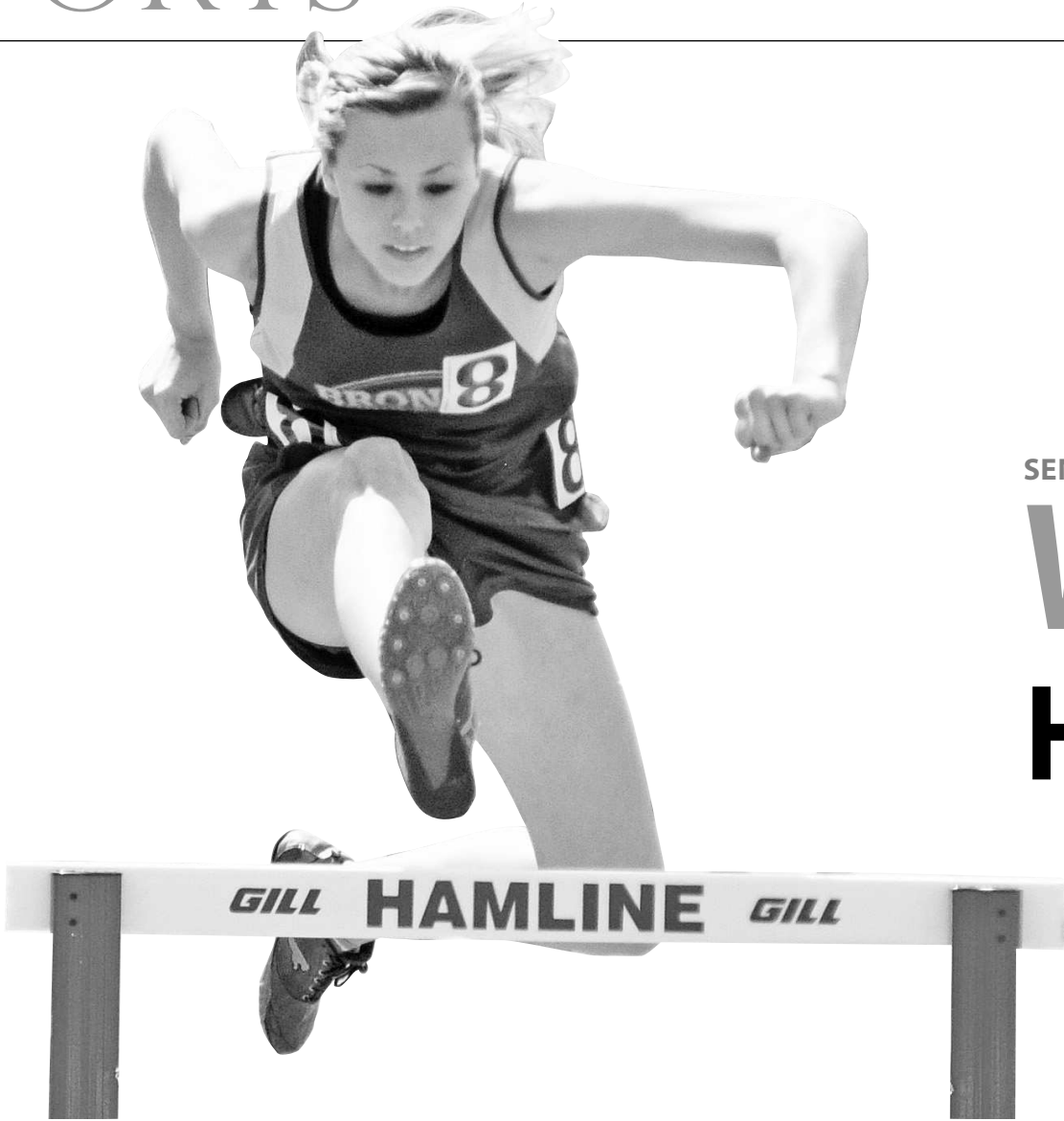


SPORTS



SENATHLETES

Who is...
Hailey Fentem

The 18-year-old International Falls High School senior is a two-time state qualifier in the 100-meter hurdles. She also qualified for state last year in the high jump and competes in other field events for the Bronco girls track and field team.

Birthday: February 14, 1996	What do you drive: 2003 Pontiac Grand Am
Future plans: Attend college for accounting and run track and field for the college.	Favorite Web sites: Twitter and Pinterest
What's on TV: NCIS, Big Brother, The Bachelorette	Favorite meal: Mashed potatoes
Favorite music: Anything I can dance to.	Biggest superstition: My lucky socks
Favorite movies: The Heat	Worst habit: Biting my nails
	Talent I'd most like to have: Singing

Favorite attribute about yourself: Height	Your motto: Always be yourself. Those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind.
Least favorite attribute: Crankiness	Favorite thing to do that has nothing to do with sports: Go mudding, go bowling and hang out with friends.
Favorite holiday: Christmas	Dream job: Modeling
Your hero: My grandparents	Love to trade places for a day with... Mila Kunis
Top three things on your bucket list: Go to the Bahamas. Ride in a hot air balloon. Own a Lexus.	

