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Girls' basketball preview: Royals looking to return to state

By Matt Thomas

The Hopkins girls' basketball team has been absent from the last two state tournaments after back-to-back losses to Minneapolis South and star Tayler Hill in the section finals.

With Hill now playing at Ohio State University, the Royals hope they can return to the state tournament for the sixth time since 2002.

"You have to stay injury free and get a few breaks here and there," Royals head coach Brian Cosgriff said. "It takes a lot of luck, it just does."

The Royals chances of making it back to the state tournament will be bolstered by a strong frontcourt line that includes 6 foot, 2 inch senior Hana Potter and 6 foot senior Tori Joransen.

Potter is a strong force inside, but is also a player who can step outside and hit a mid range jump shot. She is committed to playing for Washington State University next season.

"We've always had the philosophy that we want our best player to be our hardest worker and make everybody around her better and right now Hana is working hard at that," Cosgriff said. "Of course we want to get her the ball, but we're going to need other people to step up as well."

Joransen averaged around five points per game last year and gives the Royals some added size in the post. She is committed to playing for the University of Minnesota-Crookston next season.

"Tori has been on the varsity since ninth grade," Cosgriff said. "She's a great kid and a tremendous student. We're really lucky to have her in our program."

The Royals will also get contribu-

tions at the forward position from 5 foot, 11 inch junior Jill Greenfield and 6 foot, 2 inch sophomore Gracia Hutson.

The Royals are starting the season a little shorthanded in the backcourt as leading returning scorer, junior Brianna Williams, is still recovering from a torn anterior cruciate ligament.

"She'll be back on Dec. 15 and we'll try to work her in slowly as we go along," Cosgriff said.

In the meantime, the point guard duties will be shared by junior Julia Wiemer, junior transfer from DeLaSalle Chelsea Jacox and freshman Taylor Anderson.

At the off guard position the Royals are expecting big things from sophomore Sydney Coffey, who is the daughter of former University of Minnesota men's basketball player Richard Coffey.

"She's fast, she can jump and she's coachable," Cosgriff said. "We're real pleased with her progress so far. She's shooting the ball well so we like what we have with her."

Other players who could contribute at the guard position this season for the Royals include Sydney's younger sister and freshman Nia Coffey along with junior Ebony Livingston.

The Royals will be challenged early in the season thanks to a tough non-conference schedule that includes games against Centennial, Chaska, Eden Prairie, Apple Valley, Lakeville North and St. Paul Central.

"I think it's the toughest in the state," Cosgriff said. "Hopefully what doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

The Royals split their first two games of the season at a tournament hosted by Hamline University last weekend.

The Royals defeated Providence Academy 70-52 behind 18 points from Potter and 13 points from Sydney Coffey, but dropped their second game to Eastview by a score of 59-43.

The Royals will play their first two home games this week when they host Maple Grove on Tuesday, Dec. 1 and Centennial on Saturday, Dec. 5.



Hopkins senior forward Hana Potter shoots over the Providence Academy defense Friday at the Hamline Pat Paterson Memorial Thanksgiving Tip-Off Tournament. PHOTO: Mark Trockman

1/4/2010 1:58:00 PM

Girls' basketball: Potter pumps in 24 points to lead Royals to tourney title

By Matt Thomas

The Hopkins girls' basketball team was having an un-Hopkins like season coming into their home holiday tournament, the Dick's Sporting Goods Holiday Classic.

The Royals were 4-5 on the season and had yet to win back-to-back games. They had also suffered a couple of humiliating losses including a 26 point loss to Eden Prairie and a 23 point setback to Lakeville North.

The Royals hope all of that is now behind them after posting three straight victories on their home court to capture the tournament's first place trophy.

In the tournament's championship game, the Royals shot a sparkling 63 percent from the field and got 24 points and 11 rebounds from senior forward Hana Potter on their way to a 68-47 victory over Eastview.

The win also avenged an earlier season 59-43 loss to the Lightning.

"We needed this game from the standpoint that this was the first time all season long that we've been healthy," Royals head coach Brian Cosgriff said. "It's our floor, our tournament and we wanted to do well no question about it."

