



2023 GOPHER CONFERENCE BOYS BASKETBALL

FOR RELEASE

The Gopher Conference is proud to announce the 2023 Boys Basketball award winners.

Team:

Standings:

1	Maple River	15-0
2	USC	12-4
3	JWP	7-9
4	WEM	3-12
5	NRHEG	3-13
6	Medford	2-14
	EAST	
1	Hayfield	14-2
2	K-W	12-4
3	Randolph	10-6
4	FBA	7-9
5	Triton	6-10
6	Blooming Prairie	4-12

Conference Championship Game:

Maple River 73,

Hayfield 70 – Double OT

Conference Champion: Maple River

The Maple River Boys Basketball team just completed a 30 and 4 season and won their 3rd straight Gopher Conference Crown. The Eagles defeated MVL 75-71 in the Section 2AA Championship game and advanced to the Class AA State Tournament. The Eagles received the #4 seed in the State Tournament, but fell in the first round to Minnehaha Academy 53-48. Maple River would defeat Eden Valley-Watkins 59-32 before falling to Pequot Lakes 50-43 in consolation games. Maple River led all Minnesota AA teams in scoring defense for the 2nd straight season allowing just 44.7 points per game. Maple River won their 23rd conference championship in 34 years as a school. For the Eagles, it was their 5th title in 10 years of competition in the Gopher Conference. Maple River finished the conference season with a perfect 16-0 record and by winning the West Division, they advanced to the Conference Championship game. In the Conference Championship game against Hayfield in Mapleton, the Eagles defeated the Vikings 73-70 in a double overtime thriller. Maple River dominated the conference competition outscoring their opponents 68.1 to 37.0, a whopping 31.1 scoring margin. Despite the domination, Maple River only garnered two all-conference members of the 18 selected by the conference coaches. The Eagles were led by senior captains Mason Schirmer, Hayden Niehbuhr and Will Sellers. Maple River was ranked in the top 10 of Class AA throughout the year, ending the year ranked #6 in the state. The 30 wins for the Eagles set a school record for wins in a season surpassing 29, set by 3 different Maple River teams.



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2023 Player of the Year: Isaac Matti

Name	Grade	School
Isaac Matti	12	Hayfield

Summary: Isaac led Hayfield to a 14-2 record in the Gopher Conference and the East Division regular season title. The Vikings finished the season 23-7 overall. He led the entire Gopher Conference in points per game at 22.8 during conference games (20.8 overall). He scored a school-record 50 points at home against Blooming Prairie on January 24th. He finished his outstanding prep career with 2170 points (2nd in school history) and 568 assists (most in school history). He was a 5-year starter, never missing a game, during which the Vikings went 124-24 with two Class A state championships. This is his second consecutive year being named Gopher Conference Player of the Year, and third straight year being named 1st Team All-Conference. Isaac is undecided at this time about where he plans on playing in college.

1st Team All-Conference

Name	Grade	School
Mason Schirmer	12	Maple River
Hayden Niebuhr	12	Maple River
Zale Bushlack	12	USC
Ethan Pack	12	Hayfield
Memphis James	11	JWP

2nd Team All-Conference

Name	Grade	School
Daxter Lee	11	NRHEG
Hudson Dillon	11	Bethlehem Academy
Zander Jacobson	11	Hayfield
Quinn Sabila	12	Randolph
Austin Erickson	12	Medford
Alex Lee	12	Kenyon Wanamingo

3rd Team All-Conference

Name	Grade	School
Pierce Petersohn	9	Triton
Jonathan Martinez	11	USC
Tyson Cooreman	12	Randolph
Gabe Hein	11	Blooming Prairie
Nick Bushlack	12	USC
Zach Mason	11	Kenyon Wanamingo



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Honorable Mention

Name	Grade	School
Aaron Pawlitschek	11	Maple River
Daulton Bauer	9	JWP
Will Sellers	12	Maple River
AJ Higginbottom	12	Kenyon Wanamingo
Talen Taylor	12	WEM
Gavin Brown	12	WEM
Brady Kittleson	10	Blooming Prairie
Trey Gaytan	12	Bethlehem Academy
Jayce Leonardo	11	Triton

Sportsmanship Recipients

Name	Grade	School
Charlie King	12	Bethlehem Academy
Kolby Vigeland	11	Blooming Prairie
Jaden Gerhart	12	Hayfield
Ethan Born	10	JWP
Jase Graves	12	Kenyon Wanamingo
Aidan Sindelir	12	Maple River
Landon Driscoll	12	Medford
Sawyer Prigge	12	NRHEG
Evan Bennerotte	12	Randolph
Max Oakland	12	Triton
Nathaniel Clore	12	USC
Gabe Androli	12	WEM

Sportsmanship winners were a member of the varsity roster during the season or at the end of the regular season, they did not have to be on postseason roster. They are someone who exemplified good sportsmanship qualities.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL AWARD WINNERS!!!!