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Season of change yields second state berth

By John Rittenhouse

Every rebuilding project requires a new design, and Phillip Paquette laid out his blueprint for the 2016-17 hockey season well before practice started in November.

Paquette, who was named Luverne's head boys' hockey coach earlier in the year, had his own vision of what style of play he wanted to display on the ice during his first season on the bench.

The changes he wanted to implement may have seemed somewhat drastic from what Cardinal players and fans have become accustomed to, but they were necessary.

Luverne, after all, was entering its first season of play without the services of high-scoring forwards Chaz Smedsrud (who graduated last spring) and Jaxon Nelson, who decided to join the Sioux Falls Stampede and forgo his junior year of high school eligibility.

Faced with the reality that LHS would no longer be an offensive powerhouse, Paquette, along with assistant coaches Paul Erickson and Adam Ossefoort, decided the time to steer the program in a different direction was at hand.

Instead of trying to outscore their opponents in bundles, the coaches agreed the best approach to finding success on the ice was to become a more defensive-

focused squad.

"The entire coaching staff was optimistic at the beginning of the season because we knew we had a talented team," Paquette said.

"We also agreed to switch our focus on defense because the team had lost high-scoring games in the past couple of section championship games. Coaching changes are always tough on players, and the same can be said about switching the focus from offense to defense because it required some of them to take over new roles. We met with each kid individually before the season to lay out our vision for the season. We told them we wanted to play hard, clean, disciplined hockey and that we needed them to stick together as a team to face all the challenges the season will offer. To their credit, they did just that. They showed up and worked hard in every practice and in every game."

Luverne got off to a strong start by winning its first five games of the year, including an impressive 3-2 victory on the road over a ranked Orono squad.

The five-game run ended with a home loss to Waseca, but the Cards bounced back to win four of their next five games as well as capturing the consolation



Luverne seniors (from left) Jesse Reed, Chris Jelken, Andrew Reisch and junior Ben Serie take part in the introduction ceremony at the Xcel Energy Center March 8.

Change/continued on page 5



Members of the Luverne High School hockey team and the coaching staff watch the action on the ice during the consolation semifinals in Mariucci Arena Thursday.



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Change/continued from page 4

championship at the South St. Paul Tournament.

LHS ended play in 2016 with a 4-0 home loss to a talented Totino-Grace team on New Year's Eve day, which ignited a negative stretch that had the Cardinals sporting a 0-3-1 record during a four-game span.

"It wasn't that we were playing horrible hockey during that span. We were having trouble because we were not scoring goals," Paquette said.

"We got together for a team meeting after the St. Paul Academy game (the last game of the four-game stretch) and I told the kids to look at the rest of our schedule and that there was no reason why we couldn't come together and win every game, and that's what we did."

The Cardinals put together an impressive run after Jan. 6, and a lot of the credit goes to Luverne's play on the defensive end of the ice.

The Cards reeled off 10 con-

secutive wins to complete a 19-5-1 regular season and capture the Big South Conference championship with a 14-2 record.

LHS registered six shutout victories during the final push of the regular season and notched its 11th shutout of the season with a 7-0 win over Windom in the quarterfinal round of the Section 3A Tournament.

The Cards went on to outscore Hutchinson and Marshall by a combined score of 9-3 in the final two rounds of section play to secure a berth in the state tournament for the second time in program history.

LHS didn't pick up a win during its second state appearance, but the Cardinals did turn some heads by forcing top-seeded Hermantown, the defending state champion, into overtime before dropping a heart-breaking one-goal decision.

The task didn't get any easier

Change/continued on page 6



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 egf 7

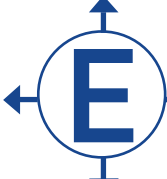
Luverne junior defenseman Jim Erickson battles for the puck with EGF's Jackson Galstad during the consolation semifinals.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 4

Luverne sophomore Charlie Reisch prepares to take the ice for the pregame skate prior to the state quarterfinal against Hermantown at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul March 8.





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Change/continued from page 5

the following day, when LHS met East Grand Forks in the consolation semifinals.

The Green Wave, who captured the state titles in 2014 and 2015, scored three unanswered goals in the final 26 minutes of the game to end Luverne's 22-7-1 campaign.

"The state tournament was an amazing experience and I think it will be something the guys will carry around with them for the rest of their lives," Paquette said.

"It's hard to put into perspective right now because it's so fresh, but we almost beat a Hermantown team that is arguably one of the best teams in our state in either class. It was an amazing effort. Then we got to play against an equally strong East Grand Forks team, and we were tied with them in the second period before running out of gas. This was a great season, and on paper, we should be an even stronger team next year. We still have a lot of work to do, and we will lose some fine seniors who were great leaders, but we should be an equally strong team next year."

With a special thanks going to the featured advertisers who made this special section possible, here is a look back at what was a sensational 2016-17 season.

Nov. 29
Luverne 10,
Fairmont 2

The Cardinals delivered first-year head coach Phillip Paquette his initial victory when they opened the season in Fairmont.

Luverne scored the first six goals of the game and ended the contest with a four-goal run to defeat Fairmont by eight goals.

Nick Harder, Kasyn Kruse and Declan Beers scored two goals each to pace an LHS offense that outshot the hosts 40-14.

Harder led the Cards with four assists, Jesse Reed and Coy Gonnerman chipped in two each and Kruse, Tyler Reisdorfer and Ben Serie added one assist each to the winning cause.

Harder opened the scoring 1:52 into the game and added an unassisted tally at the 9:15 mark of a four-goal first period for LHS.

Gonnerman chipped in a power-play tally and Gage Nath added an unassisted tally to the first-period eruption.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 8

Coaching together for the first time as a staff, Luverne head coach Phillip Paquette (above, left), Adam Ossefoort (above right) and Paul Erickson (right) implemented a defensive style of play that led the Cardinals to the state tournament for the first time in three years.

Beers scored his first goal of the game at the 12:50 mark of the second period and Serie made it 6-0 when he netted a power-play tally with 5:55 remaining in the stanza.