The Royals were playing with starting junior guard Brianna Williams for the first time all season during the tournament after Williams spent the first part of the season recovering from offseason knee surgery.

Williams scored 12 points in her season debut against St. Paul Central and added 10 points in the Royals' victory over Eastview.

"The kid brings a lot of experience, poise with the basketball, defends and rebounds the basketball," Cosgriff said. "So we're really happy to have her back."

Williams got the Royals off to a good start against Eastview by scoring the game's first six points.

The Royals led 9-0 five minutes into the game and never looked back. It took the Lightning almost eight minutes to record their first field goal and by that time the Royals held a double digit lead.

Potter scored 10 points in the first half including a short jump shot in the lane as time expired to give the Royals a 34-20 halftime lead.

Potter continued to assert herself on the blocks in the second half as she finished the game 10-of-13 from the field.

The 6-foot, 2-inch senior who is headed for Washington State University next year is averaging 15.8 points per game this season.

"She showed tremendous leadership out there in terms of doing a good job on the boards," Cosgriff said. "She shot the basketball real well and made some free throws when we needed her to. She's really started to turn the corner for us."

The Royals held the Lightning to 47 points and 31 percent shooting for the night. They did so without pressuring the ball full-court, which is typically a staple of Hopkins basketball under Cosgriff.

"We didn't pick them up full court because they are very quick," Cosgriff said. "In all fairness they were without one of their top players in Haley Thomforde and that really hurts them."

Defense was something that was lacking in most of the losses the Royals have suffered so far this season.

"We needed to take care of the basketball and we also needed to do a better job of stopping people defensively," Cosgriff said. "We just weren't stopping people at all. You have to do those two things if you want to compete with the Lakevilles and Eden Prairies and Eastviews and Chaskas."

The Royals defeated St. Paul Central 64-56 in the first round of the tournament behind 15 points from Potter.

Then they defeated Osseo 55-47 in the semifinals as Potter led all scorers again with 23 points.

With the three victories in the holiday tournament the Royals are now 7-5 with a four game winning streak under their belts.

They will look to build on that streak this week when they host New Prague on Thursday, Jan. 7.



Hopkins senior forward Hana Potter scores against Osseo Dec. 29 during the Dick's Sporting Goods Holiday Classic. The Royals beat the Orioles 55-47.
Photo: Mark Trockman

Lakeshore Weekly News

Covering The Greater Lake Minnetonka Area

3/1/2010 3:19:00 PM

Hopkins snares No. 1 seed in the section

By Matt Thomas

Another February has come and gone and that can mean only one thing: it's time for March Madness. Section tournaments in girls' basketball will start this week with some familiar teams favored to reach the state tournament.

Section 6-4A has come down to Hopkins and Minneapolis South the last couple of years and if the seeds hold true that scenario could occur again.

Hopkins earned the No. 1 seed in the section after posting an 18-8 regular season record. After going 3-5 during their first eight games, the Royals won 15 of their last 18 games down the stretch.

They were also the only team to hand the Edina Hornets a loss this season when they prevailed 60-56 on Feb. 12.

The Royals are led by senior center Hana Potter, who averages 14.1 points per game. Junior guard Bri Williams missed the first 10 games of the season due to a knee injury, but has averaged 9.5 points since returning to the lineup.

Another knee injury will force sophomore forward Sydney Coffey to miss the rest of the season. Coffey is the Royals' third leading scorer on the season at 8.7 points per game.

The Royals should have no trouble advancing to the semifinals as they face No. 8 seed Robbinsdale Cooper in a quarterfinal game at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3. The Hawks are just 1-21 on the season.

While Minneapolis South received the No. 2 seed with a record of 19-6, the Minnetonka Skippers garnered the No. 3 seed after compiling a record of 17-9.

The Skippers were in line for one of the top two seeds, but struggled down the stretch by losing four of their last six games including two three-point losses to Wayzata.

Like Hopkins, the Skippers have been bit by the injury bug as leading scorer Katy Winge was lost for the season when she tore her ACL in a Feb. 16 game against Edina.

The junior guard was averaging more than 16 points per game before the injury.

