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## ON A GREAT SEASON!



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# Spartans runners-up in 2A

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

DES MOINES – A remarkable run for the Grundy Center girls basketball team came to an end on Saturday night.

The Spartans battled through a tough Class 2A bracket to get back to the title game, but Treynor put together an impressive all-around performance in the 2A championship game, winning 48-30 and handing Grundy Center its only loss of the season.

At 24-1, the Spartans finish a two-year stretch with a 48-3 record and two state runner-up trophies. The seniors have also presided over four-consecutive NCL West titles.

But Saturday's loss still hurts, especially for a group of seniors that have played their final game together after a childhood spent playing together.

"The loss stings a lot, but playing with my teammates, for the people that root for us, there'll never be anything like it," Spartan senior Hailey Wallis said. "I'm blessed and grateful for the memories we do have together."

Wallis finished on the all-tournament team for the second consecutive season. Treynor's Konnor Sudmann was named the all-tournament team captain.

The Spartans struggled shooting the ball all night, particularly in the first

quarter with only three scores on 15 attempts. Grundy Center ended the game 10-of-35 shooting (28.6 percent).

Treynor made seven of nine shots in the first quarter, building a 15-7 lead after the first quarter and stretching out to a 26-15 half-time advantage.

"Grundy's defense is out of this world," Treynor head coach Joe Chapman said. "Ours was tough as well, and we were just a little more on offensively and hit some free throws at the end."

The Spartans held a 4-2 lead early in the first quarter on baskets from Kylie Willis and Brooke Flater. Willis finished with eight points to lead the Spartans, with Wallis scoring seven and Flater scoring six to go with a team-leading eight rebounds.

A Mandy Stogdill three-pointer on Treynor's next possession put the Cardinals ahead for good.

Turnovers and offensive rebounding hurt Grundy Center's chances in the second half. The Cardinals scored 11 points off Spartan turnovers and Grundy Center's offensive opportuni-



Grundy Center's Sydney Mathews looks for an opening in Treynor's defense during the Class 2A championship game. (Jake Ryder photo)

ties slowed to a crawl when Treynor's lengthy possessions were extended by offensive rebounds.

"We needed to lengthen the game as much as possible and there were a couple rebounds that we didn't



The Class 2A All-Tournament Team. From left: Captain Konnor Sudmann, Treynor; Hailey Wallis, Grundy Center; Emma Atwood, Central Decatur; Alli Masters, Central Decatur; Nicole McDermott, Cascade; Kayla Chapman, Treynor. (Jake Ryder photo)

get that would've given a chance to get back on offense," Lindeman said. "We had opportunities there and that hurts, since we've generally been so good on the boards."

Grundy Center was as

close as six points, 31-25, after a Reegan Zinkula 3-pointer before the end of the third quarter and a Flater transition bucket almost two minutes into the fourth. The Spartans got a stop on the other end

with a chance to get within at least four, but a Kayla Chapman steal led to two free throws from Sudmann and the Spartans didn't get closer than eight points the

CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 11

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The Grundy Center girls basketball team finished with a state runner-up trophy in Class 2A in a second-consecutive season ending in the state championship game. (Jake Ryder photo)

CONTINUED  
FROM PAGE 10

Sudmann finished with 17 points on 5-of-8 shooting and 7-of-9 free throws.

“They waited for the right shot,” Flater said, “and their shots weren’t falling, ours weren’t. ... They were the better team tonight.”

The memories that the

Spartan seniors have made with each other are countless over four strong years of basketball, as well as state-tournament runs in volleyball. Hailey Wallis, Maddie McMartin, Sydney Mathews, Kylie Willis, Brooke Flater, Reagan Zinkula, Sarah Lindeman, Cora Saak and Brittany Burroughs leave Wells Fargo

Arena knowing they’ve inspired future Spartans.

“The little girls in the crowd, they don’t see silver and gold,” Wallis said. “They see people that they look up to, that they want to be like. I’m so happy that as a group of seniors, we were able to lead this team and lead future generations of Spartan basketball, to show people

what they can accomplish.”

Lindeman added: “We did not finish the way we wanted, but not having the state championship trophy doesn’t diminish what we’ve done. All you can do is try, and these girls have done that game after game and again tonight. ... I’m so very proud of what they’ve done this year and over the course of four years.”

## Good Luck at state Lady Spartans!

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## Good luck Spartans!



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# Letting loose

## D-NH girls throttle Panorama, return to state

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

JOHNSTON – The bus carrying the Dike-New Hartford girls basketball team to Monday's regional final with Panorama made a stop on the way to Johnston High School.

"We all got off the bus and wanted to run laps," D-NH senior Carlee Dove said. "We were so excited. Everyone was just ready to play."

When D-NH head coach Bruce Dall finally unleashed his seventh-ranked Wolverines on No. 6 Panorama, all that energy transferred into a one-sided rout of the Panthers, a 50-15 win that sent Dike-New Hartford back to the state tournament.

D-NH will play Cascade at 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 26 in the Class 2A state quarterfinals at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines, a rematch of last year's quarterfinal won by Cascade, 61-44. The Cougars went on to win the state title.

D-NH led 13-6 after the first quarter and went on a startling 32-7 run over the course of roughly 16 minutes of game time between the middle of the first and third quarters. Panorama made just four field goals in the game.

Katie Knock scored 16 points to lead all scorers. Ellie Foster added 13 points

and Morgan Weber scored 11 points.

Fourteen first-half turnovers by the Panthers (22-2) hampered Panorama's offensive chances, resulting in a season-low offensive output and the most points the Panthers, averaging around 30 points allowed per game heading into Monday, had allowed all season.

