

2019-20 West Region Tournament Notes

Feb. 20-22, Bismarck VFW Sports Center, Bismarck, N.D.



Drop the puck: The West Region Boys' Hockey Tournament gets underway on Thursday, Feb. 20 with four quarterfinal games (#1 Minot vs. #8 Bottineau-Rugby; #4 Bismarck High vs. #5 Jamestown; #2 Century vs. #7 Williston; #3 Mandan vs. #6 Dickinson). The tournament continues on Friday, Feb. 21 with two loser-out games at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; and semifinals at 5 and 7:30 p.m. The Tournament concludes on Saturday, Feb. 22 with two state qualifiers, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. followed by the championship at 4 p.m.

Back in the Capital City: Bismarck is hosting the tournament for the first time since 2017-18, and 14th overall. The regional tournament, which first began in 1995, has been hosted by Bismarck and Minot.

The favorites: Top-seed Minot is the only team with victories over every team in the WDA this season. In fact, the Magicians swept the regular season series over No. 2 Century and No. 3 Mandan. The Magi last won the region tournament in 2006. Century also has to be in the title discussion. Despite its two losses to Minot, the Patriots have played well since the holiday break. It has eight wins over its last 10 games.

Teams to watch: While Minot and Century may be the favorites to reach the region championship, the storyline to follow is which two teams likely will join them at the state tournament. Five teams – Mandan, Bismarck High, Jamestown, Dickinson and Williston – all have a strong shot. BHS, Mandan and Dickinson all split its two WDA meetings against each other. Jamestown, meanwhile, split games with BHS and Dickinson and was the only team to hand WDA regular champion Minot its lone defeat. The Blue Jays are also one of four teams with an overall winning record. Williston has wins over Mandan and Dickinson and played several other teams close.

Keep an eye on the underdogs: Just twice in the last 10 seasons has all four top seeds entering the West Region Tournament advanced to the state tournament (2012 and 2017). On seven occasions, the #5 or #6 seed has qualified for the state tournament. In 2014, the #7 seed (Mandan) qualified. Speaking of the Braves, they were the #6 seed last year, and advanced.

Streaks on the line: Bismarck High has qualified for the ND State Tournament every season since 1990. That by far is the longest active streak among all state teams. Century has also been a consistent qualifier, of late. The Patriots have reached the tournament in each of the past 13 seasons.

Icings: Jamestown has finished fourth or fifth in the WDA standings every season since 2009-10...Eleven of Williston's 20 games have been decided by two goals or less...Mandan's third place finish in the WDA regular season was its best since placing second in 2001-02...The last time Bismarck High did not enter the West

West Region Hockey Tournament

Monday, Feb. 17
Play-in, Bottineau, N.D.
 (8) Bottineau-Rugby 7,
 (9) Hazen-Beulah 4
Thursday, Feb. 20
VFW Sports Center, Bismarck, N.D.
Quarterfinals
 (1) Minot vs. (8) Bottineau-Rugby, 11 a.m.
 (4) Bismarck High vs. (5) Jamestown, 30 minutes after game one.
 (2) Century vs. (7) Williston, 5 p.m.
 (3) Mandan vs. (6) Dickinson, 30 minutes after game one
Friday, Feb. 21
VFW Sports Center, Bismarck, N.D.
Loser-out
 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m. (approx.)
Semifinals
 5 p.m., 7:30 p.m. (approx.)
Saturday, Feb. 22
VFW Sports Center, Bismarck, N.D.
State qualifiers
 TBA vs. TBA, 11 a.m.
 TBA vs. TBA, 1:30 p.m. (approx.)
Championship
 TBA vs. TBA, 4 p.m. (approx.)

2019-20 WDA Standings

Team	Conf.	Points
Minot	13-1-0-0	45
Century	12-2-0-0	42
Mandan^	9-7-0-0	27
Bismarck	7-7-0-0	27
Jamestown	8-8-0-0	24
Dickinson	7-9-0-0	21
Williston	6-10-0-0	18
Bottineau-R	4-9-0-0	12
Hazen-Beu.	0-13-0-0	0

^Held tie-break
 Some teams only played an opponent once. In those cases, games were worth 6 points in the standings instead of 3.

Region Tournament as a top three seed was 2010-11...Since 2007-08, only three teams have played in the region championship game (Bismarck High, Century and Minot)...Bottineau-Rugby is the only WDA team never to reach a region tournament final...The WDA went 7-17 against EDC opponents this season...The ND State Tournament is in Fargo (Feb. 27-29).

