



# State Preview: Lyle-Pacelli girls are aiming high



(<https://www.austindailyherald.com/author/rockyhulne/>).

By **Rocky Hulne** (<https://www.austindailyherald.com/author/rockyhulne/>).

Email the author (<mailto:rocky.hulne@austindailyherald.com>).

Published 9:36 pm Tuesday, March 13, 2018

The Lyle-Pacelli girls basketball team is rolling into the Minnesota Class A State Girls Basketball Tournament on a high note, and it's hoping it can push to even greater levels when it begins play on Thursday.

The Athletics (29-1 overall) are on a 22-game winning streak and they'll be playing as the top-seed when they take on Heritage Christian Academy (19-10 overall) in Williams Arena on noon Thursday. With the possibility of playing three games in three days against the top competition in the state, LP head coach Justin Morris wants his team to stay focused on what they can do to win.

"We've just got to worry about us," Morris said. "We've got to make the extra pass, lock down on defense, box out and run the floor. We can't worry about what seed we are and who we're playing. We've got to be the best Lyle-Pacelli team we can be and if we are, we're going to be a tough out."



(<https://www.austindailyherald.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/LPvsHayfieldGBBPLY-39.jpg>).

Lyle-Pacelli's Olivia Christianson is interrupted off the break by Hayfield's Emma Holst during the second half in the Section 1A championship Friday night in Rochester. Eric Johnson/photodesk@austindailyherald.com

The Athletics have ridden behind the play of seniors Kristi Fett, Brooke Walter and Kendal Truckenmiller this season and juniors Abby Bollingberg and Olivia Christianson had played big roles as well. Walter, who will not play college basketball, said she's hoping to go out on top.

"We've worked on basketball since we were in third grade and to end our career in basketball at the state tournament is a dream come true, but to win it all would be the cherry on top," Walter said.

It's been since 2015 when LP last played in a state tournament and it took fourth place that season after letting a late lead slip away against Ada-Borup in the semifinals. This year, the Athletics are hoping to come out and play their best with it all on the line.

"We have to be mentally tough and know that we can get through it," Truckenmiller said.

Neither Lyle or Pacelli have ever won a state championship in girls basketball and Morris is hoping this will be the group to do it. But he's also hoping his players take the time to relish the moment.

"I want them to enjoy the experience and if they lay it all out there and leave it on the floor, I'm going to be proud of them," Morris said. "I want them to be in legacy mode, I want them to be trailblazers and I want them to be in the mode that they're going to be the most special basketball team there's ever been at LP."

One thing that has carried LP throughout this season and the postseason has been the trust the team has had in each other. While Fett is a very potent scorer in the paint, she's been more than happy to share the wealth when facing defensive pressure.

"The main thing is that we all trust in each other and we believe in ourselves," Fett said. "We use the [saying] 'forget about me, I love you.'"

If LP wins on Thursday, it would play the winner of Menahga and Minneota in Target Center Friday at noon. The Minnesota Class A state title game will take place at Target Center on noon Saturday.