"We got a lot of turnovers off the press and slowed them down," Dall said. "This exceeded my expectations in terms of how good Panorama is. But I'm not surprised. This is my 10<sup>th</sup> regional final as a coach and this is by far the best executed regional final I've seen a team of mine play."

Panorama freshman Payton Beckman scored a 3-pointer and Lydia Knapp scored two free throws to give the Panthers an early 5-2 lead. D-NH responded with a 7-0 run, with baskets from Foster and Knock and a Weber three-pointer. The Wolverines never trailed from that point on.

D-NH's depth helped keep the Wolverine defense running at a high level, including holding Panorama to just three second-half points.

"It's crazy that we have so many girls that can come in, score points, play good defense, and work for the team," D-NH senior Rylee Wessely said. "It shows that



The Dike-New Hartford girls celebrate their win over Panorama. (Jake Ryder photo)

what we do in practice is what shows on the court."

After getting knocked out in the quarterfinal round of last year's state tournament, Wessely added that the girls were determined to make a return trip. On their way to Johnston, they passed the off-ramp that would take them to Wells Fargo Arena.

They'll take that exit next Tuesday en route to a re-

match against the defending champs.

"Our girls show up for big games," Dall said.

D-NH 13 16 15 6 — 50

Panorama 6 6 1 2 — 15

**D-NH**—Ellie Foster 6 0-0 13, Sydney Latwesen 0 0-0 0, Rylee Wessely 1 0-0 2, Chloe Schipper 0 0-0 0, Taylor Kvale 0 0-1 0, Morgan Weber 3 3-4 11, Katie Knock 6 2-4 16, Sophia Hoffmann 2 0-0 4, Carlee Dove 2 0-0 4, Jill Eilderts 0 0-0 0, Abby Sohn 0 0-0 0. Totals 20-40 5-8 50.

#### D-NH stat leaders

**3-pointers:** Weber 2, Knock 2, Foster. **Rebounds:** Weber 9, Knock 4, Eilderts 3. **Assists:** Foster 4, Weber 3, Knock 3. **Steals:** Weber 4, Knock 2, Foster 2. **Blocks:** Dove 2.



D-NH's Katie Knock rises up to the basket for a bucket during the second half of Dike-New Hartford's regional final win against Panorama. (Jake Ryder photo)

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## Wolverines poised for next step

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

The Dike-New Hartford girls basketball team was riding a high down to Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines last year.

The Wolverines had just made school history as the first D-NH girls team to reach the state tournament, and had done it by knocking off North Linn, the top-ranked team in Class 2A.

Cascade played spoiler to the party, pulling away in a 61-44 state quarterfinal victory as the Cougars eventually won the 2A championship over Grundy Center.

D-NH (20-2) is back in the state tournament and facing Cascade (22-1) once again in the 2A state quarterfinals, set for an 8:30 p.m. tip on

Tuesday night. The winner gets either Grundy Center or Unity Christian in the semifinals on Friday morning.

"We didn't play our greatest last year," D-NH junior Morgan Weber said. "It's a good opportunity for us and it'll be a good matchup."

Weber, Ellie Foster and Katie Knock are the three junior standouts that have paced the Wolverines' success again this season. Foster averages 15.3 points, Knock 13.3, Weber 12.0. Weber is the team's top rebounder at 7.2 rebounds per game, Knock the team leader in assists (65) and steals (65) and Foster close behind in all of those categories after missing or seeing limited time in several games earlier in the season due to injury.

"Our guards are as long as any guards around," D-NH head coach Bruce Dall said. "And I think people are going to have a problem against that."

D-NH has won 17 in a row, dating back to a 50-35 loss on Dec. 11 against fellow 2A qualifier Aplington-Parkersburg.

Cascade's only loss this season came to Bellevue, 50-42, on Dec. 4.

"We had a sour feeling after the game last year," Dall said. "[A rematch] is something we welcome. ... Respectfully, we want a chance again."

A long stretch without a basket in last year's game hurt D-NH's chances against Cascade, with the Cougars going on a 19-3 run that the Wolverines couldn't

overcome despite stronger play late.

"That taught us we have to play all four quarters, all the time," Dall said. "The girls seemed a little less confident and we just wasted so much energy trying to get back into it. You have to keep playing, you can't keep your head down."

Foster went out with a pinched nerve after a school-record 31-point performance against Sumner-Fredericksburg in the season opener on Nov. 27.

"I had been working all summer with my team, we were ready to get going and then that setback came," Foster said. "It was really frustrating."

A commit to the UW-Green Bay women's program,

Foster did not play in a 55-40 loss to Jesup on Dec. 4 and saw limited time in the loss to A-P.

A couple of physical therapy and chiropractor sessions had Foster on the road to recovery.

"My friends just kept encouraging me," Foster said. "The coaching staff really helped when I came back to get back into it and it felt like I didn't miss anything."

Bench players for the Wolverines have made considerable leaps in Foster's absence, to the point where Dall sees the team as finding a way to spin a negative into a positive and coming out a better team on the other side. D-NH is playing some of its best basketball heading into the state tourney and delivered a comprehensive defensive perfor-

mance against sixth-ranked Panorama in the regional final, shutting down the sixth-ranked Panthers, 50-15.

"We went out there, worked hard and played some of the best defense we've ever played," Weber said.

Cascade's defensive reputation precedes the Cougars, a key component to Cascade's championship run last season. Only Treynor and Grundy Center have averaged fewer points allowed this season than Cascade's average of 33.2 allowed in a tough River Valley Conference.

