

## State Basketball Tournament

St. Croix Falls became the state high school basketball champion as the tourney darkhorse defeated Eau Claire 59 to 35 in the final of the 35th annual State tourney at the University of Wisconsin fieldhouse, March 16-18.

The win was not a total surprise as the well-balanced Falls team had an outstanding five and a tremendous advantage in height with their star center and heavy scorer, 6 feet 7 inch, Paul Morrow. Morrow, one of the finest prep players with such great height, was a star in every game and set a new three-game scoring record for state tourney play. The nifty Morrow tallied 79 points in three games to erase the old mark set by Rhinelander's Johnny Kotz of 64 in 1939. Morrow also set a new mark of field goals for the State meet of 31 to wipe out the record of 25 by Kotz in 1939 and Dick Axness of Ashland in 1946.

The champions also set a new three game team scoring mark of 169 points as against the old record of 165 by Beloit in 1947. The winners also had a part in setting the highest total score for two teams in a championship game of 94, the old mark being Beloit's 56 to 37 win over Hurley in 1947. Their 59 points in the final game was also a high for a team winning the title game.

The tournament was one of the most successful in years. The crowds set a new mark for the five playing sessions of 63,001 as against that of a year ago when 62,682 were recorded.

The free throwing mark for individuals was set by Eau Claire's Chuck Mencil when he dropped 14 out of 16. Mencil set the mark just a few hours after Earl Johnson of Onalaska had set a new mark of 11 to take the old record of nine by Lon Weber, Cuba City, made in 1949 off the books.

The meet abounded with brilliant individual stars; namely, Morrow and Loren Kamish of the champions, Kent Smith and Gene Knutson of Beloit, Mencil and Jim Strum from Eau Claire; Bob Badura and Dick Gascoigne of Kohler; Bob Lawler and Kent Finanger of Wauwatosa, Earl Johnson of Onalaska, Bill Zelinske of Two Rivers and many more.

St. Croix Falls played good consistent basketball in winning the title. They disposed of Onalaska, Two Rivers and Eau Claire in that order and scored over 50 points in each game. Many believed that the winner had the benefit of a weaker bracket in the draw but no one can take away the fact that the champs handled each of their opponents in easy fashion.

Eau Claire the runnerup, had a tough fight getting into the finals. The Old Abes upset Rhinelander in the opening game after a tough battle right down to the final gun and then just barely nosed out Beloit by a single point as the timer's horn sounded the end of the game. Eau Claire had to battle it out every minute up to the title tilt and really displayed a fine brand of ball all the way.

The consolation honors went to the pre-meet favorite—if there can be such a team in a state meet—Wauwatosa. The Tosans defeated Kohler in the finale.

### Tournament Scores

#### First Round

Two Rivers .....	47	Kohler .....	44
St. Croix Falls .....	51	Onalaska .....	30
Beloit .....	61	Wauwatosa .....	51
Eau Claire .....	59	Rhinelander .....	56

#### Consolation

Kohler .....	57	Onalaska .....	37
Wauwatosa .....	56	Rhinelander .....	43

#### Championship Semi-Finals

St. Croix Falls .....	59	Two Rivers .....	35
Eau Claire .....	54	Beloit .....	53

#### Consolation Championship

Wauwatosa .....	54	Kohler .....	39
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#### Championship

St. Croix Falls .....	59	Eau Claire .....	35
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**1950 State Tournament Session Attendance**

Thursday Afternoon .....	11,371
Thursday Evening .....	12,801
Friday Afternoon .....	11,316
Friday Evening .....	13,542
Saturday Evening .....	13,971
Total .....	63,001

Just passing over the field here is one observer's comments on the eight entries in the finals:

**ST. CROIX FALLS**—The champions really played splendid ball all through the meet. Naturally tall Paul Morrow was a mighty factor in the scoring but he was not alone in bringing home the title. Morrow starred in the title game by throttling the Eau Claire centers and himself dropping



**St. Croix Falls — Winner State Basketball Tournament**

in 27 points on 8 baskets and 11 free throws. Coach Don Snyder threw an effective zone defense at Eau Claire and handled his squad splendidly. He had a great performer in Loren Kamish, a guard who could do everything very well. Little Dick L'Allier was the feeder for tall Morrow, the half-pint guard very smartly getting the ball in for the big center to take pot shots.

John Edling, a fast moving forward, scored well throughout the tourney and popped in seven baskets in the title game. Larry Lundgren was the other starter and left little to be desired. Morrow and Kamish were placed on sports writers' all-state mythical teams.

St. Croix Falls, prior to the tourney play, had won the St. Croix valley conference crown and was rated fourth in the final Big Sixteen ratings. Including tournament play, the team won 23 games and lost but one...a truly enviable record.

