

DULUTH EAST

By Tim Kolehmainen

Anybody who knows anything about Duluth East and coach Mike Randolph shouldn't have expected anything different.

Despite graduating its All-State goaltender, top five defenseman and leading scorer and Mr. Hockey finalist from last year's state tournament team, East is right back at the X in March.

Such is the height of the bar that Randolph has set during his tenure with the Greyhounds.

Not surprisingly, East is doing it the same way it did last year. Strong goaltending. Tough team defense. Just enough scoring.

It's a tribute to the players who stepped into the immense shoes left behind. The Greyhounds are a team without any true stars, but are solid and balanced up and down the lineup.

"On the back end we came in pretty green," admitted Randolph. "We've come a long way. We kind of knew we'd struggle early on, but we tried to be real patient. We had a mix of bantams that we had to blend in with older kids. The older kids had to accept the younger ones and as the season has gone along, we've become a team."

The Greyhounds are 10-0-2 in their past dozen games, many with emerging star Jo Jo Jeannetta in net. He and the East defense were at their best in the Section 7AA playoffs, allowing just two goals in three games.

In the section semifinals, they shut down Andover and UMD-bound sniper Cal Decowski and then followed it up with a 5-1 near-shutout of Elk River in the section finals. The Elks scored a goal in the third period that broke a 93:59 shutout streak for the junior goaltender.

"He just kind of took off and really took to the job," Randolph said. "He's had a great second half and he shut out Andover, which is as tough a shutout as you can earn."

Junior Andy Welinski (4-17-21) was the only returning defenseman from last year's top six, although he's been paired with veteran Jayce Paulseth, who played forward last year. Nate Repensky, Hunter Bergeson, Jay Amato and Troy Olson round out an underrated defensive corps.

But as with past East tournament squads, scoring could be the key.

After some season-long struggles at scoring goals, the Greyhounds came alive in the section tournament, averaging 5.0 goals a game.

"We're finally starting to put the puck in the net," Randolph said.

No one scorer stands out, unlike Tardy last year, which should make East tough to shut down.

"We hope to bring that offense with the defense, that combo, to the state tournament," Randolph said. "The teams that can do that can go a ways."



Lutzka



Schendel



PROGRAM INFO

Nickname: Greyhounds
Conference: Independent
Section: 7AA
Record: 19-5-4
State trips: 1958, 60 Champs, 61, 64, 75, 91, 94, 95 Champs, 96, 97, 98 Champs, 2000, 03, 04, 05, 09, 10
Coach: Mike Randolph

STAT LEADERS

Scorers	G	A	Pts
Jake Randolph	9	27	36
Kyle Lutzka	11	13	24
Phil Johnson	13	11	24
Kenny Mellin	12	10	22
Andy Welinski	4	17	21

Goalies	W-L-T	GA	SV
JoJo Jeannetta	12-4-4	1.83	.910

FULL ROSTER

#	Name	Pos	Gr
4	Kevin Brazerol	F	12
5	Troy Olson	D	12
6	Andy Welinski	D	11
8	Luke Renier	F	11
9	Kenny Mellin	F	12
10	Kyle Lutzka	F	12
11	Tyler Mass	F	12
12	Trevor Olson	F	10
14	Tim Beddow	F	12
16	Jake Randolph	F	10
17	Jayce Paulseth	F	12
18	Steven Holappa	F	10
19	Zac Schendel	F	11
21	Nate Repensky	D	10
22	Jay Amato	D	12
23	Dom Toninato	F	10
28	Nolan Meyer	F	11
31	Joseph Jeanetta	G	11
34	Phil Johnson	F	11
39	Joel Perlinger	G	11
41	Hunter Bergerson	D	11

ROAD TO THE X

Section 7AA Quarters, 2/23
Duluth East 6, Camb-Isanti 1

Johnson 2 goals

Section 7AA Semis, 2/27
Duluth East 4, Andover 0

Jeannetta 26 saves

Johnson 2 goals, 1 assist

Section 7AA Finals, 3/4
Duluth East 5, Elk River 1

Welinski 1 goal, 2 assists

Photos / Tim Kolehmainen



THE GREYHOUNDS WILL WIN THE STATE TITLE IF...

Tim Kolehmainen: Their balanced offense continues to produce throughout the tournament. East doesn't have a true sniper like last year's club with Max Tardy, but can get offensive production from up and down the lineup.