"We know we've gotta play hard," Knock said. "We want to hopefully move on. ... I think we're getting used to the environment [of Wells Fargo] and we'll just work on getting rid of the nerves and trying to play our best."

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# Familiar feeling

## Cascade derails D-NH girls

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

DES MOINES – Bruce Dall felt some déjà vu on Tuesday night.

The Dike-New Hartford girls basketball team couldn't get the shots to keep up against Cascade's zone early on, and a Wolverine rally gave way to missed opportunities that put the defending Class 2A champions back in control of a 52-43 win over D-NH in a 2A state quarterfinal at Wells Fargo Arena.

The Wolverines' end with a 20-3 record, another strong season ended in the opening round of the state tournament by the aggressive, but fundamentally sound, Cougars.

"We played hard, the effort was there," said Dall, D-NH's head coach. "I can't definitively say we did anything better than last year against them. We missed some free throws early, didn't identify shooters, got back into the game like we did last year, they pulled away. ... Really came out the same as last year."

Ellie Foster led all scorers with 20 points, Morgan Weber added 14 points and Katie Knock scored 8 as D-NH's leading scorers. All three players return next year.

D-NH averaged 29.8 percent from the floor on Tuesday. The Wolverines whittled a 33-20 halftime deficit down to 37-34 midway through the third quarter, but missed multiple opportunities to tie the game and two turnovers late in the quarter led to Cascade buckets and a 43-34 disadvantage at the end of three quarters.

"It was kind of a struggle at the end



Dike-New Hartford senior Rylee Wessely puts up the shot during D-NH's game with Cascade. (Jake Ryder photo)

there," Weber said. "We wanted to break down their 2-3 zone and try to get to the lane, drive, kick it out if there were open shooters, but we

didn't have shots falling for us."

Sophia Hoffmann's jumper with 1:28 left in the game got D-NH within 48-43 but Cascade took care of



Dike-New Hartford's Ellie Foster (left) directs traffic during a state quarterfinal game with Cascade at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines. (Jake Ryder photo)

business at the free-throw line with four consecutive made free throws. The Cougars made 19-of-31 free-throw attempts, drawing 20 total

fouls from the Wolverines. D-NH made just seven of 14 free-throw attempts on 10 Cascade fouls.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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FROM PAGE 14

Foster knows the Wolverines gave up a little too much in the first two quarters of Tuesday's game.

"We had a lot of energy, maybe too much," Foster said. "We didn't think as well as we could have. ... We were more mentally locked down in the second half. ... We definitely fought back a little harder this year."

Knock added: "We were moving the ball with a lot more intensity and were hyping each other up when anything went our way."

All-state junior Nicole McDermott scored 15 points for the Cougars. Abby Welter led Cascade with 17 points and Jordan Simon added 13 points.

"They just kept slowly pulling away from us," Dall said. "...Definitely not the same intensity we had against Panorama. For whatever reason, the court seemed small there for the girls but seemed large here."

Rylee Wessely and Carlee Dove played their final games for D-NH after a successful senior season pitching in to help a team with a lot of young talent.

"They've done a great job," Dall said. "Dove has been so great in the middle there playing behind on the post to cover shooters and Rylee does a good job of fronting. ... They're such nice girls and they'll do well in life."

For the girls that are coming back, a senior class that will be led by Knock, Weber and Foster, Dall knows that a goal wasn't quite met.

"We wanted to get to state last year, we wanted to win state this year, but you can't always get what you want," Dall said. "They still have an extra notch, you're trying to win a state championship again next year with the people we've got. We'll keep working on that."

D-NH put in an offseason filled with team-building activities and consistent work in



The Dike-New Hartford bench cheers on a late rally during the game against Cascade in Des Moines. (Jake Ryder photo)

the gym to be back and better for the 2018-19 season, but that process continues anew.

"This showed us we need to get back in the gym and work hard," Weber said. "Gotta keep grinding and get better every day and come out with the same intensity next year."

D-NH 13 7 14 9 — 43

Cascade 18 15 10 9 — 52

**D-NH**—Ellie Foster 7-14 3-5 20, Morgan Weber 5-11 1-3 14, Katie Knock 2-11 2-2 8, Carlee Dove 0-1 1-2 1, Jill Eilderts 0-0 0-0 0, Sydney Latwesen 0-0 0-0 0, Rylee Wessely 0-3 0-0 0, Chloe Schipper 0-0 0-0 0, Taylor Kvale 0-2 0-2 0, Sophia Hoffmann 0-5 0-0 2, Abby Sohn 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 14-47 7-14 43.

**Cascade**—Nicole McDermott 3-6 9-10 15, Skylar Dolphin 0-4 2-4 2, Jordan Simon 4-7 2-6 13, Abby Welter 5-10 6-7 17, Rachel Trumm 0-1 0-4 0, Robyn Takes 0-1 0-0 0, Ally Hoffman 2-4 0-0 5. Totals 14-33 19-31 52.

**3-pointers:** D-NH 8-28 (Foster 3-9, Weber 3-7, Knock 2-8, Kvale 0-2, Hoffmann 0-2); Casc 5-16 (Simon 3-6, Welter 1-2, Hoffmann 1-2, Takes 0-1, McDermott 0-2, Dolphin 0-3). **Rebounds:** D-NH 30 (Weber 11, Foster 5, Dove 4, Knock 2, Eilderts 2, Kvale 2, Wessely, Team 3); Casc 30 (McDermott 6, Welter 6). **Assists:** D-NH 5 (Foster 3, Weber, Knock); Casc 9 (three with 2). **Steals:** D-NH 8 (Knock 3, Weber 3, Foster 2); Casc 11 (Simon 4, McDermott 3, Welter 3). **Blocks:** D-NH 0, Casc 3 (Simon 2, Welter). **Fouls:** D-NH 20, Casc 10.