With Winge on the bench in street clothes, the Skippers

will look for players like junior Ali McArthur (11.8 ppg) and freshman Joanna Hedstrom (9.8 ppg) to carry the load.

The Skippers will face No. 6 seed Minneapolis Southwest (11-14) in a quarterfinal game at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3.

No. 2 seed Minneapolis South and No. 7 seed St. Louis Park are also on the same side of the bracket as Minnetonka.

On the opposite side of the bracket along with Hopkins are the No. 4 seed Wayzata Trojans.

The Trojans will take their 13-13 record into a quarterfinal game against the No. 5 seed Robbinsdale Armstrong (14-11).

The Trojans swept the regular season series against the Falcons, winning 59-42 on Jan. 29 and 52-49 on Feb. 19.

The Trojans have three players who average in double figures including sophomore Marissa Grossfeld, who leads the team at 14.0 points per game.

Senior guard Kristi Kuhn is averaging 12.8 points per game and sophomore Kayla Timmerman is averaging 10.1 points per game.



3/8/2010 3:27:00 PM

Wayzata upsets Hopkins in section semifinals

By Matt Thomas

Most people wouldn't have given the Wayzata girls' basketball team much of a chance in the Section 6-4A semifinal game against the Hopkins Royals on Saturday, March 6.

The Royals swept the regular season series in convincing fashion, including a 66-51 victory on Jan. 22 and a 74-48 victory on Feb. 16.

To have a chance, the 14-13 Trojans needed to play their best game of the season and that's exactly what happened.

They got 23 points from sophomore forward Marissa Grossfeld and 13 points from sophomore forward Kayla Timmerman as they shocked the top seeded Royals by a score of 67-64.

Senior guard Erin Krause also came up big for the Trojans by scoring a season-high 11 points in the victory.

Senior Hana Potter and freshman Nia Coffey led the Royals (19-9) offensively with 17 and 14 points respectively.

The win moves the Trojans into this week's section final game where they will face the No. 2 seed Minneapolis South (21-6).

The Tigers advanced by defeating No. 3 seed Minnetonka 58-42. The Skippers (18-10) held a 25-23 lead at halftime, but were outscored 35-17 by the Tigers in the second half.

Junior Cassidy Smith was the lone Skipper to score in double figures with 16 points. Senior guard Tyisha Smith led the Tigers with a game-high 17 points.

The Trojans and Tigers will meet in the section final at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 11 at Osseo High School with a state tournament berth on the line.

While Wayzata has never been to a state tournament in school history, the Tigers have played in four of the last five state tournaments.

They won the Class 4A title last year behind a record-setting performance by Tayler Hill who is now playing for Ohio State University.

Hopkins girls face uphill battle

BY JOHN SHERMAN • SUN NEWSPAPERS
December 19, 2009

How unusual is it that the Hopkins High girls basketball team stands 3-5 after eight games?

Imagine birds flying north for the winter.

Imagine Ford making all of its cars with the steering wheel on the right.

Imagine the Vikings winning a Super Bowl.

Wisdom tells us that anything can happen in sports, but this kind of record is highly unusual for Hopkins coach Brian Cosgriff, who usually compiles a season record of 24-2 or 25-1.

"We only have one returning starter [Hana Potter] on the floor right now," Cosgriff noted in an interview last week. "I'm pleased with our work ethic, but I knew it wouldn't be easy. We are missing our best player [junior guard Brianna Williams], who has been out with a knee injury."

The Royals have played their usual tough schedule, which included a game with the state's top-ranked Class 4A team, Lakeville North, Friday, Dec. 18.

Potter led Hopkins with 15 points and Nia Coffey added seven points.

Lakeville North overwhelmed the Royals 58-35 after bolting to a 38-10 halftime lead.

Earlier in the week, Monday, Dec. 14, the Royals won 87-67 over Apple Valley.

Hopkins' scoring was balanced. Sydney Coffey led the way with 15 points. Others in double figures were Potter with 13, Tori Joransen with 12, Chelsey Jacox with 11 and Jill Greenfield with 10. Nia Coffey added nine points.

