



ALL-COUNTY GIRLS TENNIS

Player of the Year

MIA JUAREZ

WALKERSVILLE JUNIOR SINGLES

- Named the News-Post's All-Area Player of the Year for the second consecutive season.
- After placing third at states last season, broke through and won the Class 2A state title with a 6-0, 6-2 victory over Hereford High's Julia Carrese, becoming Walkersville's first state champion in girls tennis, according to head coach Susan Nash.
- Only dropped two games in the entire state tournament. Her improved, more positive mindset helped her finish the season with an unbeaten record.
- In two seasons of playing No. 1 singles for the Lions, she has only lost one match. That occurred in the 2A state semifinals in 2025 to the eventual champion.



FIRST TEAM

LENA BUTLER SENIOR SINGLES BRUNSWICK

■ Capped a tremendous senior season for the Railroaders with a trip to the Class 1A state final, becoming the first female singles player at Brunswick High to reach that level. Cruised through the 1A West regional final, the state quarterfinals and the state semifinals with straight-set victories.



DANA DAMOULAKIS SENIOR DOUBLES URBANA

■ Won the county title at No. 1 doubles with partner Aleesha Khawaja and reached the Class 4A state quarterfinals. Helped lead the Urbana girls to the county team title.



EMMA DUBNANSKY SENIOR MIXED DOUBLES OAKDALE

■ Reached the Class 3A state quarterfinals in mixed doubles with partner Harry Hernandez after playing in the 3A West regional final. Played No. 1 singles for the Bears and served as a team captain.



LIKITHA GADDIPATI SOPHOMORE SINGLES URBANA

■ Standout season for the Hawks involved reaching the county final at No. 1 singles, winning the Class 4A North regional title with a straight-sets victory and playing in the state quarterfinals.



ALEESHA KHAWAJA SENIOR DOUBLES URBANA

■ Won the county title at No. 1 doubles with partner Dana Damoulakis and reached the Class 4A state quarterfinals. Helped lead the Urbana girls to the county team title.



AVA KORTH SENIOR DOUBLES THOMAS JOHNSON

■ After finishing the regular season with an unbeaten record (15-0) at No. 1 doubles, she and partner Grace Koziol won the Class 4A North regional title in straight sets. They advanced as far as the state quarterfinals and finished 20-2 as a team.



GRACE KOZIOL FRESHMAN DOUBLES THOMAS JOHNSON

■ After finishing the regular season with an unbeaten record (15-0) at No. 1 doubles, she and partner Ava Korth won the Class 4A North regional title in straight sets. They advanced as far as the state quarterfinals and finished 20-2 as a team.



ARSHIA MALHOTRA SENIOR MIXED DOUBLES URBANA

■ Won the Class 4A North regional title in mixed doubles with partner Vish Madduri and then advanced as far as the state semifinals. Also claimed the county title at No. 2 doubles with partner Alejandra Sierra.



HONORABLE MENTION

Brunswick—Kaitlyn Heck, Tormine Jorgensen, Hope Letho, Addison Ligi, Janelle Razunguzwa, Addison Willis

Catoctin—Adalyn DeGrange, Delaney Hench, Grace May, Madelynn Myers

Frederick—Sha’Niyah Goines, Paige Poska, Celeste Rodriguez, Kim Volante

Linganore—Olivia Beck, Chloe Freyer, Julianne Joyal, Chelsea Whiteman

Middletown—Annabel Jackson, Marissa Kraje, Alexandra Reynolds, Seneca Yarmus

Oakdale—Kady Gamble, Ava Nelson, Niriksha Ramesha

Thomas Johnson—Ava Dillman, Emma Elmlund, Amelie Kettenhofen, Brenna Mowry, Zoey Smith, Jovi Trimble

Tuscarora—Brenda Durand, Abigail Mawi, Kaylie Orellana

Urbana—Elise Faulkner, Alejandra Sierra, Charlotte Thibodeau

Walkersville—Ainsley Hoffman, Isha Patel, Lilia Sahli, Julia Tutak, Isabel Vanderau

Wolves think LaMelo Ball will ‘elevate’ their entire team

By DAVE CAMPBELL
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — LaMelo Ball came to Minnesota at a steep price.