D-NH's Morgan Weber fakes a move inside on a Cascade defender during a state quarterfinal game in Des Moines. (Jake Ryder photo)

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# Red pride

## A-P girls advance to state

**BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING**  
FORT DODGE – The Ap-  
lington-Parkersburg girls  
basketball escaped a chal-  
lenge from a motivated  
Ridge View team for a 62-55  
win in a Monday regional  
final at Fort Dodge Senior  
High School, advancing to  
the Class 2A state tourna-  
ment starting next week.

The Falcons are the sev-  
enth seed and will take on  
undefeated Central Decatur  
(22-0) in a 2A quarterfinal  
at 10 a.m. on Wednesday,  
Feb. 27 at Wells Fargo Are-

na in Des Moines.  
A-P (23-2) is making its  
first trip to state since the  
state semifinalist team of  
2013. Parkersburg’s 1932  
title is the only girls basket-  
ball title in the history of  
the two consolidated school  
districts.  
“This is just an awesome  
feeling,” A-P head coach  
Jason Berkey said. “These  
girls have worked extreme-  
ly hard the last year, year  
and a half. Summer work-  
outs, getting in the gym to  
do some extra time, and it’s  
gratifying to see the extra  
work pay off.”

“These seniors are the  
first group I had as fresh-  
men, and to see the success  
along the way and all the  
bumps and bruises, it was  
gratifying to see these kids’  
faces when they made the  
state tournament. I couldn’t  
be prouder of these young  
ladies.”  
Ridge View took an early  
second-half lead after the  
teams tied at 29 at halftime.  
A-P battled to a 42-40 lead

after three quarters and a  
pivotal 12-4 run pushed the  
Falcons’ advantage to 56-46  
with two minutes left in the  
game.  
“We persevered,” Berkey  
said. “We got key baskets  
at key times to extend the  
lead and made enough free  
throws with enough stops  
to stretch the lead out.”  
Sophia Jungling led the  
CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 3

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## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Falcons with 19 points, adding seven rebounds. Jungling was also 9-of-14 from the free-throw line for the Falcons; A-P shot 16-of-28 from the free-throw line as a team.

Megan Johnson and Jenna Bruns scored 12 points each. Bruns led the team with five steals and Johnson tied with Jaycie Ellis in grabbing eight rebounds each. Johnson added four assists as well.

Ridge View's season ended at 14-10 after an upset victory over No. 14 South Central Calhoun in the regional semifinal.

"They had a good game plan and did a good job of attacking our press," Berkey said. "You could tell they watched some tape. ... They were a very formidable opponent."

The Class 2A field includes two other teams from the North Iowa Cedar League: Grundy Center, the champion of the West, is the top seed and undefeated, playing Unity Christian in the quarterfinals. Dike-New Hartford, which shared the NICL East title with A-P, will face defending champions Cascade in the quarterfinals.

## Class 2A state quarterfinals schedule Tuesday, Feb. 26

Grundy Center vs. Unity Christian, 6:45 p.m.



Cascade vs. Dike-New Hartford, 8:30 p.m.

## Wednesday, Feb. 27

Central Decatur vs. Aplington-Parkersburg, 10 a.m.

Treynor vs. North Linn, 11:45 a.m.

A-P 16 13 13 20 — 62  
Ridge View 18 11 11 15 — 55

**A-P**—Sophia Jungling 5-11 9-14 19, Karson DeGroot 2-4 0-0 4, Megan Johnson 5-9 1-2 12, Jenna Bruns 4-11 3-9 12, Avari Everts 2-5 3-3 7, Ainsley Brungard 1-3 0-0 2, Jaycie Ellis 1-2 0-0 2, McKenna Oldenburger 2-4 0-0 4. Totals 22-49 16-28 62.

## A-P stat leaders

**3-pointers:** Johnson, Bruns. **Rebounds:** Johnson 8, Ellis 8, Jungling 7, Brungard 6, DeGroot 2, Bruns 2, Team 2, Oldenburger, Everts. **Assists:** Johnson 4, Bruns 3, Jungling 3, DeGroot 1, Ellis 1. **Steals:** Bruns 5, Jungling 2, DeGroot, Johnson, Everts, Brungard. **Blocks:** Brungard 2.



The Aplington-Parkersburg girls basketball team erupts in celebration after qualifying for the state tournament with a win over Ridge View. (Mike Thornhill/Mid-America Publishing photo)



Avari Everts holds up the "Ticket Punched" sign after Aplington-Parkersburg defeated Ridge View to qualify for the state tournament. (Mike Thornhill/Mid-America Publishing photo)

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Aplington-Parkersburg qualified for the state tournament for the first time since 2013. (Mike Thornhill/Mid-America Publishing photo)



The Aplington-Parkersburg girls celebrate a 3-pointer during the game against Central Decatur. (Jake Ryder photo)

# A-P girls realize state dream

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

Jenna Bruns remembers the end of her first basketball practice in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

"We made goals for ourselves and our team," Bruns said. "Making it to state once we got to high school was one of those goals."

The Aplington-Parkersburg girls basketball team, led by a senior trio of Bruns, Avari Everts and McKenna Oldenburger, achieved that goal last week, clinching a state berth for the fourth time in school history with a win over Ridge View. A-P's last appearance

was a state semifinal run in 2013.

"It's been a long time coming," Everts said. "We heard a lot about the boys, the boys, the boys, never a lot about the girls team. ... We got in the gym more this last summer and we've been working hard."