Fairmont ended Luverne's six-goal run with one second remaining in the second period and added another goal 47 seconds

Change/continued on page 7

John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 12



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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 8
Luverne junior forward Nick Harder closes a passing lane for a Hermantown Hawk defender during the state quarterfinals in St. Paul March 8.

Change/continued from page 6

into the third period to trim the difference to four goals (6-2).
The Cards ended any thoughts of Fairmont making a comeback by scoring four times in the game's final 13:51.
Kruse scored twice in a span of 15 seconds to up the lead to 8-2.
Beers capped his two-goal effort with 12:25 remaining and Reed netted the game's final goal with 8:27 left to play.
Kaden Ericson stopped 12 of the 14 shots he faced in goal for LHS.

Dec. 2
Luverne 6,
SP-L-H-TCU 3
The Cardinals opened the home portion of their schedule by besting St. Peter-Le Sueur-Henderson-Tri-City United by three goals at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.
Declan Beers and Kasyn Kruse scored two goals each for an LHS squad that outshot the visitors 34-14.
A three-goal first period helped the Cardinals double up the

Bulldogs.
Beers opened the scoring 7:48 into the contest and Jesse Reed and Kruse netted unassisted goals in the final 7:20 of the stanza to give the Cards a 3-0 cushion.
SP-L-H-TCU trimmed the difference to two goals (3-1) 3:03 into the second stanza and had an extended, one-man advantage when LHS took a major penalty as the period progressed.
The Cardinals, however, killed the penalty without yielding a shot on goal and scored a pair of

goals shortly after the infraction expired to assume control of the contest.
Beers registered an unassisted tally and Kruse recorded a power-play goal 27 seconds apart to up the lead to 5-1.
The Bulldogs scored with seven seconds left in the second period and added a power-play goal 7:13 into the third period to make it a 5-3 game before Luverne's Mark Sterrett provided an insurance goal with 6:30 left to play.
Daniel Tofteland made 11 saves

in goal during his first varsity start of the season.
Gaige Nath, Andrew Reisch and Ben Serie charted one assist each for the winners.
Dec. 3
Luverne 3,
Orono 2
The Cardinals produced a signature victory when they edged the Spartans by one goal in Orono.
Orono entered the game as

Change/continued on page 8



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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 15
Luverne junior defenseman Trey Roberts impedes the path to the goal for Hermantown's Brady Baker during the state quarterfinals in St. Paul March 8.

Change/continued from page 7

the state's eighth-ranked Class A squad and played like it by outshooting the Cardinals 42-17 in the game.

Luverne, however, rose to the challenge to post its biggest non-conference win in two seasons.

Kaden Ericson was brilliant in goal by stopping 40 of the 42 shots he faced and the Cardinals received goals from three different players to earn the victory.

Orono took a 1-0 lead with a power-play goal 6:54 into the game, but the Cards answered with a power-play goal from Tyler Reisdorfer to knot the score at one before the first period was complete.

A goal from Ben Serie gave the Cards a 2-1 edge 7:35 into the second period before the Spartans battled back to tie the

game at two with 1:42 remaining in the stanza.

Jesse Reed netted what proved to be the game-winning goal for LHS 2:50 into the third period.

Kasyn Kruse received assists for all three of Luverne's goals in the game.

Chris Jelken, Trey Roberts and Serie notched one assist each for the Cards.

Dec. 6
Luverne 3,
Marshall 0

The Cardinals registered their fourth consecutive victory to start the season when they blanked the Tigers in Marshall.

A three-point performance by Kasyn Kruse and a shutout effort in goal by Daniel Tofteland highlighted the victory.

Making his second start of the season, Tofteland was perfect in net as he stopped all 17 shots he faced in the contest.

Kruse led a Luverne offense that compiled 32 shots on goal by scoring twice and notching one assist.

After the teams skated to a scoreless draw in the first period, Kruse registered a pair of unassisted goals in the first 10:22 of the second period to give the Cards a 2-0 advantage.

Kruse received an assist for Ben Serie's power-play tally four minutes into the third period, which capped the scoring in the game.

Dec. 8
Luverne 5,
Redwood Valley 0

The Cardinals came up with

a key Big South Conference victory when they upended RWV by five goals at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

Both Luverne and RWV entered the clash with 3-0 league records.

The Cardinals remained unbeaten after outshooting RWV 34-8 in the game.

Kasyn Kruse turned in a four-assist effort and Kaden Ericson recorded an eight-save shutout in net to highlight the victory.

The teams skated to a scoreless draw in the first period, but the Cards registered five unanswered goals in the final two stanzas.

Chris Jelken opened the scoring at the 11:15 mark of the second period and Coy Gonnerman made it 2-0 with 3:33 remaining in the stanza.

Tyler Reisdorfer added a pow-

er-play tally with 1:52 remaining in the period to give Luverne a 3-0 cushion.

Ben Serie and Jesse Reed scored goals 25 seconds apart with less than five minutes remaining in the third period to cap the win.

Kruse charted assists for Luverne's first goal and the final three tallies.

Andrew Reisch, Reed and Serie notched one assist each.

Dec. 10
Waseca 6,
Luverne 3

Luverne's five-game winning streak to start the season came to an end when the Blue Jays saddled the Cardinals with a three-goal setback at the BMIA.

Change/continued on page 9

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Change/continued from page 8

The Cardinals were in a position to win their fifth consecutive conference game when Declan Beers scored 1:41 into the third period to knot the score at three.

Waseca simply didn't let it happen. Nick Rolling and Peter Meyer scored goals in a 49-second span to give the visitors a 5-3 advantage with 11:09 remaining and Rolling capped the scoring with 7:46 left to play to seal a three-goal conquest for the Blue Jays.

Although the Cardinals sported a 37-16 advantage in shots on goal, LHS never sported a lead.

Jackson Priebe gave the Blue Jays a 1-0 cushion at the 11:54 mark of the first period before Luverne's Chris Jelken knotted the score at one with 5:17 remaining in the stanza.

Waseca's Spencer Heitkamp put the Blue Jays in front 2-1 when he scored with one second remaining in the first period, but Luverne's Nick Harder tied the game at two with an unassisted tally 2:17 into the second period.