Although Hopkins has been struggling to win games, the Royals still have the respect of Associated Press pollsters, who have ranked them 10th in the state in Class 4A.



Injuries affect local girls hoops teams

BY JOHN SHERMAN • SUN NEWSPAPERS
February 21, 2010

Hopkins High's girls basketball fortunes are still rising as the section playoffs approach.

After going 4-5 in their first nine games, the Royals are on a hot streak that has seen them improve to 17-7.

The Royals added their latest win Friday, Feb. 19, when they defeated Minnetonka 71-56 in a Classic Lake game at Minnetonka High's West Gym.

Lately, the injury jinx has hit both teams. Hopkins lost starting forward Sydney Coffey for the season with a knee injury. Katy Winge of Tonka has also been sidelined for the season with a torn ACL.

"If you can make it through the season without an injury, it's an exception to the rule," said Hopkins head coach Brian Cosgriff. "At the same time, if you don't have one of your good players hurt, you're probably going to have a good season."

In the absence of her older sister, Hopkins ninth-grader Nia Coffey stepped into a starring role Friday night. She led the Royals with 19 points and nine rebounds.

Hana Potter and Brianna Williams each added 14 points for the winners.

Tonka guards Joanna Hedstrom and Ali McArthur scored 17 and 10 points, respectively.

"Our kids worked hard, but we couldn't get the big stops against either Hopkins or Edina [in a 66-58 loss Tuesday, Feb. 16]," said Minnetonka head coach Bart Inniger.

Tonka has a Classic game with Wayzata at 7:15 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26, at the Wayzata High gym.

"Wayzata beat us in overtime earlier this season," said Inniger.

Of course, the Skippers will miss Winge's contributions in the rematch.

"Katy did so many little things," said Inniger. "And not having her in the lineup changes our subbing pattern. Luckily, we still have players who can score - Hedstrom, McArthur, Jill Tichy, Sarah LaCroix and Cassidy Smith."

Trojans upset Hopkins in girls hoops playoffs

BY Nick Clark • SUN NEWSPAPERS
March 11, 2010

For 18 minutes of basketball Saturday afternoon inside Osseo High School, Wayzata proved it was up to the challenge.

Then, in a span of nine minutes, the Trojans proved they were up to something more.

Fourth-seeded Wayzata outlasted and upset top-seeded Hopkins Saturday, March 6, using a second-half 25-6 tear to take control before coming up with one final surge that ended with a 67-64 final in the Class 4A, Section 6 girls basketball semifinals.

In doing so, Wayzata advanced to face second-seeded Minneapolis South 7 p.m. Thursday, March 11 back at Osseo. South beat Minnetonka Saturday 58-52 in the second Section 6 semifinal game.

Chances are that one didn't live up to its predecessor.

"What a basketball game," said Wayzata head coach Mike Schumacher. "It was unbelievable how many shots went in the basket. It wasn't the most perfectly played game, but the intensity level from start to finish was pretty special."

Hopkins took a 31-30 lead into the locker room after a first half that was every bit as tight as the score would indicate. The Royals scored six of the first seven second half points to go up 37-31 with 16:11 to play, but it would be nearly 10 full minutes until their next shout would fall.

Meanwhile, Wayzata couldn't miss, as the Trojans went from down six to up 13 with 6:10 left on the clock.

Sophomore Kayla Timmerman scored 11 points, and sophomore Marissa Grossfeld netted 10 as Wayzata went on a 25-6 run to go up by double-digits.

"When we needed a stop we couldn't do it," said Hopkins head coach Brian Cosgriff.

But when Hopkins needed buckets, they found a way. The Royals answered Wayzata's extended run with a five-minute spurt of their own. Sophomore Nia Coffey buried a three to get the lead to 10, and by the time the game clock read 1:05, Hopkins had turned that 56-43 deficit into a 64-63 lead after Brianna Williams banked one in off the glass.

The Trojans weren't finished though. With both teams out of time-outs, Grossfeld came right back down the court and got Wayzata the lead back, and then after forcing a turnover, the sophomore hit a pair of free throws for the last of two of what was a game-high 23 points to send Wayzata into the Section 6 final Thursday.

