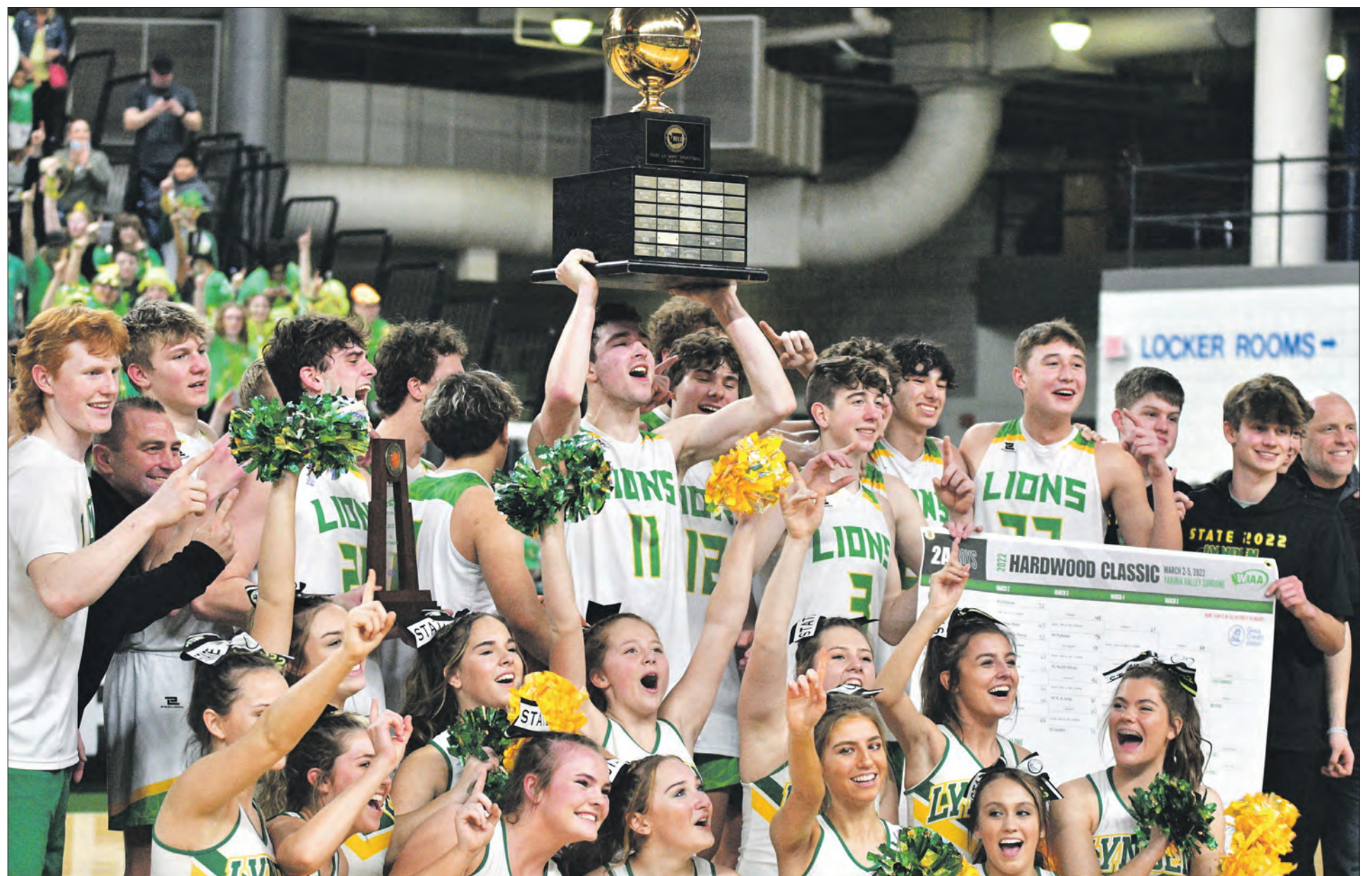




Triple Crown Town



The Lynden boys and both the Lynden Christian boys and girls celebrate their state championship victories following wins on Saturday at the Yakima Valley SunDome. (Connor J. Benintendi/Lynden Tribune)

Lynden boys, both LC teams claim state titles in Yakima

Lynden Christian 57
Nooksack Valley 56

By Connor J. Benintendi
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YAKIMA - It's only fitting that the third and final matchup between the bonafide top two teams in the state comes down to one shot, one moment, in overtime.

"I just can't believe it, I'm so happy that we got a team win like this. It took all of us, we all had a game-winning moment," said senior Libby Stump after the 57-56 win. "I love this team, I'm so happy we get to experience this. It's just so special."

However, while Stump's game-winning shot with three Pioneer hands in her face was the finalizer, multiple make-or-break plays could have decided the game earlier.

Stump and the Lyncs came through in all those moments, and their names will go into the 2022 record books in infamy. Nooksack Valley did not lose the game, Lynden Christian won it.

If this matchup was played 10 times over, it's likely both teams win five. That's how equally powered these teams were.

The season only had room for three, and the game is played until someone wins.

See **ROUND THREE** on B4

Lynden Christian 61
King's 58

By Connor J. Benintendi
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YAKIMA - Nothing comes easy in a state championship game, and the Lyncs had to work for every inch in the battle for the 1A crown.

Overcoming a huge second-half deficit, Lynden Christian earned their first state title since 2018 and first with Tim Zylstra as head coach. It was also Zylstra's first full season at the helm, as he took over the position beginning with last year's abbreviated spring season.

Despite that achievement, he kept it about the kids after the game.

"I'm just proud of them," Zylstra said after the 61-58 win. "This is about them, they put in all that work — every day we tried to get better. This is the pinnacle of that, and it shows what you can do with hard work, and once again 'staying the course' was our motto."

Meeting King's in the title game for the second consecutive postseason, Lynden Christian was determined to reverse the 2020 result. The mission was clear, but that didn't make completing it any simpler.

After leading 13-11 at the end of one quarter, LC slipped into an 11-point deficit at halftime, 34-23.

The King's lead reached its peak early in the third

See **VENGEANCE** on B3

Lynden 51
Pullman 34

By Connor J. Benintendi
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YAKIMA - This championship holds weight in the hearts of the Lions for many reasons beyond raising a gold ball over their heads.

The current Lynden seniors were sophomores when the Lions lost to North Kitsap in the semifinals in 2020. A short time later, the whole world shut down when the concern surrounding COVID-19 grew larger.

"It was a dream come true, it was the goal ever since we lost sophomore year," said senior Jordan Medcalf after the 51-34 win. "I wanted to lead this team, and that's what I did, and we won the gold ball."

High school sports, something so many in the Lynden community hold dearest, was shelved for a while after that 2020 season. They weren't able to compete for a state championship in 2021.

In their first opportunity to capitalize on another, they pulled it off.

"I'm really happy coming out of COVID that our kids, our team, were able to give the Lynden community a reason to cheer, to come out and be part of that celebration," said Lynden's head coach Brian Roper. "We've been so isolated, and to look up and see that

See **MAKING A RETURN** on B2



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