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Hollis powers Minnesota to NIT semifinals berth

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Austin Hollins, who's played more basketball games for Minnesota than any other player, saved his best for his last appearance at Williams Arena.

Hollins had a career-high 32 points, including six straight free throws in the final minute, to lead the Gophers to an 81-73 win over Southern Mississippi and a spot in the NIT semifinals.

Playing in his school-record 139th game, Hollins scored 12 straight points in a key stretch of the first half that wiped out an eight-point deficit. He made all 10 of his foul shots and was 6-for-11 from beyond the arc.

"It's top-five, definitely," said Hollins, responding to a question by several teammates who crashed the postgame media scrum in the Gophers' locker room.

"We knew coming in that would be a key in regard to trying to contain him," Southern Mississippi coach Donnie Tyndall said. "Obviously, we didn't do a great job there."

The Gophers play Florida State on Tuesday, with the championship two days later.

Neil Watson scored 16 points to lead Southern Mississippi, who had a 37-27 edge in rebounds. Daveon Boardingham added 15.

Southern Mississippi tied a school record for victories. All the Golden Eagles' losses came on the road

Although the goal for Minnesota at the beginning of the season was to make the NCAA tournament, first-year coach Richard Pitino said playing — and winning — at a high level is something to build on.

"What's great about our team, they're really enjoying this," he said. "Playing with passion, playing with pride."

The Gophers (23-13) will be playing at Madison Square Garden with a chance to erase a little bit of the sting from 2012, when they were thumped by Stanford in the NIT final.

"We got a new team, new coach and we expect to go in there and win this whole thing," said Hollins, who along with Malik Smith and Maverick Ahanmisi, head into the final games of their careers. Hollins scored 10 points in that 75-51 drubbing by the Cardinal when the Gophers were coached by Tubby Smith. Five current Gophers played in that game two years ago.

"It's a building experience, it's momentum into next season, and time for our seniors to continue their careers," said Joey King, who scored 15 points to reach double figures in all three of Minnesota's NIT games.

The Gophers started out slow against Southern Mississippi, trailing 33-25 late in the first half when Hollins got hot. He hit a pair of 3-pointers, converting a four-point play with a foul shot on the second one, then added another 3 and a floating layup that put the Gophers in the lead at 37-35.

Hollins hit a 3-pointer then converted three straight foul shots to build Minnesota's lead to 62-49 when the Golden Eagles (29-7) inched their way back in the game.

A basket by Boardingham cut the deficit to 78-73 with 17.5 seconds left, but Hollins hit two free throws and the Gophers were headed to the NIT semifinals for the seventh time. That includes two appearances that have been vacated.

The trip to New York City is also a homecoming for Pitino, who spent plenty of time at the Garden while his father Rick coached the New York Knicks, Boston Celtics, and Providence College.

"My roots are really there, it's exciting for me," Pitino said. "I had a lot of great moments as an assistant coach, we won some Big East tournaments.

"There's no better place in all of college basketball than to play in Madison Square Garden."

WATCHING THE ACTION ON THE ICE



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

From left, Lakers forwards Lucas DeBenedet (16) and Mason Meyer (9), both of the Falls, and the North Stars captain Trevor Hynnes (28) watch the action in front of them during last week's No. 1 vs. No. 2 Showdown series finale at Ice for Kids Arena in Fort Frances. The Lakers won the series and now face the English River Miners in the SIJHL semifinals, while the North Stars are in the semifinals against the Minnesota Iron Rangers.

RRCC hires new men's basketball coach

Rainy River Community College has announced the Voyageurs will have a new men's head basketball coach next season.

Kristofer Babler is replacing Jack Cook, after two seasons, beginning in the fall of 2014.

"Coach Babler comes to Rainy River with a lot of knowledge and experience and he is excited about the opportunity to coach at the college level," said RRCC Athletic Director Mel Millerbernd. "We welcome him to our staff."

Kristofer's coaching background includes being the head boys basketball and track coach at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Minneapolis, assistant boys basketball coach at Bloomington Kennedy High School, assistant men's basketball coach at the University of Wisconsin-Stout and a student assistant men's basketball coach at Gustavus Adolphus College.

In addition to his coaching positions, Babler has been a public affairs officer with the Army Reserve since 2009.

"I'm thrilled to be a part of Rainy River and the community of International Falls," Babler said. "We are going to build a hard-working, exciting basketball program here to make the area proud.

"I've prepared for this moment for a long time. We've got a great gym that we're going to fill up and make Rainy River a tough place to play."

Kristofer earned a master of education degree in applied kinesiology from the University of Minnesota — Twin Cities. He also has a bachelor of arts degree in English literature, with a coaching minor, from Gustavus Adolphus College.

In addition to coaching, Babler will be teaching some physical education courses as well as transition to college courses.



Never miss a basket. Ever.

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