

# City of champions



The Lynden and Lynden Christian girls basketball teams both left Yakima with the coveted hardware of a state championship. This season's final accomplishments represented the third state title in program history for the Lions and the 13th for the Lyncs. (Hailey Palmer/Lynden Tribune)

## PREP GIRLS 2A STATE BASKETBALL

# Lions prove to be the best of the 2A ranks

Girls capture program's third state title with high-hopes talented cast

Three seniors all score in double figures in title game

By Hailey Palmer  
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YAKIMA — Lynden senior Liv Tjoelker predicted at the end of the regular season a month ago that the Lions would be claiming the gold ball at the state tournament. That proved to be true as the Lions captured the Class 2A state title with

a convincing 60-38 win over West Valley of Spokane Saturday evening in the SunDome.

The Lions and Eagles had just met a week prior in the regionals round of state, which Lynden won 48-36.

Tjoelker said it didn't matter to her if they played a team they had played before or not.

"Whoever is in the other color jersey, we're going to play with our best effort," she said.

The Lions' offense was flying high in the first quarter of the title game, with senior Keylie Hershey knocking down a 3-pointer to get the Lions on the board first. Lynden nailed four treys in the first eight minutes, getting two from Ruby VanderHaak, one from Anna VanderYacht and one from Hershey.

The offense struggled in the second quarter after Tjoelker and

VanderYacht got into foul trouble. The team found the hoop only once from the field on a lay-up by junior Faith Baar.

Lynden coach Rob Adams said the risk of keeping Tjoelker and VanderYacht in the game with two fouls each wasn't worth the possibility of maybe putting more points on the board.

"Some of the stuff we had success with in the first quarter we couldn't run in the second quarter because of the personnel on the floor," he said. "The gamble was, can we make it ugly and still defend with the idea we don't give up a lead and get into halftime with Liv and Anna with only two fouls each and not have to play them anymore? We were able to accomplish that."

Although the offense was held to just two

See **Lions** on B3



Senior Keylie Hershey scored a game-high 22 points in the state championship against West Valley of Spokane. Her performance in the tournament earned her all-tournament second-team honors. (Hailey Palmer/Lynden Tribune)

## PREP GIRLS 1A STATE BASKETBALL

# Lyncs end Cashmere's unbeaten run in title game



Senior Riley Dykstra scored 10 points to go with five rebounds in the Lyncs' state championship win over Cashmere. Dykstra was named to the all-tournament first-team. (Hailey Palmer/Lynden Tribune)

Versus star Van Lith, fourth quarter goes 15-4 for LC; 'we just wanted to come together as a team'

It's the program's 13th championship

By Hailey Palmer  
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YAKIMA — The girls Class 1A state championship game ended exactly how it started, with Kiley Roetcisoender stealing the ball from Cashmere's Hailey Van Lith.

Roetcisoender had snagged the ball on the Bulldogs' first possession of the game, intercepting

a pass intended for Van Lith, and she would do the same in the final seconds, except this time it dashed Cashmere's hopes of a state title.

"It was just all I could ask for, being able to do it," Roetcisoender said of sealing the win for the Lyncs. "If it was me or someone else, I'm just so thankful for this win that we got."

Lynden Christian secured its third state championship in five years — and the third under six-year head coach Brady Bomber — with a 58-55 come-from-behind win over Cashmere. It's also the 13th state championship overall for the Lyncs' girls program.

Getting to lift the gold ball after the game was anything but easy for Lynden Christian. Cashmere entered the game with a perfect 24-0 record and has one of the best players in the country in Van Lith, who is committed to play next year for the University

of Louisville.

There's really no way to stop a player like Van Lith, but the Lyncs had a plan to at least try to slow her down. Lynden Christian sent a rotation of Roetcisoender, Kenadi Fay and Libby Stump at Van Lith, looking to limit her quality looks at the basket, and it worked when it absolutely needed to.

Through three quarters, Van Lith had scored 27 points and was on fire from beyond the arc, having drilled six 3-pointers. In the fourth quarter, Van Lith was held scoreless.