"We are so excited for the next game," said Wayzata senior Erin Krause, who scored 11 points. "We wanted it more today, and we were willing to work for it. That's what got us to the next game."

Hopkins had no argument towards that assessment.

"They wanted it more than us and they deserved to win the ballgame," said Cosgriff, whose team finished 19-9. "We just didn't defend worth a darn. If we defend, we'll be fine, but we just didn't come ready to play."



Edina girls win at Hopkins

BY JOHN SHERMAN - SUN NEWSPAPERS
January 19, 2010

It was a happy bus ride home for the Edina High girls basketball team, which broke a 19-game losing streak against the Hopkins Royals Friday, Jan. 15, at Hopkins Lindbergh Center.

"We hadn't beaten Hopkins since 2001," said Edina head coach Matt Nilsen following the 70-44 victory. "Of course, we're pleased to finally beat them. We did a lot of good things tonight, and we shot 54 percent from the floor."

Sophomore guard Katybeth Biewen led the way for Edina with 26 points, as she sank nine of 11 shots from the field.

Hopkins chose to concentrate on stopping Edina's all-conference guard Taylor Young, and that created openings for Biewen and the other Edina players. Young scored only four points, but she helped the team with her passing and defense.

"Jamie Bresnahan played a fantastic game," said Nilsen. "She made five of her first six shots and finished with 14 points.

"Guards M.C. McGrory and Christine Pastor played a ton of minutes off the bench."

Amanda Alexander was the Hornets' third-leading scorer with 10 points.

Edina charged to a 34-22 halftime lead and the Royals never got closer, as the Edina girls made a 17-3 run to start the second half.

Tori Joransen led Hopkins with 11 points and Hana Potter, who started her high school career at Edina before transferring, scored nine points.

Hopkins head coach Brian Cosgriff said, "I take my hat off to Edina. Biewen played an amazing game. If you had told me we'd hold Young to four and lose this way, I wouldn't have believed it.

"This was the best I've ever seen an Edina team play in the years I've coached. Really, they outplayed us in every facet of the ballgame."

While he was disappointed with Edina's victory margin, Cosgriff knows it's a long season.

"If you want to be the best, it takes a ton of work," he said. "Our girls are hard workers. This one wasn't easy for us to take, but we'll come back from it."

Hopkins will get another shot at Edina when the teams play their Classic Lake rematch Friday, Feb. 12, at Edina High.



Hopkins girls upset Edina, 60-56

BY JOHN SHERMAN • SUN NEWSPAPERS
February 13, 2010

Brianna Williams, junior guard for the Hopkins High girls basketball team, has been on the comeback trail for two months after undergoing off-season knee surgery.

An all-conference performer last season, she began to look like her old self Friday, Feb. 12, as she scored 18 points in the Royals' 60-56 upset win at Edina.

"It was a packed house ... just a great atmosphere for high school basketball," said Hopkins head coach Brian Cosgriff. "Edina beat us by about 30 the first time we played them, but their shooting wasn't as hot this time. Bri [Williams] is not at full strength yet, but she's playing well, getting better every day. In addition to her scoring, she really did a nice job defensively."

Williams was matched up against Edina's sophomore star, point guard Katybeth Biewen. Through a tenacious effort, she was able to hold Biewen to seven points.

"We wanted to make sure Biewen had to work for everything she got," said Cosgriff. "In our first game against Edina, she scored 26 points."

Hopkins' scoring was balanced in the rematch. In addition to 18 points from Williams, the Royals got 14 points from Sydney Coffey and 12 from Hana Potter. Tori Joransen chimed in with six points.

Edina came into the game with 21 straight wins, but now it's Hopkins that has the winning streak (5 in a row). After a slow start, the Royals are 15-7 overall and a game behind in the Classic Lake standings. Hopkins entered the current week 3-2 in league play and Edina was 4-1.

The last week of the regular season will be critical to Hopkins' title hopes.

As this week's edition went to press, the Royals were playing Wayzata in a Classic Lake contest Tuesday, Feb. 16.

At 7:15 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19, the Royals will play Minnetonka at Hopkins Lindbergh Center.

Hopkins will wrap up conference play in a game against Armstrong at 7:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23, at Armstrong High School.