Waseca's Meyer scored his first of two goals 16 seconds later to give the Blue Jays a 3-2 edge they took into the third period.

Beers, Jesse Reed and Tyler Reisdorfer charted one assist each for the Cardinals.

Daniel Tofteland played the first two and one-half periods in net for the Cardinals and surrendered five goals.

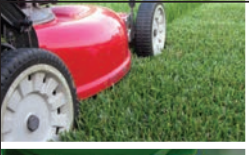
Kaden Ericson yielded one goal in the final eight minutes of the game.

Dec. 20
Luverne 8,
Windom 0
The Cardinals thrived during



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 45
Luverne High School students break out in celebration after Tyler Reisdorfer knotted the score at two during the state semifinals.

Change/continued on page 10



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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 egf 19
Forward Andrew Reisch is one of five senior leaders of a Luverne boys' hockey team that compiled a 22-7-1 record, captured the Big South Conference championship and claimed the school's second Section 3A title this winter.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 34

Luverne senior Jesse Reed tips the puck in front of a Hermantown player during the state quarterfinals at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul March 8.

Change/continued from page 9

power-play situations to highlight an eight-goal victory over the Eagles at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

Luverne scored seven power-play goals in 10 opportunities to set the stage for an easy victory over Windom.

Ben Serie and Tyler Reisdorfer

led the offensive charge for an LHS team that outshot the Eagles 32-13 by scoring two goals each.

Kaden Ericson stopped all 13 shots he faced in goal to record a shutout for the Cards.

LHS scored four goals in the first and second periods of the contest.

Declan Beers opened the scoring with a power-play goal 5:05 into the game, and Kasyn Kruse and Reisdorfer added power-play tallies 3:12 apart later in the period to make it 3-0.

Serie added an even-strength goal with six seconds left in the stanza to up the lead to 4-0.

LHS put the game away by scoring four power-play goals in the second period.

Nick Harder and Serie scored one goal each in the first 8:53 of the stanza.

Reisdorfer scored with 6:27 remaining in the period before Chris Jelken capped the scoring

with an unassisted tally with 2:49 left in the stanza.

Beers, Harder and Kruse recorded two assists each in the game.

Reisdorfer, Jesse Reed and Gaige Nath added one assist each

Change/continued on page 11



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Change/continued from page 10

to the winning cause.

Dec. 22
Luverne 8,
Worthington 0

A big second period lifted the Cardinals to victory when they squared off against the Trojans in Worthington.

The teams played to a scoreless draw in the first 17 minutes of play, but Luverne exploded for six second-period goals and went on to sport a commanding 60-6 advantage in shots on goal during an eight-goal victory.

LHS received goals from eight different players in the contest.

Kasyn Kruse opened the scoring 15 seconds into the second period and Gaige Nath and Nick Harder registered goals 47 seconds apart to make it a 3-0 game with 15 minutes left in the stanza.

Ben Serie upped the lead to 4-0 with 7:39 remaining in the period and Chris Jelken and Tyler Reisdorfer scored goals 14 seconds apart to cap the six-goal eruption with 3:05 left in the second stanza.

LHS netted a pair of third-period goals to complete the win.

Jesse Kontz scored 4:40 into the final period and Coy Gonnerman netted the game's final goal with 6:04 left to play.

Jelken led the Cards with two assists in the game.

Jonathan Stearns, Reisdorfer, Mark Sterrett, Nath, Gonnerman, Andrew Reisch and Skylar Dingmann added one assist each to the winning cause.

Daniel Tofteland registered a six-goal shutout in net for the Cards.

Dec. 26
Woodbury 5,
Luverne 3

The Cardinals took their second setback of the season when they took on the Woodbury Royals

during the opening round of the South St. Paul Tournament.

Luverne took a 3-2 lead with a pair of second-period goals, but the Royals scored three times in the third period to settle the issue.

Ronnie Sweeny knotted the score at three for Woodbury with a power-play goal 2:03 into the third period.

Alec Wonsmos and Ben Wahlin added goals in the first nine minutes of the third period to ice the win for the Royals.

Max Meyer gave Woodbury a 1-0 lead 1:02 into the game before Luverne's Trey Roberts knotted the score at one with a goal at the 11:45 mark.

Zach Lantz gave the Royals a 2-1 edge with a goal with 5:18 remaining in the first stanza, but the second period belonged to LHS.

Nick Harder tied the game at two with 8:50 left in the second stanza and Mark Sterrett scored with 5:18 remaining to give the Cards a 3-2 edge.

Woodbury sported a 40-22 advantage in shots on goal in the game.

Kaden Ericson made 35 saves in net for LHS, which received a two-assist effort from Declan Beers.

Jim Erickson, Gaige Nath and Andrew Reisch recorded one assist each for the Cards.

Change/continued on page 12



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 42
Luverne senior goalie Kaden Ericson makes a pad save in front of Hermantown's Hunter Olson during the state quarterfinals in St. Paul. Ericson made 49 saves in the clash with the Hawks.

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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 egf 10

Luverne sophomore forward Mark Sterrett controls the puck in front of an East Grand Forks player during the consolation semifinals in Mariucci Arena.

Change/continued from page 11

register a victory.

The Raiders notched the lone goal of the first period when Colin Sieh scored with 57 seconds remaining in the stanza.

The rest of the game belonged to Luverne, which sported a 33-19 advantage in shots on goal during the contest.

Nick Harder registered an unassisted tally 9:17 into the second period to knot the score at one.

Chris Jelken gave the Cards their first lead (2-1) when he scored during a power-play situation with 5:38 remaining in the second stanza.

The Cards put the game away with a two-goal third period that started with Ben Serie netting a power-play goal with 8:18 left

to play.

Mark Sterrett capped the scoring with a counter that came with 4:11 remaining in the game.

Jelken charted two assists for the Cards, while Harder finished the game with one assist.

Daniel Tofteland stopped 18 of the 19 shots he faced in goal.

Dec. 28
Luverne 4,
Hopkins 0

The Cardinals won the consolation championship of the South St. Paul Tournament by skating to a four-goal victory over the Royals.

