



Lyle-Pacelli's Brooke Walter looks to Kendal Truckenmiller after the Athletics wrapped up the Section 1A title with a win over Hayfield Friday night in Rochester. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

# Lyle-Pacelli girls hold off Vikings to advance to Class A State Tournament



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ROCHESTER — The No. 1 seeded Lyle-Pacelli girls basketball team has seen its fair share of second half postseason leads slip away in the past few years, so when No. 2 Hayfield started to cut into what was once a 15-point LP advantage, the Athletics could've panicked. Instead, they regrouped and they beat the Vikings 75-63 to win the Section 1A title and earn a trip to the Minnesota Class A State Girls Basketball Tournament in Mayo Civic Center Friday.

LP took a 44-29 lead when Kristi Fett and Brooke Walter had back-to-back scores, but the Vikings (25-5 overall) used an 11-5 spurt to pull within 49-40 with 11:02 left in the game. LP head coach Justin Morris called a timeout to settle his team and the Athletics had a big answer as Kendal Truckenmiller hit a three-pointer and Kristi Fett scored inside to push the lead back to 52-40. Hayfield never got closer than 11 the rest of the way.



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Lyle-Pacelli's Kristi Fett reaches for a rebound during the second half of the Section 1A championship Friday night against Hayfield in Rochester. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

"When Hayfield went on that run, I looked [the team] in the eyes and I said 'not this time, we're not folding this time.' We just took their best shot and we're going to come back at them," Morris said. "They played for the community, they played for each other and they played for every kid who wore a Lyle-Pacelli jersey in the last six years who didn't get a chance to experience this. We can't do anything about that team that blew a lead against Goodhue, two years ago but we could learn from it. The totality of learning from those mistakes made us tough enough to win tonight."

While Hayfield forced 25 LP turnovers, much of which came in the second half, Walter was the calming presence in the backcourt down the stretch for the Athletics (29-1 overall). She finished with seven points, seven rebounds, six steals and nine assists.



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Lyle-Pacelli's Kendal Truckenmiller brings the ball up-court against Hayfield during the second half of the Section 1A championship Friday night in Rochester. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

“Scoring really doesn’t matter to me. As long as my team is winning, I’m happy,” Walter said. “I just know I have to take care of the ball and get our offense ready, As long as I do that, then I’m fine. I believe in every single one of my players and I know they’re going to make a play when the time comes. Every single one of the players on my team can straight up ball.”

Fett finished with 20 points, 10 rebounds and three blocks for LP and Olivia Christianson added 24 points, four rebounds and five assists. Christianson, a sophomore, couldn’t put into words how big it was for LP to get back into the state tournament after a two-year hiatus.



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Hayfield's Maggie Streightiff works against Lyle-Pacelli's Kristi Fett during the first half in the Section 1A championship Friday night in Rochester. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

"We definitely earned it. We put so much time in it," Christianson said. "My vocabulary is not big enough to describe what this feels like. We played so much over the summer. We went to scrimmages on days we would rather go swimming and we played so many games and put in so much time and effort."

Hayfield, which moved from Class AA to Class A this season, had its hopes of a state tournament berth vanquished, despite having a big senior group that put on a strong push in the second half. Carrie Rutledge had 18 points, four rebounds and four steals for the Vikings and Olivia Matti added 20 points.



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Hayfield's Kate Kruger leans in to jump on a loose ball against Lyle-Pacelli in the Section 1A championship Friday night in Rochester. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

Maggie Streightiff said it was tough to see the season end on a loss.

"They're a very talented team," Streightiff said of LP. "They have outside shooters, they have good posts and they were really on tonight with their shooting. It's been a really, really fun year. We've gotten along so well. Our group of seniors is really close and it's hard to end."

Morris said he walked away from the game with plenty of respect for the Vikings.



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Hayfield's Elecia Brown leans into Lyle-Pacelli Kristi Fett during the first half in the Section 1A championship Friday night in Rochester. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

"These are two of the best three teams in the state and I feel for Hayfield because we've been there," Morris said. "Kasey [Krekling] and Fred [Kindschy] are great coaches and they deserve to go to a state tournament."

LP will open state tournament play in Williams Arena Thursday.

**Hayfield 26 37 – 63**

**LP 38 37 – 75**

**LP scoring:** Olivia Christianson, 24; Kristi Fett, 20; Abby Bollingberg, 15; Kendal Truckenmiller, 9; Brooke Walter, 7; free throws: 75 percent (12-for-16); rebounds: 33 (Fett, 10); turnovers: 25

**Hayfield scoring:** Olivia Matti, 20; Carrie Rutledge 18; Elecia Brown, 9; Kate Kruger, 6; Maggie Streightiff, 5; Emma Holst, 3; Abby Stasko, 2; free throws: 68 percent (11-for-16); rebounds: 25 (Brown, 8); turnovers: 13



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Hayfield's Carrie Rutledge shoots early in the first half against Lyle-Pacelli in the Section 1A championship Friday night in Rochester. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

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