SPORTS

BOYS HOCKEY

East Grand Forks wins Class A crown over Hermantown

ST. PAUL (AP) — East Grand Forks didn't let a slow start get in the way of a school first.

Grant Loven had a goal and three assists as the Green Wave beat Hermantown, 7-3, in the Class A Boys Hockey Championship on Saturday.

It's the first hockey title for East Grand Forks, which scored five times in the second period.

"This is something you dream about when you're 5 years old and step onto the ice for the first time," said Reed Corbin, who had a goal and two assists.

It was another year of heartbreak for Hermantown. The Hawks have lost five straight title games.

"If it didn't hurt so much, I'd laugh," said Hermantown coach Bruce Plante.

Things looked good early when Scott Wasbotten gave the Hawks (24-5-2) a 1-0 lead with 32.7 seconds left in the first period when his rebound from below the goal line deflected off goaltender Josh Weber and into the net.

Hermantown could have had more, but was 0 for 4 on the power play in the opening 17 minutes — including three opportunities in a 6-minute, 16-second span. It finished 1 for 7 with the man advantage.

"I thought we won this game in the first period," said East Grand Forks coach Tyler Palmiscno. "To kill off those penalties and to come out only down 1-0 and give up a goal that was kind of fluky, I thought that was a win for us. We took that in stride and in the second period you saw what you saw."

The Green Wave (28-2-1) scored three goals in a 4:17 span to take control in the second period.

Dixon Bowen took a pass from Tanner Tweten at the blue line and quickly split a pair of defenders before going left to deke goaltender Adam Smith and slide a backhand into the net at 2:36. Eddie Eades scored on a low wristshot from the slot 1:07 later.

"We needed to come out a lot stronger in the second period, but they came out a lot harder. We should have been ready for it," Wasbotten said.

Jace Pesch made it 3-1 about three minutes later on the power play. Corbid intercepted a pass behind the net and quickly passed it to Tweten, who skated out from behind the end line and passed to Pesch at the edge of the crease in front. Smith got a piece of the shot, but the puck trickled across the line just before a defenseman could reach in to stop it.

"We kept getting the bounces and everything was going our way," said defenseman Tye Ausmus. "We just capitalized on our opportunities."

Loven and Corbid scored about two minutes apart late in the frame for a 5-1 lead.

"We felt all year that when we played our best it was going to be tough for anybody to beat us," Palmiscno said. "Through two (tournament) games, the feeling in our locker room was that we have yet to play our best. I thought today we came out with our best for the majority of that hockey game."

Parker Hawk scored 2:31 into the third period to cut the Hermantown deficit to three, but Cale Mack and Tweten iced the game with goals midway through the frame. Jared Zeleznikar scored his first of the year on a power play with 4:08 to play.

"They were nasty physical; they were fast. They were great and they stuck it to us," Plante said.

New Prague beat St. Cloud Cathedral 5-2 for third place. Totino-Grace beat Luverne 4-3 in double-overtime in the consolation game.

MEN'S BASEBALL

Voyageurs open Florida trip 1-3

RRCC swept by MSCTC, splits with SCCC

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The Rainy River Community College men's baseball team opened the 2014 season earlier this week on its annual trip to Florida with one victory out of the pair of doubleheaders.

RRCC head coach Josh Koenig said the team has been "progressively improving" in its first games of the year.

"The pitching has been very solid overall," Koenig said. "Hitting is going to continue to improve as we continue to play."

After having practiced inside in the gym before finally having the opportunity to play outside, he said defense is the biggest question mark with the team being competitive in all of its games so far, but unable to overcome defensive errors.

On Sunday, the Voyageurs lost both games of a doubleheader against Minnesota State-Fergus Falls.

In game one, RRCC scored five runs in the bottom of the seventh and also had the bases loaded with two outs trailing 7-5 when Tanner Helms flew out to deep center field to end the game.

The Voyageurs' pitching staff struck out 11 batters and allowed only two earned runs.

Robert Parrish III

Gino Strebing started on the mound for RRCC and recorded the loss. He pitched the first 4 2/3 innings, allowing all seven runs, two earned, on three hits with four walks and a hit batter while striking out seven.