Team Notes

#1 Minot (16-5-0-0 Overall; 13-1-0-0 WDA; Co-coaches: Jason Bennett/John Grubb): The Magicians have again climbed back to the top of the WDA. The squad earned its first conference regular season title since 2015-16 and will be a strong favorite to win the West Region Tournament title this week. The last time the Magi did that was 2006. Minot began the season fast, winning its first five games and allowing just five goals in the stretch. It's been dominant in WDA play, dropping just one contest (vs. Jamestown). Defensive play has been a strength as the team has surrendered just 21 goals in 14 WDA games, including four shutouts. Goalie Tre Sortland

has been steady. He led the WDA in wins (14). Eight Magi players have 15 or more points led by Jayden Luck's 29 points. That depth has made the Magi a difficult team to match up. Minot has scored six or more goals in a game seven times. Four of Minot's five losses have come against non-conference opponents.

Stat Leaders: Points: Jayden Luck, 29; Goals: Luck, 15; Jack Plemel, 15; Assists: Luck, 14; Nicholas Murphy, 14; Riley Opperde, 14; Goalie Wins: Tre Sortland, 14; GAA: Sortland, 1.36; Save Pct: 91.2

#2 Bismarck Century (14-7-0-0 Overall; 12-2-0-0 WDA; Coach: Troy Olson): An 0-3 start seems ancient history now for the Patriots.

A pre-season injury to a top returning scorer and struggles to find the back of the net contributed to the winless start.

It didn't take long for the Patriots to get back on track, however. In fact, the squad has won 14 of its next 18 games and head into this week's West Region Tournament a strong contender for the title. It's signature win came over perennial EDC power G.F. Red River in OT in late December.

The early-season scoring struggles are long gone as Century has tallied six or more goals in a game seven times this season. Nine players have netted 10 or more points. Colton Schulte leads the team with 30. Three goalies – Wyatt Stevahn, Holden Ubl and Kaden Jangula – have at least three wins. Stevahn leads the trio with six and is also tops in GAA and save percentage.

Of the Patriots' seven losses, five have come against EDC foes. The other two came to Minot.

The last 10 years has been the most fruitful for the program. Century has finished third or better in the WDA standings every year over that stretch, including six regular season titles. Five times the team has won the region tournament crown, including the past two. And it has reached a state title game (2018).

Stat Leaders: Points: Colton Schulte, 30; Goals: Connor Hanson, 15; Assists: Schulte, 17; Goalie Wins: Wyatt Stevahn, 6; GAA: Stevahn, 1.88; Save Pct.: Stevahn, 90.3

#3 Mandan (11-10-0-0 Overall; 9-7-0-0 WDA; Coach: Leif Mattson): The Braves enter the West Region Tournament a confident bunch after rattling off a season-best four consecutive wins to end the season. In fact, the team is 8-4 since Jan. 1. The signature win came over Bismarck High on Jan. 21. Mandan's third place WDA finish is its best since the 2000-01 season, and the team is seeking back-to-back state tournament appearances for just the third time in program history.

Mandan's offense has been clicking during its recent win streak, averaging 6.5 goals per game. Three Mandan players have 20 or more points led by Carter Berger's 28. Five more have 12 or more, so scoring depth has been a strength. It will be counted on at the West Region Tour-

WDA Stat Leaders

Regular season			
Points	Games	Pts	
Player			
I. Amsbaugh, BOT	20	58	
J. Pavek, DCK	18	45	
N. Nenow, JAM	19	44	
J. Thompson, JAM	18	38	
J. Heinert, BHS	16	33	
Goals			
Player	Games	Gls	
I. Amsbaugh, BOT	20	26	
J. Pavek, DCK	18	23	
N. Nenow, JAM	19	23	
H. Nelson, JAM	19	21	
J. Hugelen, DCK	19	17	
Assists			
Player	Games	Ast	
I. Amsbaugh, BOT	20	32	
J. Thompson, JAM	18	26	
J. Pavek, DCK	18	22	
N. Nenow, JAM	19	21	
J. Heinert, BHS	16	19	
Goalie Leaders			
Wins			
Player	Games	Wins	
T. Sortland, MIN	17.3	14	
R. Gerhardt, JAM	19.5	11	
J. Concha, DCK	14.6	9	
M. Haugenoe, WIL	14.8	7	
Z. Clausen, MAN	14.3	6	
W. Stevahn, CEN	15.3	6	
Goals Against Average (Minimum of 10 games)			
Player	Games	GAA	
W. Stevahn, CEN	15.0	1.88	
H. Ubl, CEN	10.8	2.40	
T. Sortland, MIN	17.3	2.71	
M. Haugenoe, WIL	14.8	3.17	
Z. Clausen, MAN	14.3	3.63	
Save Percentage (Minimum of 10 games)			
Player	Games	SV%	
W. Stevahn, CEN	15.0	90.3	
R. Gerhardt, JAM	19.5	90.2	
H. Ubl, CEN	10.8	89.9	
T. Olson, BOT	11.6	89.8	
T. Sortland, MIN	17.3	88.8	

Stats provided by Robert Gillen, ND High School Statistician
 ndhighschoolhockey.com

nament. The team has two capable netminders in Zane Clausen (six wins) and Jordan Arenz (five wins).