Now, the Falcons (23-2) prepare for Central Decatur at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 27, one of three undefeated teams left in the state – including Grundy Center and Class 1A qualifier Newell-Fonda. The Cardinals were state semifinalists last year and are 22-0 this season.

Are the Falcons underdogs?

A-P would relish being overlooked. The two losses this season came to regional finalist Sumner-Fredericksburg and state qualifier Dike-New Hartford.

"We made it down to state same as the other teams," Everts said. "I think it's going to be fun being in that atmosphere knowing that people might see us as the underdogs. That'll be a bigger drive."

The backbone of the Falcons lies in A-P's defense – averaging 35 points allowed per game and fueling their offense through turnovers off pressure defense.

Leading scorer Sophia

Jungling, a junior, averages 12.9 points and 4.6 steals per game in addition to 82 assists.

"Defense kept us in a lot of games this season," Everts said. "Shots will fall as long as we play defense."

Bruns contributes 10.3 points and 3.7 rebounds; Everts does a little bit of everything at 6.0 points, 3.3 rebounds and 2.1 assists per game. Juniors Ainsley Brungard and Jaycie Ellis are the most prolific rebounders with 4.7 and 4.3 rebounds per game, respectively.

The Falcons reached the regional semifinal last year, falling to Grundy Center in

a 53-42 battle. The Spartans went on to be 2A runners-up.

A-P head coach Jason Berkey wanted to make sure his girls would be ready for a chance to take the next step this year.

"We stepped up a little bit more this year, Berkey said this would be the year," Oldenburger said. "We got beat by a great team last year, but we wanted to show what we were made of. We've had more energy this year to try harder and get that extra push."

A-P took a late-season loss to the Wolverines, 72-52, in Dike on Feb. 4. The Falcons have bounced back to win their last five games, including avenging the loss to Sumner-Fredericksburg in the regular-season finale on Feb. 9.

"We're not overlooking anybody right now, but we're playing with a lot of confidence," Berkey said. "We play in a tough conference as has been proven in the last couple of weeks and we're ready

for the challenge. The girls are a gritty, tough group and they play for the right reasons, putting the team before themselves, and that can make great things happen."

Leading scorers Emma Atwood and Alli Masters return for the Cardinals this season. Atwood averages 21.2 points and 8.8 rebounds per game and Masters contributes 13.9 points and 5.7 rebounds.

According to BCMoore-rankings.com, Central Decatur's strength of schedule ranked 88<sup>th</sup> out of 96 teams in Class 2A. By comparison, A-P's schedule is ranked 33<sup>rd</sup>.

Nevertheless, the Cardinals' offensive average of 70.23 points per game trails only Grundy Center and North Linn among 2A qualifiers.

"We believe in ourselves," Bruns said. "Knowing the community believes in us too is something that really helps. ... We're here to get stuff done and compete."

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# Nothing guaranteed

## Cardinals end A-P's impressive season

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

DES MOINES – Sophia Jungling knew the Aplington-Parkersburg girls needed a good night's sleep for a Wednesday morning state quarterfinal.

But the way the Falcons started their clash with undefeated Central Decatur opened a lot of eyes.

Ultimately, the more-experienced Cardinals claimed victory on Wednesday morning, but the Falcons put Central Decatur to work, making them earn every point of the 57-49 final score.

Aplington-Parkersburg's season ends at 23-3, tying a school record for wins to go with an NICL East championship and the Falcons' first trip to state since 2013.

"This is once in a lifetime, you're not always guaranteed to play basketball at state," Jungling said. "For our teammates to say we had a chance to compete at the Well with a great crowd from Aplington-Parkersburg, it's something we're going to remember forever."

The Falcons overwhelmed the Cardinals out of the chute, scoring five 3-point baskets and carrying a 23-11 advantage in the second quarter to bring a massive sea of red to its feet on the A-P side of Wells Fargo Arena.



**Avari Everts of Aplington-Parkersburg (right) cuts to the basket during a state quarterfinal game against Central Decatur in Des Moines. (Jake Ryder photo)**

Megan Johnson had 13 of her team-leading 17 points in the first quarter.

"We wanted to come out strong," Johnson said. "We felt comfortable going out there and shooting."

Jenna Bruns scored eight points with four steals and five rebounds in her final A-P game. Avari Everts scored six points with five rebounds. Sophia Jungling scored eight points with two steals and two assists.

Central Decatur, a semifinalist in 1A last year, started the long road back through defensive pressure – the Cardinals hurried the Falcons

into miscues to the tune of nine turnovers in a quarter where A-P only made nine field-goal attempts, scoring on two of them.

"We try to play with our hair on fire," A-P head coach Jason Berkey said. "We're not good when we have to slow down and run a halfcourt offense. ... But we knew they'd come back and we just didn't want to panic. ... They made a few key shots when they needed to and we just didn't get enough stops."

The Falcons salvaged a 27-22 lead at halftime, but an Erica Kauzlarich 3-pointer with 4:56 left in the third quarter

gave the Cardinals their first lead of the game.

A-P trailed 38-34 after three quarters, but were able to hold the fort in the face of numerous turnovers; the Falcons committed 22 total on Wednesday.

The Falcons battled back with the first five points of the fourth quarter, capped by a Sophia Jungling steal-and-bucket for a 39-38. The Falcons traded the lead once more, but baskets from Alli Masters and Emma Atwood, sandwiched around a Falcons turnover, put the Cardinals ahead for good with 4:10 left.



**Aplington-Parkersburg's McKenna Oldenburger brings in a rebound during a state quarterfinal against Central Decatur in Des Moines. (Jake Ryder photo)**

The Cardinals missed some one-and-one opportunities to leave the door open a bit for A-P, but the Falcons struggled to keep control of their offensive opportunities against a Central Decatur team boasting six players at 5-feet-8 and taller. The Cardinals bowed out to Treynor

in the state semifinals.

