

# APPLE VALLEY

By Loren Nelson

Aaron Gretz can proudly say he attended one of the most famous games in Minnesota high school hockey history.

Yes, Apple Valley's junior goaltender was in the stands for the 1996 classic, "The Game That Wouldn't End," a five-overtime state tournament semifinal matchup between the Eagles and Duluth East.

Apple Valley beat the Greyhounds 4-3, halting a game that lasted 93 minutes, 12 seconds of elapsed time and ended at 1:39 a.m. It remains the longest game in state tournament history.

While Gretz was in the old St. Paul Civic Center stands (his older brother was on that Eagles team) that night and early morning, there's no telling how much of the game he actually witnessed.



Gretz

"I was four years old," he said. "I do not remember it."

After shutting out Woodbury in the Section 3AA title game, Gretz now embarks on a state tournament journey he undoubtedly won't forget. Apple Valley is making its first state tournament appearance since that legendary 1996 team beat Edina to win the school's only state boys hockey title.

"I'd be lying if I said I didn't think we would be good," Apple Valley coach Jerry Hayes said after the Eagles' 3-0 section championship win over the Royals. "But we've had a lot of struggles (in the playoffs) over the years."

Hayes, in his 12th season as Apple Valley's head coach, had gone 0-5 in section championship games before this season.

Propelling the Eagles through that section final roadblock was the play of Gretz and two youngsters, freshman Hudson Fasching and sophomore A.J. Michaelson. They each scored twice against Woodbury in the 4-0 triumph.

Fasching, a star at the Bantam level last season, led the Eagles with 40 points (23 goals, 17 assists) and has been playing on a line with Michaelson, who has a team-best five goals and four assists in three playoff games, since they were Pee Wees.

Apple Valley has yet another potent forward unit featuring Chris Fischer (11 goals, 16 assists) and Kris Goodman (10 goals, 10 assists).

The Eagles (17-11-0) lost six of their final eight regular season games before making their playoff push and are among the four unseeded teams in the Class AA tournament.



Michaelson



Fischer



D. Smith



Hudson Fasching



## PROGRAM INFO

**Nickname:** Eagles  
**Conference:** Lake  
**Section:** 3AA  
**Record:** 17-11-0  
**State trips:** 1981, 92, 93, 96 Champs  
**Coach:** Jerry Hayes

## STAT LEADERS

Scorers	G	A	Pts
Hudson Fasching	23	17	40
AJ Michaelson	18	16	34
Chris Fischer	11	16	27
Michael Berens	8	15	23
Kris Goodman	10	10	20

Goalies	W-L-T	GA	SV
Aaron Gretz	13-9-0	2.27	.907

## FULL ROSTER

#	Name	Pos	Gr
3	Anthony Leong	D	10
4	Adam Robson	D	12
5	Ryan Geary	D	12
7	Jordan Ocel	F	10
8	Kris Goodman	F	11
9	Chris Fischer	F	12
10	Tate Erickson	F	10
11	Trent Heuer	F	10
12	Dustin LaFrance	F	10
16	Michael Berens	F	11
17	Thomas Obarski	F	11
19	AJ Michaelson	F	10
20	Derek Smith	D	10
21	Peter Sikich	D	12
22	Hudson Fasching	F	9
24	Vince Pedrie	D	10
26	Alex Trenary	F	12
27	John Dirks	F	10
29	Collin Olson	G	10
31	Brett Dahl	D	11
33	Aaron Gretz	G	11
37	Austin Caspar	F	11

## ROAD TO THE X

**Section 3AA Quarters, 2/25**  
**Apple Valley 3, Hastings 0**

Michaelson 3 goals  
 Gretz 18 saves

**Section 3AA Semis, 2/27**  
**Apple Valley 3, Eagan 2 OT**

Sikich game-winning goal

**Section 3AA Finals, 3/4**  
**Apple Valley 4, Woodbury 0**

Michaelson 2 goals, 2 assists  
 Gretz 27 saves

Photos / Helen Nelson

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



**Tim Kolehmainen:** The kids grow up fast -- really fast. Apple Valley is a very young team, led in scoring by a freshman (Hudson Fasching) and a sophomore (A.J. Michaelson). They're talented, but this is their first state go-round.