The opportunity with a cost of two proven power forwards and multiple draft picks was deemed worthwhile by the Timberwolves in their ongoing attempt to make the last and most difficult step toward an NBA title.

“I think he’ll elevate us,” president of basketball operations Tim Connelly said, “and our environment will be conducive to his continued growth as well.”

Eager to gain one of the league’s true point guards and lessen the ballhandling and playmaking burden on superstar Anthony Edwards, the Wolves had to swallow hard and surrender valuable assets.

Completing a complicated four-team trade with Brooklyn, Charlotte and Chicago, Minnesota acquired Ball and guard Josh Green and sent fan favorite Naz Reid and a package of draft picks — a 2033 unprotected first-rounder, first-round swaps in 2028, 2029 and 2030, and second-rounders in 2029, 2032 and 2033 — to the Hornets.

Second-leading scorer Julius Randle went to the Nets, who swapped the 28th overall selec-



Associated Press

The Timberwolves’ newly-acquired point guard LaMelo Ball laughs during an introductory press conference at the Target Center in Minneapolis on Tuesday.

tion in the draft last month for No. 33 that landed the Wolves guard Isaiah Evans. That first part of the trade also created the salary cap space necessary for the Wolves to re-sign guard Ayo Dosunmu.

Edwards was the first overall pick in the 2020 draft. Ball went third. Green was the 18th selection by Dallas and McDaniels was 28th, giving the Wolves four first-

round picks from that year.

“Well, we have none for the next 10 years,” Connelly quipped at the introductory news conference for Ball and Green on Tuesday at Target Center. “It’s all about quality, not quantity, right?”

All four of those 2020 draftees are still 25 and younger, giving the Wolves confidence they’ll continue to contend — “bites at the

apple” is Connelly’s description — as long as Edwards is on their roster.

“I’ve known Ant for a minute, so we’ve been talking,” Ball said. “Everybody’s excited, and we’re ready to get to work.”

Ball played in only 43% of the games over a three-year stretch from 2022-25 before a promising 2025-26 season that helped propel the Hornets into the play-in games. He has shown a recklessness on and off the court at times, too. But the Wolves will give him a stronger team around him than he ever had with the Hornets, and six years into his NBA career the 6-foot-7 Ball is still just 24.

“You’ve got to have a big backcourt. We learned that through the playoffs this year,” Wolves coach Chris Finch said.

The flip side of Ball’s penchant for undisciplined or flashy plays is a carefree style the Wolves could use. One of the undercurrents of their underachieving season that ended with a second-round loss to San Antonio was a moodiness that became part of their collective personality. Too many players took too long to shake off unproductive games or frustrating stretches.

“This is supposed to be fun,” Connelly said. “He enjoys life. He enjoys playing. You don’t want to make this anything but where it’s

a joyous atmosphere.”

Minnesota’s long-shot pitch for LeBron

The void left by the departure of Randle and Reid could be filled rather neatly by a certain free agent who has included the Wolves on his list of teams worth considering. Meet Minneapolis, the city’s tourism arm, even took out digital billboards in Los Angeles to add a light-hearted element to the pitch for LeBron James.

But even if the NBA’s all-time leading scorer is unlikely to land in Minnesota for his 24th season, the Wolves have found satisfaction in the widespread notion around the league they might well provide the best on-court fit for James next to Edwards, Ball and McDaniels with veteran defensive whiz Rudy Gobert at the rim.

“This is a place where you’re going to have a lot of fun and win a lot of games. We’re trying to change the narrative of how this organization is viewed. We’re kind of proud of who we are, and certainly, wherever LeBron ends up, he’s going to make that place much, much better,” Connelly said. “I like who we are and we’re pretty proud of who we are. Hopefully that’s appealing, not just to LeBron, but to any free agent.”