Luverne sported a 1-0 lead after 34 minutes of play and iced the victory by scoring three goals in

the third period.

Jesse Reed led the Cards offensively by netting two goals, while Kaden Ericson registered a 23-save shutout in goal to highlight a standout defensive effort.

Reed scored the lone goal in the first two periods of play when he put the puck in the net 5:09 into the game.

Luverne, which outshot Hopkins 40-23 in the game, exploded for three goals in the third period to seal the victory.

Jim Erickson doubled the lead (2-0) 3:37 into the stanza.

Trey Roberts and Reed registered power-play goals in the game's final 6:52 to solidify the win.

Kasyn Kruse turned in a three-

assist effort for the Cards.

Erickson, Mark Sterrett and Nick Harder contributed one assist each to the winning cause.

Dec. 31
Totino-Grace 5,
Luverne 1

The Cardinals completed play in 2016 with a 9-3 record after falling to the Eagles by four goals at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

T-G gained control of the game by outshooting LHS 15-3 and scoring two goals in the first period, and the Eagles went on to outscore the Cards 3-1 the rest of the way to win handily.

Cam Fagerlee opened the scoring with a power-play goal 4:42 into the game and Ryan Hill

added a tally with 7:03 remaining in the first period to give the Eagles a two-goal cushion.

T-G upped its lead to 3-0 when Sam Hentges scored 42 seconds into the second period, but Luverne countered with an unassisted goal from Tyler Reisdorfer to cap the scoring in the second period at the 4:55 mark.

Fagerlee's second goal of the game 4:13 into the third period gave the Eagles a 4-1 advantage before Ryan Jordan added an empty-net goal with 21 seconds left to clinch a four-goal victory for T-G.

The Eagles sported a 36-31 advantage in shots on goal in

Change/continued on page 13

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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 20

Luverne senior defenseman Chris Jelken challenges a shot by Hermantown’s Jesse Jacques during the state quarterfinals in St. Paul Thursday.

Change/continued from page 12

the game.

Daniel Tofteland turned in a 30-save performance in goal for the Cards.

Jan. 3
Luverne 1, Mankato East 1

The Cardinals opened play in 2017 by skating to a draw with Mankato East at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

Luverne sported a 45-28 advantage in shots on goal in the

contest, but the Cardinals were limited to one goal.

Nick Salzie gave the Cougars a 1-0 lead when he registered a goal with 8:03 remaining in the first period.

Luverne knotted the score at one 1:13 into the second stanza, when Kasyn Kruse netted the lone goal of the contest for LHS.

The teams skated to a scoreless draw the rest of the night.

Kaden Ericson turned in a 27-save performance in goal for the

Cardinals.

Jan. 5
New Ulm 4, Luverne 1

The Cardinals lost their second conference game of the season when they squared off against the Eagles at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

Luverne sported a comfortable 43-20 advantage in shots on goal of the game, but it was New Ulm that walked away with a three-

goal victory.

The Cardinals drew first blood in the contest during a first period that featured LHS sporting a 20-4 cushion in shots on goal.

Kasyn Kruse registered the lone goal for the hosts when he registered a power-play tally at the 7:08 mark of the opening period after being set up by Tyler Reisdorfer.

New Ulm overcame the early deficit by netting a pair of goals in both the second and third periods.

Glavine Schugel, who registered a hat trick for the Eagles, tied the game at one with a short-handed tally 2:23 into the second period before giving New Ulm a 2-1 edge with 4:02 remaining in the stanza.

Nate Miller upped the Eagles’ lead to 3-1 2:48 into the third period before Schugel completed his hat trick with an empty-net tally with 44 seconds left to play.

Change/continued on page 14

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Luverne junior forward Declan Beers fires a pass across the ice during the state quarterfinals against Hermantown at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul March 8.

Change/continued from page 13

Kaden Ericson stopped 16 of the 19 shots he faced in goal for the Cardinals.

Jan. 6
St. Paul Academy 6,
Luverne 0

A slump of not winning a game in four outings continued when the Cardinals squared off against the state-ranked Spartans in St. Paul.

St. Paul Academy, the state's

third-ranked team entering the clash, lived up to the billing against LHS.

The Spartans scored six goals in the first two periods of play and blanked the Cards for 51 minutes during a one-sided contest.

SPA assumed control of the game with a four-goal first period. Adam Zakowski opened the scoring 2:52 into the contest and Dominic Picciano added consecutive goals as the period

progressed to give the Spartans a 3-0 cushion with 7:24 remaining in the stanza.

Devin McCabe added a power-play tally with 2:37 remaining in the period to up SPA's lead to 4-0. It appeared the score would remain intact after two periods of play until the Spartans struck twice in the final minute of the second period.

Jack Johnson and Matt Dahlseide netted goals 23 seconds apart

to give the Spartans a 6-0 cushion with two seconds left in the second stanza.

SPA sported a 31=24 advantage in shots on goal in the game.

Kaden Ericson made 25 saves in goal for the Cardinals.

**Jan. 10
Luverne 15,
Fairmont 0**

A 15-goal outburst by the Cardinals snapped what was a streak

of playing four games without producing a victory when LHS met Fairmont at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

Luverne's 15-goal effort was its highest scoring total of the season and it enabled the Cardinals to complete a sweep of their season series with Fairmont.

