

# The Times SPORTS

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# STATE CHAMPS!

## Notre Dame girls win second consecutive title



The Notre Dame Academy girls' basketball team celebrates its second consecutive WIAA Division 2 state title March 12. The Tritons beat Pewaukee in the championship game, 68-54. **Josh Staloch Photo**

**BY RICH PALZEWIC**  
SPORTS EDITOR

ASHWAUBENON – Notre Dame Academy girls' basketball player Trista Fayta had a rough first half in her team's Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) Division 2 state title game.

The sophomore was 1-for-4 from the field and committed four turnovers.

That all changed in the second half.

Led by Fayta's four 3-pointers in the second half, the Tritons won their second consecutive state title with a 68-54 victory over Pewaukee March 12 at the Resch Center in Ashwaubenton.

Fayta finished with 27 points, including being a

perfect 11-for-11 from the free-throw line.

"Because I didn't make my first couple of shots, I knew I had to keep shooting," Fayta said. "I figured one would eventually fall."

With Notre Dame (29-1) leading 34-28 early in the second half, the lead ballooned to 51-36 moments later when the Tritons went on a 17-8 run.

Peyton Musial hit a pair of free throws before Fayta and Musial hit back-to-back 3s.

Fayta then hit three consecutive 3s on as many trips down the floor to send the crowd into a frenzy.

In a tight first half, Pewaukee (26-4) took a 26-25 lead into intermission.

Notre Dame held a 23-20 lead with two minutes

remaining, but the Pirates scored six consecutive points to grab the lead.

"The girls did a great job sticking to the defensive game plan," Notre Dame Head Coach Sara Rohde said. "Offensively, we wanted to get the ball inside."

Tritons forward Sarah Hardwick, who made all five of her field goals in the first half, scored 11 points before the break, including 10 of the first 12 for her team.

Sydney Whitehouse added eight points, including a pair of 3-pointers.

Hardwick finished with 17 points, while Whitehouse added 13.

"As a senior, I can't think of a better way to go out," Hardwick said. "We had a target on our back from the

beginning of the season. The underclassmen will have to deal with the pressure again next season."

With the win, Notre Dame won its 28th straight game and its fifth WIAA state title overall.

Before winning last year, the Tritons also won in 2001, 2013 and 2014.

Rohde said in a few weeks, she'll meet with the team about plans for next year.

"It's crazy to think we'll already be chatting about next season in a few weeks," she said. "Obviously, our goal is to win another state title – that's what you play for."

### Semifinal victory

Four Notre Dame players scored in double digits in a 64-45 state semifinal victory

against Menomonie.

Hope Barington (13 points), Fayta (12), Gracie Grzesk (12) and Whitehouse (10) led the Tritons in scoring.

Notre Dame trailed 7-1 a few minutes into the game before grabbing a 12-10 lead at the 14:37 mark of the first half.

"We're kind of used to those slow starts," Rohde laughed. "We did the same thing with Beaver Dam (in the sectional finals). I have trust in my girls and know we'll eventually score. If I felt it was getting out of hand, I would have called a timeout. Menomonie started well and tried to speed things up a bit."

The Mustangs led 19-14 before the Tritons ended the first half on a 21-11 run

to take a 35-30 lead at the break.

Picking up two first-half fouls, Grzesk committed her third and fourth personal fouls two minutes into the second half and was forced to sit on the bench for the next 10 1/2 minutes of play.

"When I picked up my second, I knew I couldn't pick up my third (in the first half)," Grzesk said. "My (third and fourth) fouls were silly – I needed to show my hands and be better about that."

After Grzesk went to the bench, Menomonie clawed to within 41-39 after consecutive 3-pointers.

From there, Notre Dame regained control with its

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