SUN SAILOR

Hopkins girls blitz Wayzata

BY JOHN SHERMAN - SUN NEWSPAPERS
January 28, 2010

Hana Potter, a 6-foot-2 senior center, scored 19 points Friday, Jan. 22, in the Hopkins High girls basketball team's 66-51 victory over Wayzata.

"We need Hana to play large every night," said Hopkins head coach Brian Cosgriff. "She had a good game, but was hesitating on some of her moves."

Sophomore Sydney Coffey added 14 points for the Royals and point guard Julia Wiemer had her highest-scoring game of the season, with 12 points.

Kristi Kuhn led the Wayzata attack with 19 points.

"According to our stats, we forced Wayzata into 36 turnovers," Cosgriff said. "But in the first half we had quite a few turnovers ourselves. Kristi Kuhn can really shoot. She was five for eight on three-pointers."

"We had some success picking Wayzata up full-court in the second half."

"Julia Wiemer played very well. She had 12 points and only one turnover."

The Royals will continue their Classic Lake schedule at 7:15 p.m. Friday, Jan. 29, at Minnetonka.

SUN SAILOR

Hopkins girls push past New Prague

BY JOHN SHERMAN - SUN NEWSPAPERS
Published: Friday, January 15, 2010 1:36 AM CST

Sydney Coffey and Hana Potter led a team effort, as the Hopkins High girls basketball squad pushed past New Prague 58-50 Thursday, Jan. 7, at Hopkins Lindbergh Center.

"New Prague has two tall girls that are very good," said Hopkins head coach Brian Cosgriff. "We wanted to make it a full-court game ... but we weren't able to do that until there were about 10 minutes left."

Coffey, a sophomore guard, played one of her best games of the season, scoring 13 points.

"Sydney had a great game," said Cosgriff. "She made eight of nine free throws and played tough defense."

Potter, a 6-foot-2 senior center, chipped in 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Other high scorers for Hopkins were Tori Joransen with 10, Ebony Livingston with nine and Chelsey Jacox with seven.

Brianna Williams, who scored five points, is coming back after knee surgery.

"She is still trying to get her legs under her," said Cosgriff. "She is gaining a little more every day."

Next for the Royals is a 7:15 p.m. Classic Lake Conference game Friday, Jan. 15, at Hopkins Lindbergh Center.

"Edina is 12-0 this season," said Cosgriff. "They are always a big game on our schedule."

SUN SAILOR

Hopkins girls team rises to the challenge

BY JOHN SHERMAN • SUN NEWSPAPERS
Published: Thursday, December 31, 2009 6:40 PM CST

Year after year, Dick's Sporting Goods Classic is one of the premier girls basketball tournaments in Minnesota.

Most years, the host team, Hopkins, is one of the favorites. However, this year's Royal team came into the event as a decided underdog, based on its 4-5 record.

Three games later, Hopkins was 7-5 and had the Dick's Sporting Goods championship trophy in hand.

Hopkins opened with a 64-56 win over St. Paul Central Monday, Dec. 28, at Hopkins Lindbergh Center.

The game marked the return of Hopkins' all-conference junior guard, Brianna Williams, who missed the first nine games of the season following knee surgery.

Williams scored 12 points and Hana Potter had 15 for the Royals.

"It helps to have Brianna back," said Hopkins head coach Brian Cosgriff. "She knows what we're doing, and she brings a presence to the floor with the way she takes care of the ball."

Williams only scored three points in the semifinals, as Hopkins defeated Osseo 55-47. She helped get the ball to Potter, who had 23 points. Ebony Livingston scored nine points for Hopkins, while Tori Joransen and Sydney Coffey each netted eight points.

Hopkins was matched against a quick Eastview squad in the finals, but with a height advantage in the post, the Royals were able to post an easy 68-47 victory.

"We decided to go inside more and make our possessions longer," said Cosgriff. "It wasn't really a 21-point game. We were up 10-11 points for much of the second half, and then Eastview had to foul at the end."



Potter trumped her semifinal effort with 24 points in the finals. Joransen added 12 points and Williams scored 10. Hopkins' balance was apparent, as Coffey again scored eight points and Jill Greenfield chipped in with six.