It looked like the game might be competitive when the hosts

Change/continued on page 15

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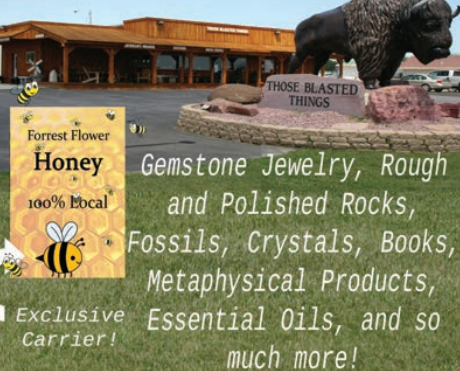
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Change/continued from page 14



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 22
Luverne junior Tyler Reisdorfer emerged as a key player in Luverne's defensive style of hockey during the 2016-17 season.

led 3-0 at the first intermission. The contest turned into a rout in the second and third periods, when LHS registered six goals in each stanza to win handily. Kasyn Kruse, who netted four goals in the contest, opened the scoring 3:57 into the game and Nick Harder scored his first of three goals 11 seconds later. Harder added an unassisted tally with 9:18 remaining in the first period to make it 3-0. Ben Serie and Coy Gonnerman, who added two goals each to the winning cause, scored 36 seconds apart in the first 2:39 of the second period to double (4-0) Luverne's lead. Gaige Nath and Kruse registered goals 33 seconds apart to make it a 6-0 game before Gonnerman recorded his second goal of the contest at the 6:06 mark of the second stanza. Jesse Reed capped the six-goal second period with a short-handed tally with 3:49 remaining. Kruse scored twice and Serie and Harder added one goal each to up the lead to 13-0 with 9:40 remaining in the third period. Charlie Reisch registered a power-play goal at 2:25 before Tyler Reisdorfer notched the final goal of the game with 1:28 left to play. Luverne, which received a 17-save shutout from Daniel Tofte-land, outshot Fairmont 57-17. Declan Beers and Reed charted three assists for the winners, while Gonnerman and Harder recorded two assists each. Trey Roberts, Kruse, Nath, Andrew Reisch, Charlie Reisch, Cade VerSteeg, Chris Jelken, Serie and Skylar Dingmann notched one assist each for LHS.

Jan. 14
Luverne 8,
Willmar 2

The Cardinals had their way with Section 3A foe Willmar when the teams squared off in Willmar. Luverne netted four first-period goals and never trailed in what

ended as a six-goal victory. Seven different LHS players scored in the game including Kasyn Kruse, who was the lone Cardinal to net two goals. Luverne raced to a 3-0 lead with Ben Serie, Coy Gonnerman and Gaige Nath scoring goals in the game's first 9:42. Willmar's Eli Slaughter ended the run with a power-play tally with 1:54 remaining in the opening stanza, but Nick Harder registered an unassisted goal with 26 seconds left to give the Cards a 4-1 advantage they would take into the second period. Kruse and Declan Beers scored goals in the first 8:48 of the second period to up the lead to 6-0, but Willmar's Avery Smith made it a 6-1 game before the period was complete. Kruse capped his two-goal effort with an unassisted tally 6:02 into the third period before Mark Sterrett capped the scoring with

Change/continued on page 16



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 egf 17
Luverne sophomore forward Gaige Nath (25) earned a position on the third line during his first season as a member of the varsity squad. He is one of six sophomores on the varsity roster.

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Change/continued from page 15

a power-play goal that came with 50 seconds left to play.

Gonnerman and Jim Erickson charted two assists each for the winners, while Tyler Reisdorfer, Kruse, Serie and Chris Jelken added one assist each to the winning cause.

Kaden Ericson made 23 saves in goal for an LHS team that outshot Willmar 39-25 in the contest.

Jan. 19
Luverne 7,
Redwood Valley 0

The Cardinals completed a sweep of their annual season series with RWV by coasting to a seven-goal victory in Redwood Falls.

Luverne, which bested RWV 5-0 at the Blue Mound Ice Arena in December, bettered that effort in the rematch.

Mark Sterrett recorded his first hat trick as a varsity skater and Kaden Ericson turned in a 16-save shutout in goal to highlight the win.

Sterrett gave the Cards a 1-0 lead 4:32 into the game and Jesse Reed added a power-play tally with 3:13 remaining in the first period to give LHS a 2-0 cushion in the second period.

Luverne settled the issue by recording four goals in the second period to up the lead to 6-0.

Sterrett scored the first goal of the stanza at the 7:17 mark of the period before completing his hat trick with 2:03 remaining.

Tyler Reisdorfer netted an unassisted goal at the 6:38 mark of the second period and Nick Harder added a goal 52 seconds later.

Declan Beers completed Luverne's seven-goal effort with a power-play tally at the 12:29 mark of the third period.

Ben Serie recorded four assists for the Cardinals, while Kasyn Kruse and Reed added two assists each to the winning cause.

Beers and Reisdorfer registered one assist each for LHS, which sported a 28-16 advantage in shots on goal in the game.

Jan. 21
Luverne 4,
Waseca 0



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 33

Luverne junior Kasyn Kruse, pictured during the state quarterfinals against Hermantown March 8, led the Cardinals in points during the 2016-17 season. Kruse is one of nine juniors expected to return to the program next winter.

Change/continued on page 17

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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 egf 1

The Luverne players gather in front of the net prior to squaring off against East Grand Forks during the consolation semifinals at Mariucci Arena Thursday.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 43

Luverne junior Tyler Reisdorfer trips up Hermantown's Ryan Sandelin during the state quarterfinals in St. Paul March 8.

Change/continued from page 16

The Cardinals gained some revenge for an early-season loss when they skated to a four-goal victory in Waseca.

The Blue Jays saddled LHS with their first loss of the season when they topped the Cards 6-3 at the Blue Mound Ice Arena Dec. 10.

The rematch belonged to LHS, which received a shutout performance in net from Kaden Ericson and four goals from four different players on offense.

Mark Sterrett gave the Cards a 1-0 cushion when he scored the opening goal 3:52 into the contest.

LHS upped the lead to 3-0 with a pair of second period goals.

Kasyn Kruse put the puck into the net at the 9:46 mark of the second stanza and Jesse Reed registered a power-play goal 2:09 later to make it a three-goal difference.

Change/continued on page 18

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Luverne junior forward Coy Gonnerman advances the puck deep into the East Grand Forks zone during Thursday’s consolation semifinal in Minneapolis.

Change/continued from page 17

Declan Beers completed the scoring in the game when he recorded a short-handed goal 13 seconds into the third period.

Reed, Beers, Kruse, Nick Harder, Ben Serie, Jim Erickson and Tyler Reisdorfer chipped in one assist each to the winning cause.

Luverne sported a 37-23 advantage in shots on goal in the game.

Jan. 28
Luverne 6,
New Prague 0

The Cardinals turned in a commanding performance during their six-goal win over the Trojans at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

Kaden Ericson posted a 14-save shutout in goal and Nick Harder and Kasyn Kruse combined ef-

forts to score five goals in the lopsided victory.