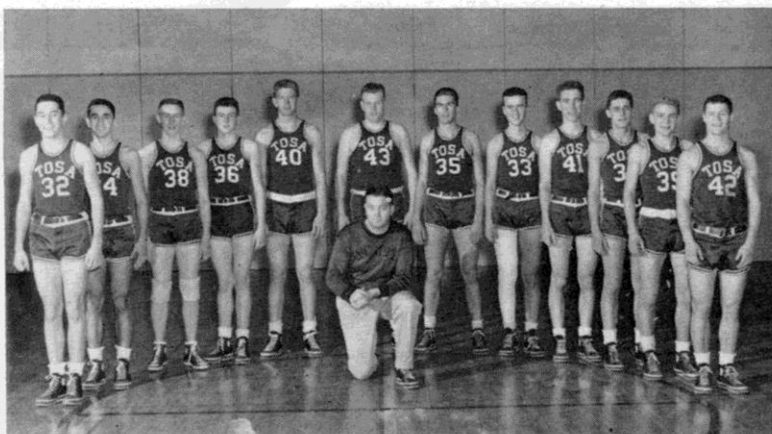


**Eau Claire — Runner-Up State Basketball Tournament**

**EAU CLAIRE**—The tourney runnerup was a fast moving sharpshooting team that had to battle its way to the finals against two strong quints, Rhinelander and Beloit. Paced by such fine shooting stars as Chuck Mersel, Bob Hessler, Don Jordan, Jim Strum and Jack Anderson, Eau Claire was the team to beat from the outset of the tourney. The Old Abes got by Rhinelander with a great drive in the last few minutes and defeated Beloit in one of the all-time thrillers of State meet play. In the semi-finals with two seconds to play, Aubrey Olson tossed in a medium distance shot to give his mates a single point win over Beloit.

In the finals, it was just too much Morrow at center for the Eau Claire five. Eau Claire campaigns independently and prior to the tournament won 15 and lost three. In regional and sectional play, they won five more games, defeating among others, a favored Stevens Point five. Including the State meet, the team had a fine season record of 22 and four.

**WAUWATOSA**—Bill Walter's Red Raiders ran into their usual tourney troubles and were dropped out of the championship race by a Beloit team that developed a hot streak in the second half and would not be denied. Tosa looked great in losing and was a fast moving club that handled the ball well. They went on to win the consolation title. The pre-meet favorites had a lot of class and were a well rounded team. Kent Finanger caught the fancy of the crowds but he had able help from the entire team roster. Tosa came to the tourney with a 22 and 1 record and finished the season with a 24 and 2 mark, one of the best in the state.



Wauwatosa — Consolation State Basketball Tournament

**BELOIT** — The state line five was a darkhorse in the tourney and came very near to reaching the finals. Beloit upset the pre-meet favorite, Wauwatosa, in the first round of play with a brilliant second half surge. They lost the afore-mentioned heartbreaker to Eau Claire in the semi-finals. The team had several bright stars in Gene Knutson, Kent Smith, Carl Schuler, Irv Shephard and Pete Panteleo. Beloit, through the season and tourney play, had an 18 and 9 record. It ranked 10th in the big 16.

**KOHLER** — Kohler brought a fine young team to the tournament that had two outstanding performers in sophomore Dick Gascoigne and junior, Bob Badura. The team got off to a shaky start against Two Rivers and missed too many easy shots to win although many thought they were the better team. In the first round of consolation play, Kohler bounced back nicely to defeat Onalaska. Dick Gascoigne set the high game scoring mark of the meet when he dropped in 29 points on 12 baskets and 5 free throws. Dick had several fairly easy shots near the end of the game that might have netted scores and given him a new single game scoring mark for a state meet but the ball just would not sink for the big genial youth. Badura played brilliantly in all three games and was the high scorer for both teams as Kohler was beaten for the consolation title by Wauwatosa. Kohler ended its fine regular season and tourney play with a mark of 22 wins and 6 defeats. The team could well be back for another shot at the title next year as most of its ace performers will be back.

**ONALASKA** — The Hilltoppers had the misfortune to draw the eventual champions in the first round of play and could not stave off the fine scoring of Paul Morrow. They gave the champs a good hard fight but lacked height. Earl Johnson played good ball and set a new scoring mark for free throws of 11 in a game only to have Chuck Mencil of Eau Claire later erase the record. The Purple and White clad quint also ran into Kohler on the rebound and dropped both its starts in the meet. Ronald Espe, Louis Mahlum, Sam Stuhr and Don Poss all played well for the gallant Hilltoppers.

**RHINELANDER** — Nifty Jim Verage nearly carried Rhinelander into

the semi-finals as he played a superb game against Eau Claire in the first round of play. Verage was highly rated by the newsmen at the meet and scored 47 points in his two starts. The Hodags were not highly rated prior to the state meet but Coach Bob Wallis' squad was definitely a crowd pleaser. Their overall record for the year including the state tourney was 12 won and 11 lost. Their play belied that record.

**TWO RIVERS** — The Purple Raiders never did hit their real stride in the tourney despite the fact that they eliminated Kohler in the first title round of play. Bill Zelinski, Jack Goedjen, Mike Wisniewski, Earl Kanlder and the rest of the lineup played mostly streaky ball in their two games. Long range sniping at the hoop netted most of their points with Zelinski being top man in the second game and Goedjen setting a fast pace in the loss to the eventual champions. The team finished the season with an overall record of 19 wins and 8 defeats.