

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

2019 BOYS BASKETBALL STATE TOURNAMENT RECAP

Four championships were crowned following four days of competition during the Minnesota State High School League's boys basketball state tournament held March 20-23, 2019 at three sites in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Target Center in downtown Minneapolis was the primary site for championship-round games. Williams Arena on the University of Minnesota campus and Gangelhoff Center on the Concordia (St. Paul) campus were also sites for the state tournament, held annually since 1913.

Henning won a state championship for the first time in any sport when it captured the Class A championship. And for the first time in MSHSL basketball history, three schools captured championships a week after their girls' teams counterparts won crowns. That historic feat now belongs to Minnehaha Academy, DeLaSalle and Hopkins.

Here is a look at the boys basketball state tournament:

CLASS A

Henning made school history with the first Minnesota State High School League state championship in any activity following a 67-42 victory over North Woods in the Class A championship game of the boys basketball state tournament on Saturday, March 23 at Target Center. The No. 4-seeded Hornets captured their historic championship by completing their third state tournament trip, and first since 1966, with an impressive display of up-tempo play and proficient shooting.

Senior guard Sam Fisher led the Henning (31-1) attack with 22 points, seven rebounds and three assists. Junior guard Parker Fraki added 13 points, five rebounds and five assists. Junior guard Blake Wallevand had 10 points on 5-of-5 shooting. Henning, which opened the season with 24 consecutive victories, shot 55.3 percent in the championship game and used a pressure defense that coaxed North Woods (29-3) into 24 turnovers and 30.6 percent shooting from the field.

This is the second consecutive season that a No. 4 seed has won the Class A state crown. During the 2018 state tournament, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton accomplished the feat.

It was the third consecutive Class A runner-up finish for North Woods, the Section 7A champion, from Cook. Junior forward Trevor Morrison led the Grizzlies with 11 points and 12 rebounds. Senior guard Chase Kleppe contributed 10 points and eight rebounds.

Henning was off and running in the first half, building a lead by as many as 25 points before settling on a 36-17 advantage at the half. Fisher had 14 points in the opening 18 minutes of play and Fraki added 13. The Hornets shot 56.5 percent from the field in the opening half while North Woods was 5 of 19 from the field (26.3 percent).

In the 1966 state tournament, Dick Peterson led Henning with 23.7 points per game. In the semifinals of that tournament, Henning lost to Edina in triple overtime. That was the first season of Edina's three consecutive state tournaments.

In the third-place game at the Gangelhoff Center, Spring Grove used overtime to record a 72-68 victory over Ada-Borup. Spring Grove (25-5), making its first state tournament appearance, earned two victories in three games to take home a trophy. During the 2018 fall state tournament season, Spring Grove was the Class Nine-Man champion in football. Senior guard Alex Folz scored 29 points, including 15 on five three-pointers to power the Lions. Senior forward Ethan Matzke added 21 points, including 12 on four three-pointers. Junior center Mason Miller had 22 points and 14 rebounds for Ada-Borup (29-3).

In the consolation final at the Gangelhoff Center, top-seeded Springfield bounced back with its second consecutive victory by defeating Westbrook-Walnut Grove, 91-61. In the quarterfinals, the Tigers (29-3) were upset by unseeded Spring Grove. Senior guard Isaac Fink powered Springfield with 35 points and 11 rebounds. Junio guard Decker Scheffler added 26 points and 13 rebounds. Senior guard Andrew Quade paced Ada-Borup (24-9) with 15 points while senior center Parker Freeburg and sophomore guard Ethan Mischke chipped in 14 each.

Henning qualified for a state championship berth with a 67-34 victory over unseeded Spring Grove in the semifinals on Friday, March 22. Senior guard Sam Fisher and junior guard Parker Fraki led Henning's group of proficient shooters with 15 points each in sending the Hornets (30-1) into the Class A championship game. The Hornets were 26 of 46 for the game

from the field (56.5 percent). In the first half when Henning built a 37-16 lead, it shot 59.1 percent. From three-point range, Henning was 8 of 17 (47.1 percent). Junior guard Isaac Fisher added 14 points and senior forward Adam Lange contributed 10. Spring Grove (24-5), which upset top-seeded Springfield in the quarterfinals, was paced by sophomore guard Caden Grinde's 11 points.

