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EDINA BOYS' HOCKEY TAKES ON MSHSL STATE TOURNAMENT



Edina Boys' Hockey compete in the semifinal game against Moorhead at the Minnesota State High School League Hockey Tournament.



The Edina Boys' Hockey Team qualify for the Minnesota State High School League Hockey Tournament for the second year in a row.



Edina loses to Moorhead 1--3, finishing fourth in the state tournament.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TED SALMEN

by **ELOISE THOMPSON**
staff writer

The Edina High School Boys' Hockey team, following their five-year streak, qualified for the Minnesota State High School League Hockey Tournament after defeating Wayzata 3-1 in Section 6AA finals. After winning the championship in 2024 and placing fourth in 2025, Edina hoped to regain their status as state champion. Their regular season record of 23-6-1 proved promising for this year's state tournament.

The state quarterfinal game on March 5 had Edina seeded third and faced off against sixth-seed Andover. Based on prior records, Edina was the favorite to win, although the team knew they still had to show up and work hard.

"[Andover's] team is playing extremely well in the second half of the season. We knew they were going to be tough to play against, hard to play against, so we wanted to get off to a good start," Edina Boys' Varsity Head Coach Curt Giles said in the post-quarterfinal game conference.

At the beginning of the game, Edina quickly took control, and most of the play happened in their offensive half. Andover's defense had a strong effort against the Hornets' shots and consistent offense. Several minutes into the first period, Edina's number 10, junior Bode McConnell, scored his first goal of the game, assisted by Minnesota Mr. Hockey Finalist and senior captain Tucker Johnson.

Within the last five minutes of the first period, after significant offensive pressure, McConnell scored his second and third goals of the game for a first-period hat trick. Andover managed to score in the second period, bringing the score to 3-1. Throughout the rest of the game, Andover continued to put shots on the goal, but the game finished with a 3-1 Edina win, advancing them to the state semifinals against Moorhead for the

second year in a row.

"We had momentum after the first period. They had momentum after the second period. Then it's our responsibility to take that momentum back," Giles said in the quarter-final post-game conference. "I think in the third period they came out, shut the door, and closed things down and did exactly what we asked them to do."

The semifinal game against Moorhead would not only be a physical challenge but also a mental one for the Hornets. In 2025, Edina lost to Moorhead in the state semifinal game 3-4 after a fairly close match. Along with that, in the fall of this school year, Edina defeated Moorhead in the football state championship, where many of the hockey players from each team also competed.

On that same day as the quarterfinal, competing in the Turkey Trot Tournament, Moorhead beat Edina Boys' Hockey 6-3. This created pressure to maintain a mindset that would allow the teams to play at their best without getting too overconfident or developing self-doubt.

The state semi-final game took place on March 6, and the stands were filled with fans spreading anti-Edina chants, but also a section of high Hornet spirit for the team. Moorhead went into the tournament as the number two seed and with a record of 27-3-, so it was clear it would be a tough match for the Hornets.

The game stayed fairly equal throughout the first period. Play stayed at a stalemate, with both teams not getting many shots off as they were tied at only six shots on goal. The first period remained scoreless. The second went similarly, with neither team being able to get the puck in the net, and shots on goal remained low and equal although penalties were high. By the end of the second, things changed as Moorhead was controlling the puck more in their offensive half.

"I thought we had a good game plan going

in," Bjorgaard said. "We had Moorhead right where we wanted them after two periods, and we had opportunities."

When the third period began, Moorhead was able to score right away, causing Edina to up their pressure and intensity in return. This continued throughout the period, although the Spuds found the net two more times in the middle of the third period, upping the score to 0-3. Yet, the Hornets did not give up. Edina senior number 12 Alex White scored with a minute left in the period, putting Edina on the scoreboard. The game ended with Moorhead moving on to the championship game, winning 1-3, and leaving Edina out of the running for the 2026 state title.

"[The team would] try and defend them as much as we possibly could. Try to keep them off the board as much as we possibly can. Try to take as much space away from them as we possibly can. And it went well until we started to get a couple of penalties. Towards the end, they kind of got some momentum. And again, if it's not 100% of the time against Moorhead, they're going to do that," Giles said in the post-game conference.

After a repeat of the previous year, the team left the ice, and the fans left the stands with their heads hung low.

"After the game, it was definitely sad, at least for me and a lot of the seniors, because, for us, that'd be the last time we play hockey," Bjorgaard said.

It wasn't completely over yet for the boys as they still had the opportunity to go for third place the following day in a game against Rosemount.

"I think just one more game with these guys who have become one family, one brotherhood. I'm thankful that we get to play tomorrow. I'm very excited," senior captain Sam Peckham said.

Unfortunately, even though they put up a fight, it again wasn't their night, and the Hornets were defeated 2-4 by Rosemount, placing them in fourth for the state tournament.

Moorhead is now a dual champion in Boys' Hockey. Both of the years happened to be when Edina lost to Moorhead in semifinals.

"All the sports that they have now, they're kind of coming out," Bjorgaard said. "To be in the state championship for football and then winning hockey, you can kind of tell that they got something going good over there."

Chase Bjorgaard

Edina managed to upset Moorhead's football team in the state championship last fall in 2025. Whether or not Moorhead manages to stay on top, it will most likely continue to be a challenge for Edina in the coming years.

"Felt really good to get them in football for sure, especially after hockey [state semifinal loss in 2025], but sucks that we couldn't get them in hockey this year," Bjorgaard said. "So I do kind of feel like a little something, you know, potential rivalry for the future is in the works."

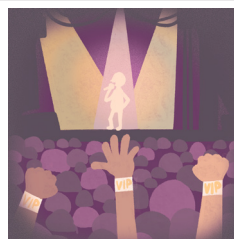
"Going into the game, I thought we felt pretty confident. We knew that we could get it done. For sure, we thought we had to play a pretty good game,"



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