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SPORTS

The **Verona Press**

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Boys hockey



Photo by Jack Miller

Verona head coach Joel Marshall hands Reece Cordray the runner-up trophy after the Wildcats' Division 1 state final against Notre Dame on Saturday, March 4, at Bob Suter's Capitol Ice Arena.

Wildcats' state run comes up silver

Notre Dame tops Verona to complete unbeaten state championship

JACK MILLER
Digital sports editor

Verona was desperately hoping for some state déjà vu.

The Wildcats won their last state championship in 2020 after an overtime win in the semifinals vaulted Verona to the state final

— where they knocked off top-seeded Notre Dame.

An overtime state semifinal victory over two-time defending state champion Hudson sent the Wildcats to the title game this season, but the top-seeded Tritons proved to be too much this time around.

The Verona boys hockey team fell 8-2 in the WIAA Division 1 state championship to Notre Dame on Saturday, March 4, at Bob Suter's Capitol Ice Arena in Middleton.

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Boys hockey



Photo by Jack Miller

The Verona boys hockey team celebrates after winning a Division 1 state semifinal against Hudson on Friday, March 3, at Bob Suter's Capitol Ice Arena in Middleton.

Moline's winner sends Verona to state final

Senior forward scores game-winning goal in OT against Hudson

JACK MILLER
Digital sports editor

Conrad Moline made sure to take a few mental notes while watching the girls state tournament on Thursday night — specifically when Autumn Cooper had a game-winning goal off a nifty move that led to Superior/Northwestern's 3-2 win over Hudson.

Moline made that exact move when he netted the game-winning goal during the Verona boys hockey team's 4-3 overtime win over Hudson in a WIAA Division 1 state semifinal on Friday, March 3, at Bob Suter's Capitol Ice Arena in Middleton.

With the game tied 3-3 in overtime, Moline won a chase down for the puck against a Hudson defender before flicking the puck to himself while moving his stick above the defenders

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Gymnastics

Deserving points

VA/ME captures first state championship, Rufenacht repeats in all-around

MARK NESBITT
Sports editor

The only problem for Verona Area/Madison Edgewood coach Rachael Hauser seemed to be hoisting a large gold trophy above her head for photo ops after the program won its first-ever WIAA Division 1 state championship.

The Wildcat/Crusaders racked up 146.1167 points to edge Franklin/Muskego by 0.8 points for the Division 1 state title on Friday, March 3, at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School. It marks the closest state meet since 2014 when the Franklin co-op clipped Burlington/Badger/Catholic Central by 0.52 of a point for the title.

"This is a crazy team that is really good," said Verona junior Annika Rufenacht. "We get along so well and I think that helps push each other more. It's so much more fun being on a team that you're friends with and you can push each other. It just makes you better."

It's only the 14th time in the history of the 53-year state meet that the Division 1 race came down to less than one point since the WIAA started a two level or division tournament.

The Wildcat/Crusaders had a 2.06-point lead over Franklin/Muskego going into the final rotation. There were two events VA/ME outscored Franklin/Muskego, including the floor exercise that led to a



Photo by Mark Nesbitt

Verona junior Annika Rufenacht tied junior Denise Ta for a WIAA Division 1 state championship on the balance beam with a score of 9.517 on Saturday, March 4, at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School.

1.35-point advantage that made up for the 0.81-point edge Franklin had on the uneven bars.

"In my opinion, there is no one more deserving than these girls," Hauser said. "They have worked so hard this season from where we

came from last year."

For an encore, VA/ME had six gymnasts combine to win 10 individual medals and three titles at the Division 1 state individual meet on Saturday, March 4.

Rufenacht repeated as the all-around state

champion — which goes to the state's top gymnast. Rufenacht scored 38.10 points, only 0.21 of a point away from setting a new state record.

Rufenacht captured state titles on the uneven

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Gymnastics

Hauser named state's coach of the year

VA/ME head coach helped Wildcat/Crusaders to first-ever state title

MARK NESBITT
Sports editor

Verona/Edgewood gymnastics coach Rachael Hauser could have left for the WIAA Division 1 state meet a day earlier, but she wasn't going to leave without her rising stars.

That's because Hauser was named the Wisconsin Gymnastic Coaches Association's Coach of the Year during a banquet

on Thursday, March 2, in Wisconsin Rapids, one day before the state meet was set to start at Wisconsin Rapids High School.

"It feels pretty cool," Hauser said. "I'm not going to lie. It was very unexpected. You usually see it go to coaches of some of the top teams in the state."

Hauser has coached VA/ME for 12 years. She has coached and judged club gymnastics for 14 years. Hauser has led the Wildcat/Crusades to six state meet appearances, one title and one state runner-up finish.

Verona senior Katie

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Photo by Mark Nesbitt

Verona Area/Madison Edgewood coach Rachael Hauser was named the Wisconsin Gymnastics Coach of the Year on Thursday, March 2, in Wisconsin Rapids. Hauser, right, coaches senior Ella Crowley before a balance beam routine at the WIAA Division 1 state meet on Friday, March 3, in Wisconsin Rapids.