North Woods completed the Class A championship pairing with a dramatic 57-55 victory over Ada-Borup in the lower-bracket semifinal. Senior guard Cade Goggeye made a three-pointer from the deep right corner with 0.4 seconds remaining in regulation time as part of a drama-packed final minute of play that allowed the Grizzlies (29-2) to earn a spot in the Class A championship game for the third consecutive season. After Goggeye's successful three-pointer, Ada-Borup (29-2) took a timeout to figure out a plan to go the length of the court in less than half a second. A three-quarters court-length pass was good to junior center Mason Miller, but his desperation try from well beyond the NBA three-point line was off the mark. Junior forward Trevor Morrison powered the Grizzlies with 20 points and 10 rebounds. Goggeye had 18 rebounds, six assists, a block and three steals. Miller paced the Cougars with 18 points and Brainard had 15.

CLASS AA

Minnehaha Academy said a likely goodbye to the Class AA field in boys basketball by capturing a third consecutive state championship on Saturday, March 23 at Target Center. The Minneapolis-based private school, which has petitioned the Minnesota State High School League to be placed in Class AAA for the next two-year competitive placement cycle for boys basketball, completed its three-peat of Class AA crowns with a 69-52 victory over Minneapolis North in the title game.

The three consecutive Class AA championships for Minnehaha Academy (29-2) equals the mark of three in a row captured by Braham from 2004-2006.

Junior guard Jalen Suggs, a prized national recruit, powered the Redhawks with 20 points, four rebounds and four assists as Minnehaha Academy defeated Minneapolis North for the second time this season. On Feb. 19, the Redhawks recorded a 63-59 nonconference win. Freshman forward Prince Aligbe also finished with 20 points and also had seven rebounds.

Chet Holmgren, a 7-foot sophomore, was a dominant presence in the low post with a triple double of 16 points, 14 rebounds and 10 blocks.

It was the third major-activity championship for Minnehaha Academy. In the fall, the SMB co-op that included players from Minnehaha Academy, won the Class AAAA football championship. A week ago, the girls basketball team won the Class AA crown.

Minneapolis North (23-10) was attempting to become the first school to win championships in three different enrollment classes since the four-class era began in 1997. The Polars' runner-up finish in 2019 ends a string of three consecutive appearances in championship games by Minneapolis North that ended with titles. During the four-class era (1997-2019), Minneapolis Public Schools are 9-3 in state championship games. North and Henry are both 4-1, and Washburn is 1-1.

Minnehaha Academy built a 30-15 lead at the half behind 10 points from Suggs and eight from Aligbe. Although the Redhawks were just 7 of 24 from the field in the first half (29.2 percent), they made up for it, in part, by making 15 of 16 free throws. Minnehaha Academy extended its lead by a basket over the course of the second half by outscoring the Polars by a 39-to-37 margin in the final 18 minutes of play.

Senior guard Nasir El-Amin scored 17 points for Minneapolis North and sophomore center Davon Towley, Jr., was next with eight points.

In the third-place game at the Gangelhoff Center, Lake City, the No. 5 seed to enter the Class AAA tournament, recorded a 51-47 victory over Perham. Junior guards Nathan Heise and Reid Gastner paced the Tigers (28-2) with 23 points and 17, respectively. Gastner hit a three-pointer with 5:32 left in regulation that gave the Tigers a lead they wouldn't surrender. Senior guard Jensen Beachy paced Perham (30-3) with 19 points and sophomore center Finn Diggins had 18.

In the consolation final at the Gangelhoff Center, Melrose raced to a 66-57 victory over Esko behind 27 points from senior guard Preston Keavenly. Sophomore guard Grant Moscho and sophomore forward Rowan Nelson added 12 and 10 points, respectively, for the Dutchmen (28-5). Senior guard Camden Berger scored 26 points for Esko (22-11) in a game where the lead changed hands 12 times.