"We had to slow down and pass the ball around and let the play come to us," Jungling said. "It was more difficult for us to dribble through that press with their length and good athletes."

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Berkey knows the Falcons showed what they could do against the athleticism and experience of Central Decatur.

“They’re winners, they’ll fight and claw and I knew we could battle back,” Berkey added. “We got our run but just couldn’t get enough stops. You tip your hat. ... It

doesn’t diminish what we accomplished all year.”

A-P’s junior class has the potential to make another run at state, though the onus will be on them to build on the framework built by seniors Jenna Bruns, Avari Everts and McKenna Oldenburger.

“It’s good knowing that we really helped change the culture,” Bruns said.

“Hopefully along the road, the girls take after what happened this year and have an inner drive to push them. ... I’m so proud of all of these girls.”

Berkey consistently credited this senior group as being a continuation of Ap-lington-Parkersburg’s girls athletics’ transformation into a program that can hang with the boys in terms

of a pedigree on a big stage.

“Their leadership is second to none,” Berkey said. “That’s the reason we do the things we do here. We’ve got a good group coming back – this only makes them hungrier.”

A-P 23 4 8 14 — 49  
Cent Decatur 11 11 16 19 — 57

A-P—Sophia Jungling 3-9 1-4 8, Karson DeGroote 2-4 0-0 5, Me-

gan Johnson 6-10 3-4 18, Jenna Bruns 2-6 2-2 7, Avari Everts 2-6 2-2 6, Ainsley Brungard 1-1 1-2 3, Jaycie Ellis 1-1 0-1 2, McKenna Oldenburger 0-4 0-0 0. Totals 17-41 9-15 49.

CD—Alli Masters 6-13 6-8 21, Abbie Ridgway 1-9 2-2 4, Riley Bell 0-2 3-4 3, Alaina Applegate 3-3 2-2 8, Maizee Lindsey 0-8 0-0 0, Emma Atwood 5-11 5-8 15, Erica Kauzlarich 2-5 0-0 6. Totals 17-51 18-24 57.

3-pointers: A-P 6-13 (Johnson

3-4, DeGroote 1-2, Jungling 1-4, Bruns 1-2, Everts 0-1); CD 5-25 (Masters 3-5, Kauzlarich 2-5). **Rebounds:** A-P 34 (Johnson 7, Bruns 5, Everts 5, Ellis 5, Brungard 3, Jungling, Oldenburger, Team 7); CD 31 (Atwood 8). **Assists:** A-P 9 (Everts 2, Johnson 2, Jungling 2, Bruns, Ellis, Oldenburger); CD 9 (Four with 2). **Steals:** A-P 7 (Bruns 4, Jungling 2, Ellis); CD 6 (Masters 2, Atwood 2). **Blocks:** A-P 0, CD 9 (Masters 3, Bell 3). **Fouls:** A-P 18, CD 14. **Fouled out:** A-P (Everts).

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## Fearless Spartans ready for last go-round

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

The seniors for Grundy Center girls basketball want to make the most out of their final trip to Wells Fargo Arena.

Almost a year has passed since the Spartans' four-point loss to Cascade in the Class 2A championship game.

That run to the title game established Grundy Center as a team to watch this year. The Spartans are undefeated at 22-0 and have been the top-ranked team in Class 2A since the beginning of the season.

For the Spartan girls, however, their only expectation is that they'll go all out to try and win their quarterfinal game against Unity Christian at 6:45 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

"We're going to give it all we've got," Spartan senior Hailey Wallis said. "Last year was more like, 'Oh my gosh, we're going to state!' It feels more like this year we're there to get things done."

The Spartans will need to

beat the Knights to get the ball rolling—Unity Christian already owns a recent win over fourth-ranked Cherokee, 82-71, in the regional final. Four players scored in double figures for Unity Christian that night, with Janie Schoonhoven (17.8 points per game) leading the way with 22 points.

"They've got good length and good athleticism across the board," Grundy Center coach Matt Lindeman said. "That's any coach's dream, small-school wise. They run the floor very well, they're very skilled."

Grundy Center's defense played a major role in the Spartans' success in last year's trip to Des Moines. None of the Spartans' three opponents scored more than 45 points. Hailey Wallis and Maddie McMartin were named to the all-tournament team, with Wallis setting a pair of records for most consecutive free throws made and total free throws made in a single game, going 18-for-18 against Cascade.

This year, the Spartans enter the state tournament

with the best scoring defense of the eight Class 2A teams remaining, but they also have the third best scoring average, behind North Linn and Central Decatur.

"Defense can put you in position to win a championship," Lindeman said. "Ultimately, your offense has to win it, and that's been the goal all along. ... This group has always been better defensively but our points per game continues to go up each year."

Grundy Center boasts extensive senior depth, with Wallis, McMartin, Sydney Mathews, Kylie Willis and Brooke Flater in the starting five and Cora Saak, Reegan Zinkula, Sarah Lindeman and Brittany Burroughs delivering in their roles off the bench.

Flater and Willis have come up big in the post in recent games to take some attention off Wallis, the team's leading scorer at 18.5 points per game. Flater and Willis average 10.5 and 10 points, respectively.

"We need to make sure we're rebounding and do-

ing our best blocking out to get big boards against Unity Christian," Willis said. "And we want to be on the offensive and helping out our team in that way, too."

McMartin has been impressed with how the Spartans have found ways to evolve as a team throughout the regular season.