A key to success for the squad is playing with an early lead. Mandan is 9-2 when it scores the first goal, but just 2-8 when it doesn't.

Stat Leaders: Points: Carter Berger, 28; Goals: Berger, 15; Assists: Berger 13, Goalie Wins: Zane Clausen, 6; GAA: Clausen, 3.63; Save Pct.: Clausen, 88.7

#4 Bismarck High (8-13-0-0 Overall; 7-7-0-0 WDA; Coach: Wes Carr): Winning is synonymous with the Demon program, however, injuries, inconsistency and a challenging schedule all played a part in a losing record heading into the postseason. BHS won its first five WDA games, but posted just a 2-7 mark in conference play since then. The team struggled defensively during that span. Ironically, the Demons best game over the past month was a loss. It took rival Century to overtime on Feb. 11 before falling.

Despite less-than-desired results and injuries, BHS has a good shot to return to the state tournament for a 31st consecutive season. The squad has five players with 10 or more points led by Joseph Heinert's 33. Scoring hasn't been a problem against WDA competition. Tightening up its defense will be key, however. Goaltending has been up and down this season. The numbers aren't stellar, but much of that

has to do with the stiff EDC competition the Demons have faced. Quinn Ackerman leads the squad with five victories. For the first time since 2010-11, the Demons are not a top three regional seed, but there is a good number of players in the lockerroom with big-game experience of the past few years. The squad needs two wins to extend its ND State Tournament streak to 31 years in a row.

Stat Leaders: Points: Joseph Heinert, 33; Goals; Heinert, 14; Assists: Heinert, 19; Goalie Wins: Quinn Ackerman, 5; GAA: Logan Hendrickson, 3.83; Save Pct.: Hendrickson, 87.5

#5 Jamestown (12-8-0-0 Overall; 8-8-0-0 WDA; Coach: Matt Stockert): It's been a season of streaks for

Jamestown. The team had a three-game winning streak to begin the season. The 'Jays endured a four-game losing skid in January, largely because of a shorthanded roster due to illness. Then, they rattled off five-straight victories only to drop the next two.

The squad enters the regional coming off a big road win at Bismarck High and secured the No. 5 seed. The Blue Jays were the only WDA team to defeat conference champion Minot (3-2 on Dec. 21) in the regular season. And nearly did it again, falling to Minot by a goal in the second meeting.

Scoring has been a strength as the squad is averaging 4.45 goals per game. Seven times the Blue Jays have netted six or more goals. Five players have 20 or more points led by Nolan Nenow's 44. Riley Gerhardt has 11 of the squad's 12 wins in goal and is among the league leaders in victories and save percentage. His best effort came in a 2-1 OT victory at Fargo North when he stopped 57 shots. If the squad wants to return to the state tournament for the first time since 2018, he's likely going to have to play a key part.

Stat Leaders: Points: Nolan Nenow, 44 Goals; Nenow, 23; Assists: Jace Thompson, 26; Goalie Wins: Riley Gerhardt, 11; GAA: Gerhardt, 3.85; Save Pct.: Gerhardt, 90.2

#6 Dickinson (10-9-0-0 Overall; 7-9-0-0 WDA; Coach: Dallas Kuntz): It's not how your start, but how you finish.

That's the approach the Midgets are taking as they begin the postseason. Dickinson was out of sorts during the first half of December, surrendering 31 goals during an 0-5 start. In the team's defense, two of those losses came to Minot and Century.

Since the rough start, the Midgets' team defense has improved, including their goaltending. Jayce Concha has eight victories. The scoring has picked up and the team is 10-5 since that winless streak. It's signature victory was over Bismarck High on Feb. 4 and there appears to be no slowing down heading into the West Region Tournament. The team scored a season-high 13 goals vs. Hazen-Beulah in its final home game. Dickinson has seven players in double figures in points led by Joseph Pavek's 45. The team saw its string of three consecutive state tournament appearances end last season. Despite being a sixth seed, the program as a good chance to qualify.

Stat Leaders: Points: Joseph Pavek, 45; Goals: Pavek, 23; Assists: Pavek, 22; Goalie Wins: Jayce Concha, 9; GAA: Concha, 4.16; Save Pct.: Concha, 87.0

#7 Williston (7-13-0-0 Overall; 6-10-0-0; Coach: Tyler Jundt): The Coyotes already have surpassed their win total

of last season, but the program has sights set on more significant accomplishments this season. Winning is important for a young team to gain confidence, but victories over quality opponents, and in meaningful games, is what gets a program back on track. The Coyotes hope to do both this week at the West Region Tournament.

