

# LAKEVILLE NORTH

By Tim Kolehmainen

For one night, Lakeville's civil war – emphasis on civil – shifted about 65 miles to the southeast down US Highway 52.

When third-seeded Lakeville North and top-seeded Lakeville South squared off in the Section 1AA finals last Friday night, the Rochester Civic Center was overrun by Cougars and Panthers. It may have been a ways to travel for a game, but no one wanted to miss the party afterwards. Or the reward – a trip to the Class AA state tournament.

South had to be confident after beating North twice during the regular season by a combined 9-1 score. But it was North that earned the state bid, courtesy of a surprising 5-0 victory.

"The kids had worked so hard during the week and in preparation for the playoffs," coach Randy Schmitz said. "There was a lot of excitement and great emotion showed by everybody."

That excitement might have been tempered a bit the next morning, when the seeding was announced for the Class AA state tournament. North (11-15-2), the only team in the tournament field with a losing record, drew No. 1 Minnetonka in the opening round Thursday night.

Schmitz was realistic about the draw, but wasn't ready to concede without a fight.

"You play under great competition throughout the year," Schmitz said, referring to the

Panthers' Lake Conference slate. "We've been there before, as far as tough games against tough opponents."

That schedule is both a blessing and a curse for the Panthers.

North has certainly played plenty of tough opponents, including 10 teams ranked in the Hockey Hub's top-10 polls. That doesn't even include two games against fellow state tournament qualifier Apple Valley. The Panthers know what a state-tournament quality team looks like.

Unfortunately, they've only gone 1-9-2 in those 11 games, which has some observers scoffing at their sub-.500 record.

"We had some games throughout the year that we played really well in," argued Schmitz. "At the end of the season, we were able to put together four good games in a row (including a 4-4 tie with No. 9AA Jefferson in the regular season finale). The biggest difference was we were able to score some goals and get some offense."

Sophomores have paced North's attack for much of the season. Leading scorers Nate Arentz (20-11-31) and Brady Skjei (10-18-28) are talented players, but are very young.

"They have great hockey skills and they played for us last year as freshmen," Schmitz said. "The mix that we have, good seniors that lead the way, and some juniors and sophomores. It's a nice balance of players."

North has rotated two goaltenders, sophomore Charlie Lindgren (6-7-2, 2.86, .890) and senior Matt Arentz (5-8-0, 3.69, .871).



N. Arentz



B. Skjei



## PROGRAM INFO

**Nickname:** Panthers  
**Conference:** Lake  
**Section:** 1AA  
**Record:** 11-15-2  
**State trips:** 2006, 10  
**Coach:** Randy Schmitz

## STAT LEADERS

Scorers	G	A	Pts
Nate Arentz	20	11	31
Brady Skjei	10	18	28
Tyler Goss	12	11	23
Jack Pahl	6	16	22
Nick Johnson	10	11	21

Goalies	W-L-T	GA	SV
Ch. Lindgren	6-7-2	2.86	.890
Matt Arentz	5-8-0	3.69	.871

## FULL ROSTER

#	Name	Pos	Gr
1	Charlie Lindgren	G	10
4	Jack Pahl	F	12
5	Tim Kuzniar	D	12
6	Ben Skelly	D	12
7	Tory Merz	D	11
8	Nick Johnson	F	12
9	Gordon Kappers	F	11
10	Luke Moore	F	11
11	Jake Moore	F	11
12	Nate Arentz	F	10
13	Derek Wypyszynski	F	12
14	Ryan Bochniak	D	11
16	Brady Skjei	D	10
17	Johnny Domina	D	11
19	Tyler Goss	F	12
20	Ben Counters	F	11
23	Ramsey Skjei	F	11
24	Blake Winiacki	F	10
25	Evan Peterson	F	10
25	Charlie Hayes	F	10
36	Shaun Reinhardt	D	11
38	Derek Perkins	F	12
39	Matt Arentz	G	12

## ROAD TO THE X

**Section 1AA Quarters, 2/25**  
**Lkvl North 4, Farmington 1**

Wypyszynski and Paul 1 goal each

**Section 1AA Semis, 2/27**  
**Lkvl North 6, Roch Century 3**

Lindgren 32 saves

**Section 1AA Finals, 3/5**  
**Lkvl North 5, Lkvl South 0**

Lindgren 26 saves

B. Skjei 1 goal, 2 assists

Photos / Tim Kolehmainen

## THE PANTHERS WILL WIN THE STATE TITLE IF...



**Tim Kolehmainen:** They can continue playing as they did in the 1AA playoffs -- and against Jefferson during the regular season. Otherwise, the Panthers will be a decided underdog in any game at state.