"We weren't scared to try new things," McMartin said. "We know now that if someone's having an off night, we've got people that can step up into that role."

Grundy Center has had plenty of opportunities to show off its depth in multiple games decided by 35 points or more this season, but Wallis agrees that the bench will play a huge role on both sides of the ball.

"We've got four or five players that can come in and contribute," Wallis said. "... We just have to go out every single game not worrying about people's expectations."

"I know that this is going to be my last time playing with these girls. I'm gonna relish these moments and make the most out of it."

## All in Spartan girls endure Knights' challenge

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

DES MOINES—Unity Christian put together impressive scoring runs to start every quarter of Tuesday's state quarterfinal game against top-seeded Grundy Center.

Can't get rid of the Spartan girls that easy, though.

Grundy Center answered Unity Christian's final attempt to silence the undefeated Spartans with a roar and closed out a 49-45 victory in the Class 2A quarterfinals at Wells Fargo Arena.

Next up for the Spartans (23-0) is a rematch of last year's state championship game, but this time in the state semifinals: Cascade will play Grundy Center at 10 a.m. on Friday. Cascade defeated Dike-New Hartford 52-43 on Tuesday night.

The upset-minded Knights (19-6), having already dispatched fourth-ranked Cherokee to reach Des Moines, popped off nine unanswered points to start the game, scored the first six points of the second quarter, outscored the Spartans 7-2 to start the third quarter, and again went on a 9-0 run in the final frame.

But that just wasn't going to cut it against a Grundy Cen-

ter team determined to fight for their dreams.

"This team will not say die," Grundy Center head coach Matt Lindeman said. "We're going to fight to the end and we were fortunate to make enough plays at the end against a really good Unity Christian team."

With 3:06 left in the game, Lindeman called a timeout after a Spartan turnover and Grundy Center facing a 43-38 deficit.

"We upped our pressure defense," Lindeman said. "When we get after it a little more defensively it can help our offense for whatever reason. We moved the ball better."

The ensuing 9-0 run featured points scored by four different players, helped by two turnovers and 0-for-2 free-throw shooting by the Knights. Brooke Flater scored a bucket, Hailey Wallis drained an NBA-length 3-pointer, Sydney Mathews finished off a fast-break lay-up off a turnover and Cora Saak stopped and popped a jumper.

After the Knights closed back within two, 47-45, Wallis and Flater added a free throw each on back-to-back possessions to help seal the deal.

The Spartans shot just 34.6

CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 8

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Grundy Center's Brooke Flater (left) drives to the basket during a state quarterfinal with Unity Christian. (Jake Ryder photo)

CONTINUED  
FROM PAGE 7

percent from the floor on Tuesday but forced 19 Unity Christian turnovers and grabbed 13 offensive rebounds.

"There are so many other ways for us to get back in the game," Saak said. "We had some older players come back to talk to us last night, and they talked about

keeping your heart, determination and confidence, because that's something the other team can't take away from you. We focused on keeping our heads in the game."

Grundy Center knows a thing or two about outlasting teams at the state tournament, too, after some of the heart-stoppers they played last winter.

"I think our experience of playing down here helped us stay calm and to know what we do best," Willis said.

Eight Spartans scored in Tuesday's game, led by Willis and Reagan Zinkula with nine points each. Wallis had eight points, Saak scored seven points, McMartin and Flater scored 6 points each and Lainy Thoren and Sydney Mathews chipped in two



Grundy Center's Cora Saak (second from right) jumps for joy after time expired in the Spartans' state quarterfinal victory over Unity Christian. (Jake Ryder photo)

points each.

"This was a great team win," Wallis said. "There was no sense of panic, I didn't feel like we were ever down, it was just something we had to overcome. ... A sense of urgency kicked in, 'it's go time,' and we wanted this so bad and worked so hard for this."

Unity Christian 13 7 14 11 — 45

Grundy Center 13 10 15 11 — 49

UC—Justine Malenke 3-10 0-0

8, Brooke Zevenbergen 2-4 0-0 4, Corrina Timmermans 2-8 2-5 6, Jori Bronner 4-7 5-8 13, Janie Schoonhoven 6-12 0-1 12, Tyra Hulstein 1-2 0-0 2, Danielle Kroeze 0-1 0-0. Totals 18-44 7-14 45.

GC—Hailey Wallis 3-12 1-2 8, Maddie McMartin 2-5 0-0 6, Sydney Mathews 1-2 0-0 2, Kylie Willis 4-12 0-1 9, Brooke Flater 2-6 2-4 6, Reagan Zinkula 3-4 0-0 9, Sarah Lindeman 0-3 0-0 0, Cora Saak 2-6 2-2 7, Lainy Thoren 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 18-52 5-9 49.

**3-pointers:** UC 2-14 (Malenke 2-9, Timmermans 0-3, Hulstein 0-1, Kroeze 0-1); GC 8-27 (Zinkula 3-4, McMartin 2-5, Saak 1-4, Willis 1-2, Wallis 1-7; Mathews 0-1; Thoren 0-1; Lindeman 0-3). **Rebounds:** UC 33 (Schoonhoven 15); GC 34 (Wallis 10, Flater 7, Saak 4, Willis 3, Thoren 2, McMartin 2, Mathews 2, Zinkula, TEAM 3). **Assists:** UC 12 (Timmermans 6); GC 11 (Saak 3). **Steals:** UC 6 (Timmermans 3); GC 12 (Wallis 3, Mathews 3, Flater 3, McMartin, Zinkula, Saak). **Fouls:** UC 13, GC 13.