As the seventh seed, the squad will be the underdog, but history has proven a low seed can break through and qualify for the state tournament.

The last time Williston did that was 2010, and the last time it won a region tournament game was 2017. Of its seven wins, two have come against teams – Mandan and Dickinson – seeded ahead of them in the tournament. The most telling stat to show how close the program is in returning to its winning ways from a decade ago is in the number of close games its played. Eleven times the outcome of a game was decided by two or less goals (seven times by one goal).

Five players have 10 or more points led by Jackson Ekblad's 25 points. Four of those players are juniors or younger. Mason Haugenoe has played the majority of the minutes in goal. He has all seven wins.

Stat Leaders: Points: Jackson Ekblad, 25; Goals: Ashton Collings, 14; Kyle Mischke, 14; Assists: Ekblad, 14; Goalie Wins: Mason Haugenoe, 7; GAA: Haugenoe, 3.17; Save Pct.: 89.1

West Region Hockey Tournament History

Year	Championship	Tourney Site
1994-95	Jamestown 4, Century 3	Bismarck
1995-96	Century 3, Minot 2	Bismarck
1996-97	Devils Lake 2, Minot 1	Minot
1997-98	Minot 3, Bismarck High 2	Bismarck
1998-99	Bismarck High 3, Minot 1	Minot
1999-00	Minot 4, Dickinson 3 (OT)	Bismarck
2000-01	Bismarck High 8, Mandan 0	Minot
2001-02	Bismarck High 3, Minot 1	Bismarck
2002-03	Minot 1, Century 0 (2OT)	Bismarck
2003-04	Bismarck High 2, Hazen-Beulah 1	Minot
2004-05	Minot 5, Bismarck High 1	Minot
2005-06	Minot 2, Williston 1	Bismarck
2006-07	Bismarck High 2, Minot 1	Bismarck
2007-08	Bismarck High 7, Williston 4	Minot
2008-09	Bismarck High 3, Minot 1	Bismarck
2009-10	Bismarck High 5, Century 4	Minot
2010-11	Century 6, Minot 4	Bismarck
2011-12	Bismarck High 4, Century 2	Bismarck
2012-13	Century 4, Minot 2	Minot
2013-14	Bismarck High 5, Minot 2	Minot
2014-15	Century 2, Bismarck High 0	Bismarck
2015-16	Bismarck High 5, Minot 1	Minot
2016-17	Bismarck High 6, Minot 0	Bismarck
2017-18	Century 4, Bismarck High 2	Minot
2018-19	Century 2, Bismarck High 0	Minot
2019-20	TBD	Bismarck

Titles By Schools: Devils Lake (1); Jamestown (1); Minot (5); Century (6); Bismarck High (12)

#8 Bottineau-Rugby: (10-12-0-0 Overall; 9-12-0-0 WDA; Coach: Jesse Nostdahl): The Braves will embrace the

underdog role this week at the West Region Tournament. On paper, the No. 8 seed isn't expected to contend for one of the top four places. However, Bottineau-Rugby, isn't the typical No. 8 WDA seed. Under first-year coach Jesse Nostdahl, the squad doubled its win total of a season ago. It has a victory over East Region Tournament entrant Devils Lake and it has played several top WDA teams close this season. It lost to WDA regular season champion Minot, 3-1, with the Magi's final goal coming into an empty net. In the Braves' regular season finale, it trailed Century, 4-3, heading into the final period before falling 7-4. The team has victories over Jamestown and Dickinson.

A quick glance at the Bottineau-Rugby scoring sheet and one player jumps off the page. Forward Ian Amsbaugh leads the state in scoring with 58 points. His skill level has enabled him

to score despite getting a lot of attention from opposing teams. Two other forwards have 20-plus points.

Where the team has struggled is defensively. B-R has allowed six or more goals in a contest game eight times. The squad will need to tighten things up defensively and in goal. Netminder Tyler Olson leads the team in wins, GAA and save percentage. He will need to be at his best if the Braves want to reach the third day of the tournament. The last time the Braves reached a state qualifying game was 2018.

Stat Leaders: Points: Ian Amsbaugh, 58; Goals: Amsbaugh, 26; Assists: Amsbaugh, 32; Goalie Wins: Tyler Olson, 5; GAA: Olson, 4.03; Save Pct.: Olson, 89.8

*News/Notes compiled by WDA SID/Executive Secretary
Note: Stat leaders are for regular season games only*