Minnehaha Academy made its way into a championship game for the third consecutive season with a dominant 82-52 victory over Lake City in the upper-bracket semifinal. Junior guard Jalen Suggs led the way with 24 points, 11 rebounds and seven assists. Sophomore center Chet Holmgren added 23 points and 11 rebounds. Freshman forward Prince Aligbe had 15 points and junior forward Kaden Johnson chipped in 14. Junior guard Reid Gastner paced Lake City with 21 points.

In the other semifinal, Minneapolis North completed the championship pairing with a 62-46 victory over Perham. The No. 2-seeded Polars used a balanced offensive attack and a quick-hands defense in defeating the No. 3 seeded Yellowjackets. Senior guard Nasir El-Amin scored 13 points and sophomore center Davon Townley, Jr., had 12.

CLASS AAA

Top-seeded DeLaSalle added to its already-rich tradition of basketball success, and dominance in the Class AAA field, with a 63-56 victory over No. 2 Waseca in the championship game on Saturday, March 22 at Target Center. It was the eighth Class AAA crown since 2012 for the Islanders (27-5), which included a state-record six crowns in a row from 2012-2017. The only non-title season in that span came during the 2018 tournament when DeLaSalle finished third.

Senior forward Jamison Battle, a 6-foot-7 force in the low post as well as on the perimeter, scored 26 points, and senior guard Tyrell Terry added 19 points and 10 assists to fuel DeLaSalle's latest championship run. DeLaSalle, which also won a Class AAA crown in 2006, finished the season on an eight-game winning streak. In the third-to-last game of the regular season, the Islanders suffered a 79-71 setback to Minnehaha Academy, which would later win its third consecutive Class AA championship.

In its latest championship victory, DeLaSalle used 60.9 percent shooting in the second half to keep upset-minded Waseca at bay. The Bluejays (30-2) pulled to within 48-44 with just more than five minutes remaining in regulation time when senior forward Matt Olsem muscled in a layup. But that only spurred the Islanders, who answered with a 14-9 run that stretched their lead to 62-53 with 29.5 seconds remaining. Battle ignited the

run with a three-pointer from the deep left corner and Terry had five free throws in the spree.

Waseca tried to mount a late surge, including getting farther-than NBA-range three-pointers from senior guard Malik Willingham in the closing minutes, but DeLaSalle's lead remained intact. Willingham finished with 21 points and sophomore center Andrew Morgan had 19 points. Waseca was attempting to win its first state championship since capturing its first, and only, title in 1918. That season, Waseca went undefeated at 13-0 and defeated Duluth Central 29-10 in the championship game. Lester Juhnke led Waseca in tournament scoring that championship year with 14 points per game over the course of four games.

In the third-place game at the Gangelhoff Center, senior guard Medi Obang scored 38 points in 34 minutes of play, and also added three rebounds and five steals to power Austin to an 88-6 victory over Princeton in the Class AAA third-place game on Saturday, March 23. Junior guard Agwa Nywesh chipped in 12 points and had eight rebounds for the Packers (25-6). Senior center Jon Stimmler led Princeton with 23 points and 15 rebounds.

In the consolation final at the Gangelhoff Center on Friday, March 22, Holy Angels overcame a five-point halftime deficit to record an 80-73 victory over Mahtomedi. Junior forward Matt Banovetz paced the Stars (26-5) with 27 points and freshman guard Emmett Johnson added 23. The Stars shot 56 percent from the floor in the second half. Mahtomedi (25-7) was fueled by junior guard J'Vonne Hadley, who had 18 points, eight rebounds and seven assists. Senior forward Devin Melzer had 19 points, senior guard Zac Centers had 16 and senior guard Sam Bell totaled 15.

In the semifinal round, DeLaSalle found its way to a familiar place on Thursday, March 21 following its 93-54 victory over Princeton. Senior forward Jamison Battle scored 28 points and senior guard Tyrell Terry added 22 points, 12 rebounds and six assists to power the top-seeded Islanders (26-5) into the Class AAA championship game for the seventh time since 2012. The Islanders' latest championship berth came courtesy of an up-tempo attack and pressure defense that didn't take any breaks against Princeton (27-4). From the outset, DeLaSalle was off and running in building a 42-30 halftime lead, and then extending it with a 51-24 surge in the second half. The Islanders scored 64 points in the paint, had 27

points off turnovers and 31 points off fast breaks. Senior guard Kameron Givens had 19 points and junior center Jalen Travis contributed 14 points and six rebounds for the Islanders. Princeton, making its first state tournament since 1932 and third overall, kept things close in the early going, but was forced to play catchup throughout. Senior guard Adam Williams had 21 points and center Jon Stimmler had 13 points and 10 rebounds for the Tigers.