"We have made some improvements," Cosgriff said after the tournament. "But we still have a lot of work ahead."

Royal girls team rolls past Raiders

BY JOHN SHERMAN - SUN NEWSPAPERS
December 31, 2009

Hopkins High's girl basketball team relied on Hana Potter in a 56-39 victory Tuesday, Dec. 22, at Roseville Area High School.

The Royals charged to a 35-19 halftime lead and maintained a double-figure lead throughout the second half. With the win, Hopkins improved to 4-5 overall.

Potter, a 6-foot-2 senior center, led the Hopkins attack with 19 points. Sydney Coffey added eight points and Christine Jacox scored seven for the Royals.

"Hana did a nice job," said Hopkins head coach Brian Cosgriff. "She hit some jumpers and was also able to score in the lane. Defensively, she did a good job against their center, Megan Stuart."

Hopkins has played a brutally tough schedule thus far, and the Roseville game provided some relief.

"Roseville is a good ballclub, but it is not in the same class as some of the teams we've been playing; Eden Prairie, Lakeville North and some others," Cosgriff said.

Hopkins' depth was one of the key factors in the victory over the Raiders. Eight different players provided points.

During the first third of the season, Hopkins was forced to play without its star guard, Brianna Williams, who was sidelined following knee surgery.

Coach Cosgriff said he expected Williams to return for the Dick's Sporting Goods Holiday Classic, which was in progress Tuesday, Dec. 29, as this edition went to press.



With her quickness, experience and scoring ability, Williams is expected to add another dimension to the Hopkins attack.

"I am planning to bring Brianna back slowly," Cosgriff said. "She has some practice time under her belt, but we have to be cautious. Hopefully, sometime in January, she'll be ready to start."

Next for the Royals is a 7:15 p.m. game with New Prague Thursday, Jan. 7, at Hopkins Lindbergh Center.

Hopkins girls' basketball: An eye opener

A tough schedule has the Royals in an unusual position:
Learning on the fly.

By BRIAN STENSAAS, Star Tribune
January 12, 2010

Asked if last week's tight 58-50 victory over Class 3A, No. 5 New Prague -- won mostly thanks to free throws down the stretch -- had opened his eyes at all about this year's team, Hopkins girls' basketball coach Brian Cosgriff actually did pop his eyelids.

"We've had our eyes opened a lot this year," he said. "They're wide open every game."

A quick peek at the schedule shows why.

The Royals this season have done battle with a host of talented programs. Over a three-week stretch from Nov. 28 to Dec. 18, Hopkins, rated No. 6 in Class 4A, took on and lost to No. 7 Eastview, No. 8 Maple Grove, No. 3 Chaska, No. 4 Eden Prairie and top-ranked Lakeville North.

Combined, those five teams entered this week with 10 losses.

After going 26-3 the past two seasons, the Royals entered this week at an unfamiliar 8-5, and it doesn't get any easier. Hopkins continues its tough set of games Friday against Class 4A, No. 2 Edina, perhaps the surprise of the season so far at 12-0.

"We're not here to make excuses or anything like that but I'll compare our schedule to anybody's," Cosgriff said. "I look at it and kind of go, 'Well, this sends a message that we need to get better as a ballclub. But, yet, we're still not a bad team.'"

It is, however, one that is learning on the fly.

Senior forward Hana Potter is the Royals' lone fully healthy starter back from last year's team, which lost to eventual state champion Minneapolis South in the Class 4A, Section 6 championship. Guard Bri Williams tore her ACL during an AAU game in May and was out until Dec. 28.

At 15.4 points per game, Potter is the only Royals player to average double digits in scoring and is the team's spark plug on both ends of the court. The rest of the players are still falling into place.

"The bar is set incredibly high at Hopkins; the kids understand that," Cosgriff said. "With the schedule we're playing, this wasn't unexpected. People just have to understand we're young."

Whether it's because they grew up as gym rats in the area or have heard



StarTribune

from former and current players and coaches, Hopkins' players know the history.