"After she hit her last three, our girls put a little more effort to get into her and at least not let her shoot over us," Bomber said. "We rotated Kenadi, Kiley and Libby every couple of minutes and Riley finished on the last possession. I couldn't be prouder of our girls' togetherness and toughness tonight."

The game was going

See **Lyncs** on B2

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# Lyncs: Find redemption after dropping state title a year ago

Continued from B1

back-and-forth between the two teams for a little over two-and-a-half quarters, but Cashmere went on an 8-0 run over the last two minutes of the third quarter to take a 51-43 lead heading into the final frame.

Van Lith and the rest of the Bulldogs looked to their crowd with their arms raised ready to lift the trophy. However, there were still eight minutes to play in this game.

The Lyncs went on a timely 8-2 run over the first four minutes of the final quarter to bring themselves within two points. Then Fay tied the game at 53-53 on a layup with 3:28 left.

Roetcisoender nailed a 3-pointer on the Lyncs' next possession to put them ahead for good, as it turned out. Stump knocked down a jumper to extend the lead to 58-55.

A couple of defensive stops and Roetcisoender's clutch steal later, Lynden Christian was raising the trophy at center court.

"These girls are tough. They've just built this resiliency and camaraderie that makes me so proud as their coach," Bomber said. "You just want to go to bat for them and give them the chance to be successful. They were so tough tonight. Just gritty mentally and physically."

It was the usual all-around team effort from Lynden Christian, with every player contributing on both ends of the floor. Stump, who



Junior Emily Mellema, guarded by Cashmere's Hailey Van Lith, drives to the basket in the first half of the state championship game. (Hailey Palmer/Lynden Tribune)

was partially responsible for guarding Van Lith, scored a team-high 12 points, including the Lyncs' final basket.

Senior Riley Dykstra poured in 10 points to go with five rebounds. Junior Emily Mellema also scored 10 and junior Paige TeVelde scored nine, knocking down three 3-pointers.

Dykstra was named to the all-tournament first team, while Mellema was

named to the second team.

"Libby and the rest of these girls have worked so hard," Bomber said. "They're in the gym early in the morning and late at night in the off-season. When the moment is here, it's never too big for them. I'm really proud of them for their effort tonight."

Stump said it was exciting to go up against someone of Van Lith's caliber be-

cause those opportunities don't come along very often.

"It's such an honor because when do you ever get to go up against a player like that?" Stump said. "It's pretty cool, but then you just have to swallow it and go out and play as hard as you can because she's just another player."

The Lyncs outscored the Bulldogs 15-4 in the final quarter, flipping the script

of the state championship a year ago when the Lyncs scored four points in the fourth quarter and watched a lead and their title hopes slip away to LaSalle.

"We just like to make it exciting for the fans," Mellema said.

The junior said the coaching staff didn't tell the Lyncs girls anything special before the fourth quarter. The Lyncs simply did what

they had done all season — play with each other.

"We just wanted to come together as a team and we definitely did more than they did in the fourth quarter," Mellema said. "I think that's the biggest reason why we won. We are a team and we play together so well."

It wasn't just the five starters for the Lyncs coming together to make the comeback. It was all nine of them, once again showing how deep the LC roster goes, a trait that's been maximized all season.

Bomber said he hoped keeping everyone's minutes down in their previous two games would keep legs reasonably fresh for the big game.

"We ran all nine of our girls through tonight and they all contributed," he said. "With our offense, we wanted to cut hard and make [Cashmere] move as much as we could. We hoped that by the end of the fourth quarter we would have a chance to have a little more gas in the tank."

Cashmere's Van Lith ended her career having played in three state championships, walking away with second place in each one at the fate of a Whatcom County team. One loss came to Mount Baker and the other two to the Lyncs.

Lynden Christian closed out its season with a 27-1 record, 22 straight wins and at the top of the Class 1A ranks for 2019-20.



No. 2 Lynden Christian and No. 1 Cashmere clashed in the state title game and the Lyncs snapped Cashmere's 24-game undefeated streak with a late comeback from eight points down in the fourth quarter. LC finished its season at 27-1. (Hailey Palmer/Lynden Tribune)

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