In the lower-bracket semifinal, Waseca completed the championship pairing with a 79-69 victory over Austin. Waseca (30-1) built on a two-point halftime advantage with a 43-point output in the second half, including a late, game-defining run to earn a spot opposite No. 1 DeLaSalle for the crown. Sophomore guard Ryan Dufault scored 10 of his 30 points during a game-ending 21-12 run over the final five minutes of play when the Bluejays turned a one-point deficit into a 10-point victory. Dufault made back-to-back three-pointers to trigger a 10-point run of his own. Andrew Morgan, a 6-foot-8 sophomore center for Waseca, added 23 points and 15 rebounds. He was a dominant presence in the low post with nine defensive rebounds, two blocks and a steal. Austin (24-6) took its final lead when senior guard Dongrin Deng made a three-pointer with 4:38 remaining in regulation time. Senior guard Medi Obang powered the Packers with 28 points, and he also had five steals. Junior guard Agwa Nywesh added 11 points and three assists. Austin was attempting to qualify for the Class AAA final for the first time since 2017 and fourth time since 2013. Austin hasn't won a state crown since capturing the 1958 crown during the single-class era

CLASS AAAA

Hopkins completed the trifecta of boys' basketball champions that mirrored the feat of their girls' basketball team counterparts following a 55-40 over Lakeville North in the big-school championship game. Junior guard Kerwin Walton led a balanced attack with 17 points and senior forward Zeke Nnaji added 14 points to go with 12 rebounds in powering the Royals (27-4) to their first title since 2016 and eighth Class AAAA championship since 2002. Hopkins also was the state champion in 1952 and 1953 during the single-class format.

The final game of the tournament featured cold shooting by each school and long stretches of scoreless play.

After Lakeville North (27-5) scored the first nine points of the second half to take a 26-24 lead following an alley-oop dunk by senior guard Tyler Wahl, the Panthers went on a scoreless drought that lasted nearly eight minutes. The Royals' scoreless stretch during that span didn't last quite as long; theirs was just four minutes long. When Hopkins did find an offensive rhythm, it went on a 14-2 run to build a 40-28 advantage with about six minutes left in regulation.

Lakeville North shot 28.3 percent from the field (28.3 percent) and Hopkins was just slightly better at 31.1 percent (14 of 45).

Senior forward Dane Zimmer had seven points for Hopkins and was a major force on the defensive end of the floor with 15 of his game-high 21 rebounds. He also had two blocks and three steals.

The 40-point output by Lakeville North ties a mark for the lowest point total scored by a second-place finisher. That was by Bloomington Jefferson in a 54-50 loss to Hopkins in the Class AAAA championship game in 2002. Wahl, a University of Wisconsin recruit, finished with 19 points and 17 rebounds for Lakeville North, which began the state tournament as the No. 5 seed. The Panthers were attempting to win their second Class AAAA championship since 2014. They have also finished runner-up on two other occasions; in a loss to Osseo in 2012 and to Hopkins in 2016.

The victory by Hopkins was the second over Lakeville North during the 2018-19 season. In the third game of the season, Hopkins recorded a 78-72 win.

In the third-place game at the Gangelhoff Center, senior guard Tommy Chatman made a jumper with five seconds remaining in regulation time to give Park Center a 61-59 victory over East Ridge (28-4) on Saturday, March 23. Earlier, Chatman made 1 of 2 free throws with 37 seconds remaining that had given the Pirates (30-2) a three-point lead. With 19 seconds left, East Ridge sophomore guard Kendall Brown made the first of two free throws, and on the miss of his second attempt, grabbed his own rebound and made a bucket to tie the score at 59-all. Chatman and senior

guard Khari Broadway had 15 points each for Park Center. Brown paced the Raptors with 18 points, seven rebounds and five assists.

