



Northstar Girls Hoops All-State Tournament Team

HIGH SCHOOL

MINNESOTA



By **Marc Hugunin**

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The ballots are in—both of them. Grant's and Marc's. And they're counted. So here's the Northstar Girls Hoops all-tournament team. And this one is truly an individual honor. Teams that won 2 or 3 games got team trophies, and God bless 'em. Why do so many people think the all-tournament trophies should be team trophies, too? In other words, the MSHSL all-tournament formula was 3-3-2-1-1. 1st and 2nd place got 3, 3rd got 2, 4th and 5th got 1, and the rest? Did not matter one bit what you did. You were out.

But here at Northstar Girls Hoops, the all-tournament team consists of the best 15 players regardless of school enrollment, regardless of age, regardless of what trophy the team got. Here they are.

First Team

Center—Kristi Fett, Lyle/Austin Pacelli, 6-5, senior, 72 points, 48 reb, 13 blocks

Fett was the obvious MVP of the Class A tournament. None of Lyle/Pacelli's 3 opponents came even remotely close to figuring out how to stop her or even to slow her down. She has developed a nice, soft shooting touch, almost always using the board (as one should) to shoot a high percentage. She also dominated the boards on both ends of the court. Lyle/Pacelli was hardly a one-girl team, but Fett gave them a huge first step to success. She led all tournament players in rebounds and blocked shots.

Athlete—Megan Walstad, Eastview, 6-3, senior, 51 pts, 24 reb, 8 ast

Who was the overall MVP not only of Class AAAA but of the entire state tournament. As always, it is almost impossible not to pick Paige Bueckers, but we've got to go with the winner, and that is Eastview and Megan Walstad. Whatever Eastview needed, Walstad did it and did it well. Need a bucket. Got it. Need somebody to guard Bueckers. Got it. Need a key rebound. Got it. Need help handling the ball against Hopkins intense and relentless pressure. Got it. Out MVP for the 2018 state tournament regardless of class? Got it.

Superstar—Paige Bueckers, Hopkins, 5-10, sophomore, 72 pts, 13 reb, 10 ast

But there is of course almost nothing more than Paige Bueckers could have done to help her team become state champions. Well, make one more shot, I guess. But, seriously, there is no blame at all to be laid at the feet of anybody who shot 14-of-23 from the field including 3-of-4 3s. None whatsoever. It was a truly awesome performance.

Guard—Kacie Borowicz, Roseau, 5-8, junior, 70 pts, 25 reb

But even Bueckers' 37 points against Eastview had nothing on Borowicz' 40-point effort against Maranatha for individual brilliance and for drama. Maranatha had Roseau right exactly where they wanted them, right where they beat everybody, in the last few minutes after they've worn their opponents down to a frazzle. And Kacie actually looked a tiny bit frazzled there for a minute. But she just decided Roseau was not going to lose. She scored 9 points on 1-of-1 FG and 7-of-8 FT with 4 rebounds coming out of a 60-60 tie at 4:30. And Roseau won.

Guard—Heaven Hamling, Grand Rapids, 5-8, senior. 50 pts, 19 reb, 19 asts, 17 stls

Heaven led all tournament players in assists and steals, and gave pretty much a clinic of point guard skills, especially pin-point passes that travelled half to three-quarters of the court in transition.

Second Team

Center—Mary Burke, Mountain Iron-Buhl, 5-11, senior, 66 pts, 21 reb, 13 stls

Mary rolled her ankle in the section semi-final and was only about 50 percent in the section final against Bigfork. Thus the 8-point victory over a team MIB had beaten by 30 just a couple weeks earlier. Mary was back to 80 to 90 percent for the state tournament, according to coach Jeff Buffetta and also her dad. Mary said she was 100 percent, and her 22 points, 7 rebounds and 4 steals per game would seem to agree.

Power Forward—Dlayla Chakolis, Hopkins, 5-10, junior, 45 pts, 17 reb

The best offensive rebounder I have ever seen.

Small Forward—Mariah Alipate, Eastview, 5-10, senior, forward, 49 pts, 18 reb

It's been a long road back from blue-chipper to knee rehabber to a state championship. Contributed way beyond what was expected by many at the beginning of the season.

Point Guard—Grace Touchette, Northfield, 5-9, senior, point guard, 54 pts, 13 reb, 13 ast

Smooth, cool. Northfield is known for its height, but Grace is the motor, the glue, you name it.

Shooting Guard—Lauren Jensen, Lakeville North, 5-9, sophomore, 54 pts, 16 reb

Didn't have a great tournament after that first night, but if anybody can ever beat out Paige Bueckers for a Player of the Year or similar honor, it is Jensen.

Third Team

Center—Ke James, Lakeville North, 6-2, senior, 47 pts, 29 reb

Knows how to play the post, very fundamentally sound, improved by leaps and bounds these past 2 season.

Forward—Jaclyn Jarnot, Maranatha, 6-1, senior, 62 pts, 44 reb

Guard skills at 6-foot-1, and absolutely relentless on offense. Always on the attack.

Point Guard—Maesyn Theisen, Sauk Centre, 5-8, senior, point guard, 54 pts, 17 reb, 15 ast

Another long-roader. She has been one of Minnesota's best guards since 6th grade. And, yes, she won a bunch of state titles in AAU, and nobody ever, ever said she wasn't a winner. Still, it's Sauk's first state title in 8 state tournaments in past 9 years, and 3 previous state final appearances. Just makes this all the sweeter.

Combo Guard—Madi Heiderscheidt, Sleepy Eye, 5-7, senior, 57 pts, 5 reb

Made the most miraculous, unlikely, unexpected plays of the whole tournament. “We never expected to be in this position,” she said after Sleepy Eye’s semi-final win, and nobody else expected it either. But “clutch” became her middle name this past week.

Combo Guard—Taylie Scott, Heritage, 5-7, junior, point guard, 73 pts, 26 reb, 10 ast (overall tournament scoring leader) (not MSHSL all-tournament)

Bet you didn’t know who the all-over tournament scoring leader is. Yup. Taylie Scott of Heritage. Had a super tournament despite losing 2 games. Unfortunately the all-tournament formula was 3-3-2-1-1. 1st and 2nd place got 3, 3rd got 2, 4th and 5th got 1, and the rest? Did not matter one bit what you did. You were out. Well, Taylie Scott was one of the top 15 players in this tournament, period. No formula can prove otherwise.

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