

SPORTS

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WIAA DIVISION 2 & DIVISION 3 BOYS BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

BEST IN STATE

Pewaukee, Lake Country Lutheran bring home the gold ball



Dave Radcliffe/Freeman Staff

LEFT: Pewaukee's boys basketball team celebrates after defeating La Crosse Central in the WIAA Division 2 state championship game Saturday at the Kohl Center. **RIGHT:** Lake Country Lutheran senior Johnny Nehls holds up the gold ball as his teammates celebrate around him after the Lightning defeated West Salem in the WIAA Division 3 state championship game Saturday at the Kohl Center.

Pirates take down La Crosse Central to repeat as Division 2 state champs

By Dave Radcliffe
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MADISON — David Burkemper couldn't help but laugh.

And who could blame him? He and his players were having the time of their lives.

On the grandest stage Wisconsin high school basketball has to offer, Pewaukee showed everyone what it's capable of when firing on all cylinders. It was a shooting

display for the ages as the Pirates came one 3-pointer shy of matching the state tournament record and completed their quest for back-to-back titles with a 67-48 victory over La Crosse Central in the WIAA Division 2 state championship game Saturday at the Kohl Center in Madison.

"I know I don't make a lot of friends out there with smiling like that, but I'm just enjoying watching my team play," Burkemper said. "Sometimes like yesterday when Ash-

waubenon made us play their style, I get frustrated because I want people to see, especially in a venue like this, how good these kids are.

"And tonight, that smile was me showing the world hey, this is who we are."

It was no laughing matter for the Riverhawks (28-2), who hadn't lost to an in-state opponent before running into the uber-efficient offense that is Pewaukee (27-3).

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Lightning refuse to be denied again after finishing as state runner-up last year

By Mark Hutchinson
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MADISON — There are no panic buttons in the Kohl Center locker rooms.

But that was OK with the Lake Country Lutheran boys basketball team.

The Lightning didn't even look for one despite facing a rare halftime deficit, 31-29, at that juncture of the WIAA Division-3 state championship game Saturday.

They knew what was required, they wasted no time doing it, and they rode home with the first gold ball in program history.

LCL, ranked second in the state and seeded second in the state field, scored the first 10 points of the second half during a 13-2 run that paved the way to a 67-56 victory over top-ranked and top-seeded West Salem. The Lightning, who dropped the 2021 D-3 state final to Racine St. Catherine's, finished their

2021-22 campaign at 28-2 and ran their two-year ledger to 54-4.

Senior center Ben Lubbers, who scored six of his career- and team-high 22 points during the surge, mixed his metaphors while sitting alongside coach Mark Newman and senior teammate Luke Haertle at the postgame media conference as he reeled in the years he and his teammates spent together.

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WIAA DIVISION 1 BOYS BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP: Neenah, Brookfield Central

Lancers overpowered by Rockets in state final

Brookfield Central only led for 81 seconds throughout the night

By Dave Radcliffe
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MADISON — Nobody on the floor was more talented than Andrew Rohde.

But the overall talent of Neenah was too much for one man to overcome.

Despite a heroic individual performance by the senior guard, Brookfield Central would have to settle for a silver trophy. The top-seeded Rockets had four players score in double figures en route to winning their first state title since 1978 with a 64-52 victory in the WIAA Division 1 championship game Saturday night at the Kohl Center.

"At one point in time I said to one of my assistants it was like every time we left somebody open, they made a shot," Brookfield Central coach Dan Wandrey said. "They'd get inside and hurt us there.

"Their impressiveness is that nobody's really all that impressive. But part of that is because there's almost no gap from one through seven or eight."

The Rockets (29-1) only trailed for 81 seconds, making just under half of their field-goal attempts and only turning the ball over four times.

"They're a really well-coached team and their half-court offense, it's really hard to guard," Rohde said. "But I was just honored to be

here and nobody expected us to make it this far. So I think that's an accomplishment and we proved a lot of people wrong."

There's no doubt about that. Not much was expected of the No. 3 seeded Lancers (24-6) entering the season after they lost David Joplin and Ben Nau, among others, to graduation last year. Both were key contributors when Central won its first state title in 2019, when it knocked off Neenah in the semifinals before downing Sun Prairie.

As it turned out, so was Rohde, who emerged as an important role player on that championship squad. Biding his time before becoming the top dog his senior season, Rohde made the most of it as he set a two-day record at the state tournament with 55 combined points, including a game-high 34 against Neenah.

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Dave Radcliffe/Freeman Staff

Brookfield Central senior guard Andrew Rohde pulls up for a jumper during the WIAA Division 1 state championship game Saturday at the Kohl Center.

WOMEN'S MARCH MADNESS: Oklahoma 78, IUPUI 72

IUPUI drops close game in first tournament appearance

McLimore leads Jaguars with 18 points

By Cliffe Brunt
AP Sports Writer

NORMAN, Okla. — Taylor Robertson scored 17 of her 22 points in the second half to help fourth-seeded Oklahoma beat No. 13 seed IUPUI 78-72 on Saturday night in the first round of the women's NCAA Tournament.

IUPUI coach Austin Parkinson was disappointed that the Jaguars failed to properly guard Robertson — one of the nation's best 3-point shooters — after half-time. Robertson shot 4 of 9 on 3s after the break.

"I thought we did a poor job on Robertson in the sec-



LEFT: Oklahoma guard Kelbie Washington (10) drives past IUPUI guard Natalie Andersen (24) and Rachel Kent (22) during the second half of a first-round game in the NCAA women's college basketball tournament on Saturday in Norman, Okla. **RIGHT:** Oklahoma guard Madi Williams (25) guards IUPUI guard Anna Mortag (21) in the first half of a first-round game in the NCAA women's college basketball tournament on Saturday in Norman, Okla.

ond half," Parkinson said. "We covered her great in the first half and lost her on some really pretty easy switches we would normally make. A player like that and

you leave her open, it's three points. That was tough."

Madi Williams added 21 points for the Sooners (25-8), who got a tournament win for first-year coach Jennie

Baranczyk. Oklahoma will host Notre Dame in a second-round game Monday. Notre Dame defeated Massachusetts 89-78 earlier in the evening.

Rachel McLimore scored 18 points for IUPUI.

Macee Williams, the four-time Horizon League Player

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Former Mukwonago, Brookfield Central standouts shine in tournament loss

NORMAN, Okla. — Former area standouts Natalie Andersen and Anna Mortag put up a pair of good performances off the bench for IUPUI in a 78-72 loss to Oklahoma in the first round of the NCAA women's basketball tournament on Saturday.

Andersen — a former Mukwonago star and 2019 Freeman Girls Basketball Player of the Year — contributed across the board for the Jaguars, finishing with four points, two rebounds, one assist and one steal over 17 minutes of action.

Meanwhile, Mortag — Brookfield Central's scoring and rebounding leader and the 2020 Freeman Girls Basketball Player of the Year — scored 14 points in 13 minutes while also recording four rebounds and one block.

IUPUI finished the year with a 24-5 record.