In the consolation final at the Gangelhoff Center on Friday, March 22, Eden Prairie defeated Eastview for the second time during the 2018-19 season, this time a 76-65 victory. Junior guard Drake Dobbs led the Eagles (22-10) with 25 points and junior forward John Henry chipped in 17. Eden Prairie shot 50 percent from the floor and was 11 of 23 from three-point range. Junior forward Steven Crowl had a double-double for Eastview (19-13) with 23 points and 13 rebounds.

In the upper-bracket semifinal, Lakeville North recorded an upset of a higher seeded team for the second time in just more than 24 hours with a 47-45 victory over No. 1 Park Center in the Class AAAA semifinals of the boys basketball state tournament on Thursday, March 21 at Target Center. The No. 5-seeded Panthers (27-4) bolted to a stunning lead in the first half and then endured anxious moments to earn a berth in the big-school championship game for the fourth time since 2012 and first since 2016. In the three previous championship-game appearances, the Panthers were the Class AAAA runner-ups in 2012 and 2016. Lakeville North won the Class AAAA crown in 2014.

Senior guard Tyler Wahl made the second of two free throws with 1 minute 3 seconds remaining in regulation time to give the Panthers a 47-40 advantage. But Park Center (29-2), who trailed by as many as 21 points in the first half, scored the final five points to close the gap. Senior guard Emmanuel Tamba drew the Pirates to within 47-45 on a layup with 17 seconds remaining in regulation. Throughout the final minutes of regulation, Lakeville North played keep-away in a spread offense designed to drain the clock. But the Panthers couldn't add to its lead when they missed free throw opportunities.

Park Center, which outscored Lakeville North 31-16 in the second half, had an opportunity to force overtime, but Tamba missed a short jumper as the horn sounded. The Pirates were attempting to earn a spot in the Class AAAA championship game for the second time since 2013 when it was runner-up to Apple Valley.

Senior guard Tommy Jensen led Lakeville North with 16 points and three

steals. Senior guard Tyler Wahl had 11 points and 15 rebounds. During the quarterfinals on Wednesday, Lakeville North upset No. 4 Eden Prairie. In 2016, the Panthers upset No. 1 seeded Osseo in the semifinals.

Lakeville North bolted from the start and led by as many as 21 points in a first-half of domination. Jensen had 11 points in the first and senior forward Jack Rusch chipped in nine as the Panthers shot 48 percent from the field (12 of 25), including 5 of 9 from three-point range. Park Center, meanwhile, couldn't find its scoring stroke and made just 4 of 22 shots and committing nine turnovers. Tamba led the Pirates with 16 points while junior forward Dain Dainja had 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Hopkins opened the 2018-19 season with a nine-point loss to East Ridge. But in the second-to-last game of the season for both teams, Hopkins avenged the loss and put itself in position to add to its rich, tradition-filled basketball success. Senior center Zeke Nnaji scored 21 points, had 10 rebounds and three assists to power the Royals (26-4) to a 71-47 victory over the Raptors in the Class AAAA semifinals of the boys basketball tournament on Thursday, March 21 at Target Center.

A championship berth is nothing new to Hopkins. The Royals, who last won a Class AAAA crown in 2016, have captured seven total big-school crowns since 2002. Prior, Hopkins was the 1952 and 1953 state champion in a single-class format. The No. 2-seeded Royals will face No. 5 Lakeville North (27-4) in the Class AAAA championship game on Saturday at 8 p.m., at Target Center. In the third game of the season for the Royals on Dec. 8, they recorded a 78-72 victory over Lakeville North.

Hopkins, which held a two-point advantage at the break, used a 7-0 run to open the second half to gain separation en route to a 45-23 surge in the final 18 minutes of play. Junior guard Kerwin Walton had 17 points on 7-of-8 shooting from the field and senior forward Andy Stafford added 13 points. The Royals led by as many as 26 points in the second half. Senior forward Courtney Brown, Jr., was the only East Ridge (28-3) to score in double figures. He finished with 13 points and four rebounds.