Talon Kunkel struck out three batters pitching 1 1/3 innings in relief, while Jake Schulte picked up a strikeout throwing the final inning.

At the plate, Makana Canda went 2-3 with 2 RBI and a run scored, while Robert Parrish III, Brett Bateman, and Helms each had one hit.

MSCTC 8, RRCC 3

In Sunday's game two, the Voyageurs scored twice in the top of the third to take a one-run lead, but then gave up four runs in the bottom of the fifth and two more in the sixth and lost to Fergus Falls, 8-3.

MSCTC outhit RRCC, 9-5, while the Voyageurs committed three errors, compared to only one for Fergus Falls.

Helms led the Voyageurs at the plate by batting 2-3 with 2 RBI. Sean Deviney, Canda, and Colten Boudreau each had one hit.

Kris Barber pitched the first 4 2/3 innings for RRCC and recorded the loss, allowing six runs, three earned, on six hits with a walk while striking out seven. Jose Pedraza pitched the final 1 1/3 innings, allowing two runs on three hits with a hit batter.

SCCC 10, RRCC 4

On Monday, the Voyageurs lost the first game of a doubleheader against Schenectady County Community College, 10-4.

Of RRCC's eight hits, Canda and Parrish had two apiece with each scoring a run and Parrish also recording 2 RBI. Helms doubled, while Boudreau, Ben Churilla and Dyan Zayas also each had a hit.

In the field, the Voyageurs committed three errors, compared to one for SCCC.

Stephen Rivera pitched the first four innings for RRCC and recorded the loss, allowing all 10 runs, eight earned, on four hits with a walk and three hit batters while striking out two. Joseph Hudson pitched the final two innings, giving up two hits with one strikeout.

RRCC 2, SCCC 0

In Monday's game two, the Voyageurs picked up their first win of the season when they shut out SCCC, 2-0.

Parrish pitched the first five innings and recorded the victory for RRCC with no runs allowed on three hits and a walk while striking out seven. Tyler Boldt allowed a hit pitching in the sixth inning, while Helms recorded a save allowing only one hit pitching the seventh inning.

Of RRCC's eight hits, Boudreau batted 2-3, Helms tripled with a run scored, Victor Rodriguez doubled and an RBI, Deviney doubled, Strebing singled with an RBI, and Canda and Churilla also singled.

The Voyageurs are now 1-3 overall and return to action today to face St. Lawrence (Quebec) at 12 p.m. and Erie CC at 3 p.m. at Walter Fuller Field in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Sunday's game 1
MSCTC 7, RRCC 5

MSCTC	0-0-0	4-3-0	0	7	3	0
RRCC	0-0-0	0-0-0	5	5	5	6

Sunday's game 2
MSCTC 8, RRCC 3

RRCC	1-0-2	0-0-0	0	3	5	3
MSCTC	1-1- 0	0-4-2	x	8	9	1

Monday's game 1
SCCC 10, RRCC 4

RRCC	0-0-0	4-0-0	0	4	8	3
SCCC	3-1-0	5-1-0	x	10	13	1

Monday's game 2
RRCC 2, SCCC 0

SCCC	0-0-0	0-0-0	0	0	5	0
RRCC	0-1-1	0-0-0	x	2	8	0

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Hollins helps Minnesota beat Penn State, 81-63

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The pressure on Minnesota will ratchet up on Thursday. Sunday afternoon was for reflection — and some fun.

Austin Hollins had 14 points and three steals in his last scheduled home game, a fitting senior spark for the Golden Gophers in an 81-63 victory over Penn State on Sunday to set up a rematch between these teams in the first round of the Big Ten tournament.

"It's bittersweet. That's the best word I can use to describe it," Hollins said. "It felt great going out there and getting a win, seeing the guys that I came in with go out having a good game ... but it'll be sad I'm leaving and not being able to play in 'The Barn' again."

DeAndre Mathieu led the Gophers (19-12, 8-10) with 16 points and six assists, Mo Walker scored 16 points on a career-best 8-for-10 free-throw shooting performance, and Minnesota locked up seventh place in coach Richard Pitino's first season.