New Prague won the consolation title at the 2015 state tournament, but the Trojans were no match for an LHS squad that sported a 30-14 advantage in shots on goal in the game.

LHS scored one goal in the first period, two in the second

and three in the third to win the contest handily.

Kruse gave the Cards a 1-0 lead 1:02 into the game and doubled the advantage (2-0) with a power-play tally 5:42 into the second period to cap a two-goal effort.

Harder, who registered a hat trick for the Cards, scored Luverne’s second goal of the second

period with 8:33 remaining.

A three-goal third period that started with Mark Sterrett scoring at the 9:27 mark locked up the win.

Harder scored twice in a span of 2:05 to cap the scoring and complete his hat trick.

Change/continued on page 19



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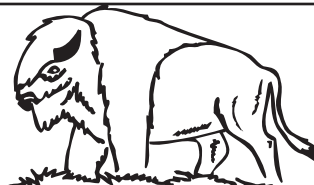


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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 40
Luverne sophomore forward Ben Serie battles for the puck with a Hermantown player near the Hawks' net during the state quarterfinals in St. Paul March 8.

Change/continued from page 18

Kruse led LHS with three assists in the game.

Declan Beers, Tyler Reisdorfer and Jim Erickson added one goal each to the winning cause.

Jan. 31, Luverne 16, Worthington 0

Luverne's best offensive night of the season turned into a 16-goal victory when they entertained the Trojans at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

The Cardinals sported a 73-8 advantage in shots on goal and netted a season high 16 tallies during the rout of Worthington.

Nick Harder, Tyler Reisdorfer, Kasyn Kruse and Coy Gonnerman paced the LHS offense with two-goal efforts.

Kaden Ericson (seven saves in two periods) and Oscar Holmberg (one save in the third period) combined efforts to produce a shutout in goal.

Luverne's decisive victory

included an eight-goal outburst in the second period and four-goal efforts in the first and third stanzas.

Harder and Reisdorfer netted one goal each in the first 4:35 of the game and Ben Serie added an unassisted tally with 5:44 remaining in the opening period.

Kruse registered an unassisted, short-handed goal with eight seconds left in the first period to up the lead to 4-0.

Gonnerman recorded two

goals, including one unassisted effort, and Kruse and Trey Roberts chipped in one goal each in the first 5:44 of the second period to double the lead (8-0) for LHS.

Reisdorfer registered a power-play tally at the 7:24 mark of the second period, while Jesse Reed (an unassisted effort), Jonathan Stearns and Harder added goals in the final 3:05 of the stanza to make it a 12-0 game.

Gaige Nath, Mark Sterrett, Andrew Reisch and Skylar Ding-

mann netted third-period goals to complete the rout for Luverne.

Reed led LHS with five assists in the game, while Serie and Jim Erickson added three and two assists to the winning effort respectively.

Chris Jelken, Declan Beers, Cade VerSteeg, Gonnerman, Kruse, Roberts and Reisch charted one assist each for the winning Cardinals.

Change/continued on page 20



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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 13

Luverne senior goalie Kaden Ericson registers one of his 49 saves during the state quarterfinal loss to Hermantown at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Change/continued from page 19

**Feb. 2
Luverne 3,
New Ulm 2**
The Cardinals opened their February schedule by posting a thrilling one-goal overtime victory over the Eagles in New Ulm. Luverne, which lost a 4-1 decision to the Eagles at the Blue Mound Ice Arena Jan. 5, appeared to be in trouble when New Ulm's Bayler Kraus registered a power-

play goal with 2:57 remaining in the third period to give the hosts a 2-1 edge.
The Cardinals simply didn't give up the fight.
Kasyn Kruse knotted the score at two with a short-handed tally with 1:50 remaining in the third period and Nick Harder settled the issue by netting an unassisted goal 1:09 in overtime to clinch a 3-2 win over New Ulm.

The teams skated to a scoreless draw in the first period before Kruse gave the Cards a 1-0 cushion with a goal that came 7:13 into the second period.
New Ulm's Nate Miller tied the score at one with 55 seconds remaining in the second stanza.
Luverne sported a 29-23 advantage in shots on goal in the game.
Kaden Ericson made 21 saves in net for Luverne, which received

one assist each from Declan Beers and Jesse Reed.
**Feb. 6
Luverne 11,
Windom 1**
The Cardinals made short work of the Eagles when the teams squared off in Windom.
Luverne scored 10 goals in the first two periods of play and sported a 42-29 advantage in

shots on goal during a 10-goal victory over the Eagles.
Kasyn Kruse led LHS offensively with four goals and two assists, while Declan Beer turned in a two-goal, three-assist effort.
LHS assumed control of the contest by erupting for six goals in the first period.
Kruse scored twice and Ben

Change/continued on page 21



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Change/continued from page 20

Serie added a tally in the first 6:15 of play to give the Cards a 3-0 cushion.

Beers scored both of his goals and Jesse Reed added an unassisted tally in the final 2:27 of the period to make it 6-0.

The Cardinals put the game out of reach with a four-goal second stanza.

Kruse scored 1:21 into the period and capped his four-goal performance with a short-handed, unassisted tally at the 12:55 mark of the stanza.

Mark Sterrett and Nick Harder added goals before the period was complete to give LHS a 10-0 advantage heading into the third period.

Charlie Reisch scored 5:45 into the third period before Windom snapped Luverne's 11-goal run with 25 seconds left to play when David Volk scored for the Eagles.

Kaden Ericson made 21 saves without surrendering a goal in the first two periods of the game, while Daniel Tofteland stopped seven of eight shots in the third period.

Harder and Jim Erickson contributed three and two assists respectively to the winning cause.

Reed and Serie chipped in one assist each.

Feb. 9
Luverne 5,
Marshall 2

The Cardinals completed their trek to a Big South Conference championship with a three-goal victory over the Tigers at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

In what boiled down to a single game that determined the league title, Luverne overcame an early 2-0 deficit by netting five unanswered goals in the final two periods of play to clinch the crown.