The Royals advanced to state each year from 2002 to 2006, winning two titles ('04 and '06) and finishing runner-up in another ('05).

To get back for the first time in four seasons, Hopkins has to get through a Section 6 that has a different feel. South no longer has juggernaut Tayler Hill (31.4 points per game) on its roster. Only Minnetonka (10-3, ranked No. 8 in Class 4A) joins Hopkins as ranked teams in the section. The crosstown rivals square off Jan. 29 in what could be a section show-down preview.

"We've said all season, 'Destination Target Center,'" Williams said. "We're all upset about [the losses], but we know we can get better, keep progressing and keep working on it. We have some time before it really counts."

If not this year, the future looks bright.

Potter and forward Tori Joransen (9.1 points per game) are the only Hopkins regulars who will not be back next season. Potter, who went to state as a freshman while playing for Edina, is as much a teacher as she is a player this season. She wants to ensure the younger players carry on the winning tradition.

"Our record maybe isn't as good, but we're having fun on this team," Potter said. "It's been tough, but we just have to stay patient and be positive."

It's far too early to tell what the rest of this season will hold, let alone next year. But a return to prominence might not be that far off.

"What you do in January and February doesn't count as much as what you do in March," Cosgriff said. "And lately we've been watching in March. Our goal every year is to be playing in March, and to do that you have to work extremely hard and make some sacrifices, and the kids know that."

StarTribune

Girls' basketball roundup: Wayzata pins upset on Hopkins
March 7, 2010 - 7:59 AM

SECTION 6: The roar of the Wayzata Trojans echoed throughout the gym with every basket. Blue and gold covered the bleachers as Trojans fans cheered their team to a 67-64 upset victory over top-seeded Hopkins in the semifinals Saturday afternoon at Osseo High School.

The No. 4-seeded Trojans lost both of their regular-season games against Hopkins (19-9).

In their third meeting of the year, neither team controlled the game in the first half. The Trojans trailed by one point after the first half but were able to rally in the second.

"We just made several critical shots, had critical rebounds on the defensive side," Wayzata coach Mike Schumacher said. "It was a pretty gutsy effort."

The Trojans led by 10 with less than six minutes remaining when Hopkins staged a comeback. The Royals took the lead on a basket by Brianna Williams with about a minute left to play.

Sophomore Marissa Grossfeld made a layup with 45 seconds to play, putting the Trojans ahead by one. She was fouled with 32.5 seconds left, and hit two huge free throws for the final points.

Grossfeld finished with a game-high 23 points, leading four Wayzata (15-13) players in double figures.

StarTribune

Hopkins makes a late move after fouls weaken New Prague

By BRIAN STENSAAS, Star Tribune

Last update: January 8, 2010 - 1:09 AM

Each standing more than 6 feet tall, seniors Maggie Weiers and Hannah Strop are quite the 1-2 punch inside for New Prague's girls' basketball team. That much was evident Thursday night when, with both in the lineup, the Class 3A, No. 5 Trojans went ahead by as many as eight on the road against Class 4A, No. 6 Hopkins.

But then came the fouls. A bunch of them.

With New Prague down two points, Strop, a 6-1 senior, picked up her fifth foul with 6 minutes, 28 seconds to go in the game. With her on the bench, Hopkins took advantage and came back for a 58-50 victory at the Lindbergh Center.

"We can't play Hopkins without Hannah Strop," Trojans coach Ron Gunderson said. "But we have to learn to finish basketball games. This is a big lesson for us."

Hopkins committed 19 turnovers, missed a slew of free throws and struggled against a feisty zone defense, yet was able to walk away victorious against New Prague (6-4).

"We need to rectify some things," Hopkins coach Brian Cosgriff said.

Over the final 9 minutes, 20 seconds, the Royals (8-5) finally made some shots.

Ebony Livingston and Chelsey Jacox hit back-to-back three-pointers that tied the score at 43-43. Two possessions later, Hana Potter's layup gave the Royals their first lead since 5:17 remained in the first half.

This time it stuck.

Potter finished with 11 points and was key on defense, especially down the stretch, at keeping New Prague at bay.

"She was really the big-time player I feel she can be," Cosgriff said.