"It was good to get one at home, the last one at home for the seniors," Walker said. "We all played hard. We knew what we were playing for. So good to get it."

D.J. Newbill had 15 of his 24 points in the second half for the Nittany Lions (15-16, 6-12), who tied for 10th in the conference standings with Northwestern and drew the higher seed because they beat the Wildcats earlier this week.

Minnesota and Penn State will play on Thursday in Indianapolis, with the winner advancing to the quarterfinals to face Wisconsin.

"One of the hardest things to do in sports is beat a team three times, so we've got to understand that," Pitino said.

The Gophers also beat the Nittany Lions in Pennsylvania 68-65 on Jan. 8.

"We'll worry about Minnesota on Wednesday," coach Patrick Chambers said. "We've just got to pick up the pieces, regain our confidence."

The Gophers badly needed to win this to keep their NCAA tournament bid viable, and even another victory over the Nittany Lions on Thursday might not be enough to get in. Seven losses in the 10-game stretch prior to this, including defeats to the Big Ten's last two finishers, Northwestern and Purdue, and a 2-7 conference road record hurt.

But whatever happens next weekend when the brackets are filled out, the Gophers finished on a high note in honor of Hollins and the three other players who won't return next season.

Hollins had 57 points over his last three games, the most in such a stretch of his career. He scored first on a short flip shot from the lane, and the Gophers surged to a 23-3 advantage that looked like it belonged on the football scoreboard across the street. That was their biggest lead of the entire Big Ten season.

Fellow senior Maverick Ahanmisi, whose playing time dwindled with the arrival of three newcomers in the backcourt that Pitino brought in, matched his career high with 13 points. He went 3 for 6 from 3-point range.

Ahanmisi played only 47 minutes total over the first 17 conference games and scored just two points. But he said afterward all that mattered to him was winning, while acknowledging he held back tears.

"I've got a lot of regrets this year with decisions I've made — I think that happens — but I need to find him more minutes somehow someway," Pitino said, "and hopefully we'll be playing a little bit longer."

Even Oto Osenieks, who will skip his last season because of a persistent knee injury, joined the celebration by throwing an inbound pass and promptly returning to the bench in the final minute with a wave to the crowd.

The other senior, Malik Smith, went scoreless. In his last six games, he totaled eight points on 1-for-23 shooting, including a 1-for-20 mark from 3-point range.

The Gophers led by as much as 51-26 in the second half, until Newbill helped bring the Lions back to within 55-46 before the Gophers pulled away again. They had their fast break in full gear most of the game, thanks to 21 defensive rebounds and 10 steals that propelled it.

Tim Frazier added 14 points, going 10 for 12 from the foul line, for the Lions.

They've had some triumphs this season, with two wins over Ohio State and a victory at Indiana in one of the Big Ten's most daunting arenas for visiting teams, but they're still they're still 12-42 in Big Ten play since Chambers was hired.

"We fought our way back to single digits, but I think we ran out of gas," Chambers said. "In this league you just can't do it."

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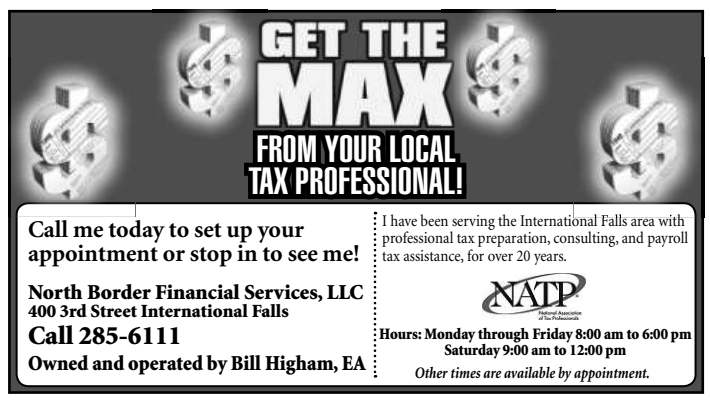
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