LHS took a 12-2 BSC mark into the game, while Marshall entered its final league game of the year with a 12-2-1 mark.

Luverne's five-goal rally, which featured goals from five different players, decided the issue.

Jim Erickson opened the scoring for LHS with a shot from point that made it a 2-1 game with 6:40 left in the second stanza.

Declan Beers knotted the score at two with a power-play goal that came with 2:25 remaining in the period.

Luverne scored three times in

the final 7:40 of the third period to ice the victory.

Kasyn Kruse gave the Cards their first lead (3-2) of the night 9:20 into the final stanza and Ben Serie added a goal 10 seconds later to make it a 4-2 game.

Jesse Reed capped Luverne's three-goal third period with a tally that came with 2:41 left to play.

Marshall got off to a good start as Dylan Crique-Danielson scored 17 seconds into the contest before netting his second goal of the first period with 8:18 remaining.

Luverne sported a 37-22 cushion in shots on goal of the game.

Daniel Tofteland stopped 20 of the 22 shots he faced in net for the Cards.

Reed led LHS with two assists.

Kruse, Beers, Serie, Mark Sterrett and Chris Jelken added one assist each to the winning cause.

Feb. 17
Luverne 7,
SP-L-H-TCU 0

The Cardinals completed a

Change/continued on page 22



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 41

Luverne junior Jim Erickson swipes at the puck during the state game against Hermantown.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 27

Luverne senior Jesse Reed leads a rush into the Hermantown zone during the state quarterfinals in the Xcel Energy Center March 8.



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Luverne junior forward Declan Beers battles for the puck along with Hermantown’s Dawson Pietursa during the state quarterfinals in St. Paul March 8.

Change/continued from page 21

19-5-1 regular season by rolling to a seven-goal victory over St. Peter-Le Sueur-Henderson-Tri-City United in Le Sueur.

Luverne scored all seven of its goals in the first two periods of the game to sweep their annual season series with the Bulldogs.

The win also completed a 14-2 Big South Conference slate for the Cards.

Luverne, which outshot the hosts 49-18 in the game, received a hat trick from Kasyn Kruse and a two-goal effort from Nick Harder.

Harder opened the scoring with a power-play tally 5:06 into the game and Kruse scored eight seconds later to make it 2-0.

Harder’s second goal of the night came with 1:02 remaining

in the first period and Mark Sterrett added a power-play tally with five seconds left in the stanza to up the lead to 4-0.

LHS iced the win with a three-goal second period.

Jesse Reed opened the scoring in the second period with a power-play goal 6:49 into the stanza.

Kruse registered an unassisted, short-handed tally with 8:23 left to play in the second period before scoring the game’s final goal with 54 seconds remaining in the stanza.

Daniel Tofteland turned in a 16-save shutout in net for the Cards.

Kruse, Harder and Ben Serie contributed two assists each to the winning cause, while Reed,

Sterrett, Declan Beers and Tyler Reisdorfer finished the game with one assist each.

**Feb. 25
Luverne 5,
Windom 0**

The Cardinals opened the Section 3A Tournament by skating to a five-goal victory over the Eagles during a quarterfinal-round game played at the Blue Mound Ice Arena.

Top-seeded LHS was limited to five goals by eighth-seeded Windom, but the Cardinals dominated the contest by outshooting the Eagles 75-18 in the contest.

Five different Cardinals put the puck in the net and goalie Kaden Ericson recorded an 18-save

shutout to highlight the victory.

Luverne assumed control of the game with a three-goal first period.

Trey Roberts netted an unassisted tally and Mark Sterrett scored a goal 2:47 into the game to give the Cards a 2-0 lead.

Coy Gonnerman added a goal with 5:35 remaining to cap the scoring in the first period.

LHS went on to add one goal in each of the second and third periods.

Ben Serie upped the lead to 4-0 with 5:15 remaining in the second stanza.

Gaige Nath scored the game’s final goal with 1:23 left to play.

Chris Jelken led the Cards with two assists in the contest.

Serie, Gonnerman, Jesse Reed and Andrew Reisch added one assist each to the winning cause.

**Feb. 27
Luverne 4,
Hutchinson 2**

The Cardinals earned a berth in the Section 3A championship game by topping the Tigers by two goals at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter.

In what was a hard-fought battle in the semifinals between the Cards and fifth-seeded Hutchinson, Luverne scored four of the final five goals of the game to advance to the title tilt.

After the teams battled to a

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Change/continued from page 22.

scoreless draw in the first period, Hutchinson's Peyton Jasken netted the first of two power-play goals by the Tigers to give his team a one-goal edge 32 seconds into the second period.

Hutchinson's 1-0 lead didn't last very long.

Luverne's Nick Harder tied the game at one with an unassisted tally 53 seconds later.

The Cardinals gained a 2-1 lead when Ben Serie netted his first of two goals with 52 seconds remaining in the second stanza.

Serie's second goal of the game came 5:25 into the third period and it upped the lead to 2-1.

The rest of the scoring came in the game's final minute.

Hutchinson's Jake Mraz netted a power-play goal with 48 seconds remaining to make it a 3-2 difference.

Tyler Reisdorfer answered for Luverne with an unassisted, empty-net goal that came with 19 seconds left to play.

Luverne sported a 39-22 advantage in shots on goal in the contest.

Kaden Erickson made 20 saves as Luverne's net-minder.

Trey Roberts and Jesse Reed recorded assists for the winners.

March 1
Luverne 5,
Marshall 1

The Cardinals captured their second Section 3A title in program history when they upended the Tigers by four goals at the Lund Center on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter.

The section championship game was a tight battle for the better part of two periods, but Luverne outscored Marshall 4-0 in the final 19:59 to earn their second trip to the state tournament in the past three years.

Kasyn Kruse turned in a two-goal effort for an LHS squad that outshot the Tigers 33-18 in the game.

Goalie Kaden Ericson made 17 saves in net during the contest.

Luverne netted the game's first



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 egf 15

Change/continued on page 24

Luverne's Kasyn Kruse checks East Grand Forks defenseman Luke Vonesh Thursday.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 egf 3

Cardinals Tyler Reisdorfer (2), Nick Harder (9) and Chris Jelken (19) scramble for the puck during the consolation semifinals against East Grand Forks.

