

2018 Boys and Girls Soccer State Tournament Recap

The Blake School and Mahtomedi win championships in Class A;

Minnetonka, Stillwater capture crowns in Class AA

Four champions were crowned during the 2018 boys and girls soccer state tournaments.

The quarterfinals were played at four Minnesota sites on Oct. 23-25. The semifinals were played Oct. 30-31 at U.S. Bank Stadium, and Championship Day was Nov. 2 at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Here is a look at the state tournaments:

Class A

Girls

Top-seeded Mahtomedi completed its championship defense in dramatic fashion with a 1-0 victory in double overtime in a rematch of the 2017 Class A final. It was a state-best eighth girls' soccer state title for the Zephyrs.

Senior forward Sonia Meyer snapped the scoreless tie with 7 minutes, 24 seconds remaining in the second overtime session to give the Zephyrs (15-5-1) their first consecutive championship since winning their third in a row in 2006.

Mahtomedi nearly clinched the championship in the first overtime, but a powerful blast from junior forward Audrey Sexson hit the right post with 1:16 left.

Mahtomedi, making its 14th state tournament appearance, mustered five shots on goal during the championship match, and Orono (18-3-1) had three. Junior defender Reiley Prueter had two shots for the Spartans. Junior goalkeeper Claire Gagne had four saves for the Spartans and Mahtomedi junior goalkeeper Megan Lisowry had three.

The Zephyrs also claimed their first Class A championship in girls soccer in 1997, the first season of the two-class format. Titles followed 1999, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, and 2017.

Orono was making its fourth appearance in a Class A championship game since 2014. In that span, the Spartans were the champions in 2014 and runner-ups in 2015 and 2017.

In the third-place game, Benilde-St. Margaret's and Academy of Holy Angels shared the trophy and medals after the teams played to a scoreless draw on Wednesday, Oct. 31. Overtimes are not played, and shootouts are not used in third-place games to decide an outcome.

Boys

The Blake School, the top seed in the Class A field, captured a boys' soccer championship for the first time since 2008 with a stunning conclusion to the title game against upstart Bemidji on Nov. 2 at U.S. Bank Stadium.

After outshooting Bemidji 19-1 and holding a decided territorial advantage during 90 minutes of play, the Bears (19-1-2) still needed an uncanny way of scoring to record their second state crown in five state tournament appearances.

Sophomore midfielder Keegan James brought the tense battle to a sudden end when he scored off the opening kickoff to start the second overtime. It was a line drive-type volley from 55 yards that took four seconds in flight before sailing over the outreached hand of Bemidji senior backup goalkeeper Joe Fletcher to complete the rare scoring play. Six years ago, a rule was implemented that it was no longer a requirement for the opening kickoff to have two touches by the team beginning play.

Unseeded Bemidji (19-3-1) was on an upset binge en route to the program's first-ever appearance in the boys' soccer state championship game. On the way to the title game, the Lumberjacks defeated No. 3 Mahtomedi in the quarterfinals and then No. 2 Holy Angels in the semifinals.

Bemidji starting junior goalkeeper Jedidiah Bitter was dazzling in preventing the Bears from scoring multiple goals. He made nine saves, many in spectacular fashion, in nearly 70 minutes of play. Bitter suffered concussion-like symptoms during a collision in the penalty area and was removed for the remainder of the game. Fletcher made two saves in relief, including a sprawling one early in the first overtime.

The Blake School's territorial dominance created nine corner kick opportunities to none for the Lumberjacks. James had a team-best five shots on goal and senior forward Luke Melin had three. Senior midfielder Aspen Galdamez had the lone shot on the goal for the Lumberjacks.

In the third-place game, junior forward Julio Hernandez scored with 43 seconds remaining in regulation time to give Austin a 1-0 victory over Academy of Holy Angels in the Class A third-place game on Wednesday, Oct. 31. His unassisted goal snapped a scoreless draw. Had the teams concluded regulation time tied, they would share the third-place trophy. Austin sophomore goalkeeper Casey Berg faced 22 shots and made 12 saves. Austin finished the season 18-3-0. Sophomore Peter Forseth and junior Will Lehner split goalkeeping duties for Holy Angels (19-2-0). Both made three saves.

Class AA

Girls

Minnetonka was the No. 5 seed to begin the Class AA tournament on Oct. 23 at Prior Lake High School. The Skippers outlasted No. 4 Maple Grove for a 2-1 shootout victory in the quarterfinals. A week later, Minnetonka needed a shootout as well to record the

upset of the season with a 1-0 victory over top-seeded Eagan, the defending Class AA champion.

The toppling of higher-seeded opponents culminated with a 1-0 victory over No. 2 Wayzata in the Class AA championship game on Nov. 2 at U.S. Bank Stadium. It was the third championship for the Skippers and first since 2013. The other came in 2001. Minnetonka (16-4-1) is 3-0 in championship game appearances.

Wayzata (17-4-0) was attempting to match Mahtomedi, who earlier in the day had won its state-best eighth championship with a victory over Orono in the Class A title game.

Senior forward Riley Brackin scored the only goal the Skippers would need in the 28th minute when she took a through-ball from senior midfielder Grace Weisman on a diagonal run. Wayzata mounted continuous surges, especially in the second half when they held a 14-1 advantage in shots. Wayzata outshot Minnetonka 18-4. Wayzata senior goalkeeper Paige Kahlmeyer made 10 saves.

It was Minnetonka's first victory in three matches with Wayzata during the 2018 season. During Lake Conference matches, Wayzata recorded a 4-0 victory on Sept. 17 and a 2-0 win on Oct. 2.

In the third-place game, top-seeded Eagan (18-1-3) bounced back from a semifinal loss to record a 4-2 victory over Stillwater Area (15-3-4). Junior forward Julia Barger had a hat trick while junior midfielder Alison Wong chipped in a goal and an assist. Senior midfielders Maddy Leach and Abby Begin had goals for Stillwater.

Boys

Duluth East was the No. 3 seed in the 2017 state tournament and proceeded to lose to No. 2 Stillwater 5-1 in the semifinals before an eventual third-place finish. Fast forward to 2018, and this time, Duluth East was the top seed and Stillwater again was No. 2.

Still smarting from the semifinal loss, Duluth East looked forward to its championship pairing with Stillwater and the chance to atone for the setback. But Stillwater dashed those hopes with a 2-1 victory in overtime in the Class AA championship game on Nov. 2 at U.S. Bank Stadium.

Senior forward Spencer Scott scored 53 seconds into overtime to give the Ponies (19-1-2) another victory over the Greyhounds (19-1-2) and a second Class AA championship in the past three seasons. It was Stillwater's third consecutive berth in the Class AA championship game. Sandwiched around the titles was a runner-up finish to Wayzata in 2017.

The Ponies put a quick end to the extra session when junior midfielder Nicholas Purdie sent a high corner kick from the far side. In traffic, Scott was able to get a header on the ball that bounced once on the goal line and past Duluth East senior goalkeeper Oliver Hasler.

Duluth East forced overtime when senior midfielder Michael Reichoff scored on a header with 11:40 left in regulation time. Senior midfielder Logan Huber gave the Ponies an early lead that they held for much of the game on a header goal from five yards.

In the third-place game on Nov. 2, St. Paul Central and Minnetonka shared the trophy and medals after playing to a 1-1 tie. Senior defender William Hintz converted a penalty kick opportunity with 2 minutes, 29 seconds remaining in regulation time to lift St. Paul Central (18-1-2) into the tie. Senior defender Nate Vogel gave the Skippers (14-3-5) an early lead with a header goal in the 11th minute.