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# Second chance

## Spartans knock out defending champs, back in 2A title game

BY JAKE RYDER  
MID-AMERICA  
PUBLISHING

DES MOINES – Grundy Center girls basketball got its revenge Friday morning.

Now, the Spartans get their opportunity for redemption.

The Spartans got another crack at the Cascade team that defeated Grundy Center in last year's Class 2A title game, and Hailey Wallis led a third-quarter charge that paved the way for Grundy Center to unite for victory at the free-throw line, a 59-49 triumph over the Cougars on Friday morning to ensure there would be a new champion in Class 2A.

Grundy Center remains undefeated at 24-0. The Spartans will play Treynor (25-1) in the 2A title game at 5 p.m. on Saturday. Treynor held back a rally from Central Decatur for a 58-53 win on Friday afternoon. The Cardinals will be looking for some revenge of their own – Grundy Center defeated Treynor, 42-39, in last year's state semifinals.

Hailey Wallis led the Spartans with 25 points, adding seven rebounds and three steals.

"A theme for this season was redemption," Wallis said, "and it's perfect that we got to play against them to achieve that. ... There's not a lot of people that get to accomplish this [two state title games] ... But we're not done yet, we have one more we want to achieve."

Grundy Center trailed at



Grundy Center's Kylie Willis (34) reaches for a loose ball in the Spartans' state semifinal with Cascade. (Jake Ryder photo)

halftime, 17-16, but an 11-5 run in the third quarter got the Spartans rolling against Cascade's 2-3 zone that suffocated the Spartans in the paint in the first half. By the end of the quarter, the Spartans had outscored Cascade 21-9 and led by 11.

Cascade closed within four points in the fourth quarter and had two opportunities to make it a one-possession game, but a turnover and a missed layup eventually put Sydney Mathews on the line for the start of a free-throw parade, with Grundy Center hitting 13-of-16 free throws in the last 1:55.

"I'm constantly shooting free throws when I'm practicing on my own," said Reagan Zinkula, who was a perfect 4-for-4 at the line in the fourth quarter toward her

nine points on Friday. "We had to go to the line, be confident and go in there and do our thing."

Cascade coach Mike Sconsa added: "I dared them to hit their free throws, ... I was purposefully trying to get them there, extend the game as much as possible, hoping they'd miss, and they didn't."

Wallis, the state's record holder for consecutive free throws made and free throws made in a single state tournament game in last year's title game against Cascade, dropped in 10 more on 14 attempts on Friday. Maddie McMartin added 10 points and Brooke Flater had six points, 10 rebounds and three assists.

The Cougars never let the Spartans off the hook, whether it was relentless pressure

defense or defending the paint from Grundy Center's attacks. But the Spartans kept hammering Cascade, and eventually drew enough contact to get to the free-throw line early and often, overcoming 16 turnovers while coaxing 16 Cascade turnovers of their own.

"Mr. Lindeman told us to play our game and not worry about what they're doing," McMartin said. "We had to stay calm late and just play our game."

The Spartans also got another lift from freshman Lainy Thoren, who has slotted into a senior-dominated team to step up and contribute with valuable post minutes to keep seniors Kylie Willis and Flater fresh. Thoren finished with four rebounds, one assist and one steal.



Grundy Center's Hailey Wallis goes up for the shot during a state semifinal game with Cascade. (Jake Ryder photo)

"She provides a nice size presence," Lindeman said. "She can handle the ball so she helps us there – I'm proud of how she stepped up, it's not an easy situation."

As the only remaining undefeated team in Class 2A, surviving a challenging 2A bracket filled with tight matchups, Lindeman isn't taking Grundy Center's run for granted, even if a title has been the ultimate goal from day one.

"We find a way to grind it out," Lindeman said. "We're gonna find ways to get it done, and more often than not we have. ... We're happy, we're excited, but we still have one more job to do."

Cascade 11 6 9 23 — 49  
GC 12 4 21 22 — 59  
Casc—Nicole McDermott 8-11 10-10  
26, Skylar Dolphin 2-7 0-0 5, Jordan

Simon 2-8 1-3 6, Abby Welter 5-13 0-3 10, Rachel Trumm 0-7 2-2 2, Robyn Takes 0-1 0-0 0, Ally Hoffman 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 17-48 13-18 49.

**GC**—Hailey Wallis 6-11 10-14 25, Maddie McMartin 3-3 3-4 10, Sydney Mathews 1-3 2-2 5, Kylie Willis 1-7 1-2 3, Brooke Flater 1-5 4-8 6, Reagan Zinkula 2-6 4-4 9, Sarah Lindeman 0-2 1-2 1, Cora Saak 0-1 0-0 0, Lainy Thoren 0-1 0-1 0. Totals 14-39 25-37 59.

**3-pointers:** Casc 2-9 (Dolphin 1-3, Simon 1-4, Welter 0-1, Trumm 0-1; GC 6-18 (Wallis 3-7, McMartin 1-1, Mathews 1-2, Zinkula 1-5, Lindeman 0-1, Saak 0-1, Thoren 0-1). **Rebounds:** Casc 28 (McDermott 6); GC 38 (Flater 10, Wallis 7, Willis 5, Thoren 4, Saak 3, Zinkula 2, Mathews 2, McMartin 2). **Assists:** Casc 5 (McDermott 2); GC 8 (Willis 3, Flater 3, Thoren, Wallis). **Blocks:** Casc 7 (Simon 3); GC 1 (Flater). **Steals:** Casc 9 (McDermott 4); GC 9 (Wallis 3, Flater 2, Lindeman, Saak, Thoren, Mathews). **Turnovers:** Casc 16, GC 16. **Fouls:** Casc 22, GC 17. **Fouled out:** Casc (Dolphin).

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