The logo for LuVerne Minnesota features the word "LuVerne" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a red heart shape integrated into the letter "v". Below "LuVerne" is the word "MINNESOTA" in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. Underneath "MINNESOTA" is the tagline "Love the life!" written in a red, cursive script font.

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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 25
Luverne sophomore forward Ben Serie searches for a teammate in Hermantown’s defensive zone during the state quarterfinals in St. Paul March 8.

Change/continued from page 24

goal 9:44 into the contest when Jesse Reed registered an unassisted tally.

The 1-0 cushion remained intact until 7:30 remained in the second period, when Marshall’s Mason Plate knotted the score at one.

Kruse regained the lead for LHS with 2:59 left in the second period

and the Cardinals never looked back as they settled the issue with a three-goal third period.

Mark Sterrett ignited the third-period uprising 58 seconds into the stanza before Kruse registered a power-play tally to make it a 4-1 game with 7:49 left to play.

Declan Beers scored the final goal with 51 seconds left.

Nick Harder led the Cardinals with two assists in the title tilt.

Reed, Kruse and Trey Roberts charted one assist each.

March 8
Hermantown 3,
Luverne 2

The Cardinals made a big splash during their state tourna-

ment debut against Hermantown at the Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul.

Luverne entered the game as a huge underdog against the state’s top-ranked team, but the Cardinals earned respect by forcing the Hawks into overtime before falling by one goal at game’s end.

The teams skated to a scoreless

draw in the first period of play before Hermantown gained a 2-0 lead in the second period.

Tyler Watkins netted the first goal of the game for the Hawks 1:44 into the second period.

Ryan Sandelin made it a two-goal difference with 2:46 left in

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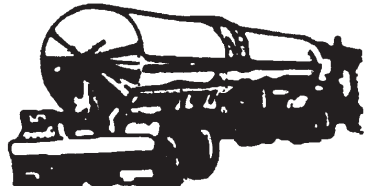
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Change/continued from page 24

the stanza, but that proved to be the last time Hermantown would score in regulation play.

Luverne defenseman Tyler Reisdorfer made it a 2-1 game when he netted a power-play tally with 1:54 left in the second period.

Reisdorfer sent the game to overtime when he netted his second unassisted goal of the game with 2:08 remaining in the third period.

The game's overtime session didn't last very long.

Hermantown's Dylan Kolquist scored the game-ending goal 42

seconds into overtime to send the Hawks to the semifinals.

Hermantown doubled (52-26) Luverne's output in shots on goal in the game.

Kaden Ericson, who was sensational in goal for LHS, made 49 saves.

March 9
East Grand Forks 5,
Luverne 2

The Cardinals drew another tough assignment when they

Change/continued on page 26



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 egf 11
East Grand Forks defenseman Dylan Egeland keeps Luverne's Kasyn Kruse away from the puck in Mariucci Arena.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 5
Luverne junior defenseman Tyler Reisdorfer is introduced to the television audience prior to the state quarterfinal against Hermantown. Reisdorfer netted both of Luverne's goals in the game.

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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 23

Luverne junior forward Declan Beers swipes at the puck from his knees during the state quarterfinals against Hermantown March 8.

Change/continued from page 25

were pitted against the fourth-seeded Green Wave during the consolation semifinals in Mari-

ucci Arena in Minneapolis. East Grand Forks captured back-to-back state champion-

ships in 2014 and 2015, but that didn't seem to intimidate LHS. The Cardinals erased a 2-0 defi-

cit by scoring a goal late in the first period and another early in the second period to knot the score

at two, but the Green Wave registered three unanswered goals

Change/continued on page 27

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John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 24

Sophomore Ben Serie, pictured during the game against Hermantown March 8, netted Luverne's first goal against East Grand Forks.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 1

Luverne junior goalie Daniel Totteland compiled a 7-2 record during the 2016-17 season and is expected to log more time in net for Luverne next season.



John Rittenhouse photo/0316 herman 1

Mark Sterrett (front) and Jesse Reed (24) keep an eye on the action from the bench during the state quarterfinals in the Xcel Energy Center.

Change/continued from page 26_____

during the game’s final 26 minutes to end Luverne’s 22-7-1 season.

EGF gained the upper hand early as Hunter Olson scored 2:58 into the contest and Carter Beck added a tally with 37 seconds left in the opening stanza to give the Green Wave a 2-0 cushion.

Luverne answered the challenge by scoring twice in a span of 29 seconds to tie the game at two.

Ben Serie quelled EGF’s momentum by netting an unassisted tally with seven seconds left in the first period.

Kasyn Kruse knotted the score at two after being set up by Trey Roberts and Nick Harder 22 seconds into the

second period.

The Green Wave answered the challenge by outscoring the Cards 3-0 the rest of the game.

Nick Lund snapped the deadlock with 9:00 remaining in the second period and Nick Derrick made it a 4-2 difference when he netted a power-play goal with 5:18 left in the stanza.

Dylan Egeland provided EGF with an insurance goal when he registered the game’s final tally with 5:34 left in the third period.

EGF sported a 50-20 advantage in shots on goal in the contest.

Kaden Ericson registered 45 saves in net for the Cards.



Stick to it.

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Good Luck at State

Congratulations Cardinals!



Section 3A Champions 2017 State Tournament Qualifiers



JOHN RITTENHOUSE PHOTO

Team members include (*lying on the ice, from left*) Nick Harder, Max Skattum, Mark Sterrett, Trey Roberts, Declan Beers, Kaden Ericson, Daniel Tofteland, Kasyn Kruse, Coy Gonnerman, Gaige Nath, Charlie Reisch, (*kneeling*) Andrew Reisch, Jim Erickson, Cade VerSteeg, Tyler Reisdorfer, Skylar Dingmann, Jesse Kontz, Ben Serie, assistant coach Adam Ossefoort, (*back*) head coach Phillip Paquette, assistant coach Paul Erickson, manager James Chanthalangsy, Chris Jelken, manager Levin Stuker and Jesse Reed.

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