



# Cass Lake Times

## Panther Boy's Basketball heading to state

By Allan Olson

The Cass Lake-Bena boys basketball team brought home the section championship hardware; something the home town fans and players have been looking forward to for the eight long years since the last title.

On Friday, March 16, the Panthers took on the Ada-Borup Cougars, who soundly defeated the Panthers in the first game at state in 2009. This time, it was the Panthers with the decisive victory.

The two teams were scoreless for nearly two minutes of game time, before the Cougars broke it open with their three pointer for their one and only lead of the game.

"They focused on one or two or even three players, but they can't focus on all of them. They all can shoot, and our bench once again came out strong," said Head Coach John Wind.

Jarell Jacobs put the Panthers on board with a pair of free throws. Raul Washington gave the Panthers the leader board for the first time of the night at 14:44, and Jacobs added some more points with a bucket and a free throw to the lead to four.

Over the next five minutes RaSean Connor, Noah DeLapaz and Jacobs all teamed up to give the Panthers a 16-10 lead. The Cougars then watched the steady hands of junior Ethan Brown drop back and drill a trey. The Cougars scored another bucket of their own for a 19-12 spread, before Washington dropped in a lay-up and Antonio Brown sunk back-to-back buckets. Washington then hit another shot to give the Panthers a 16-point lead. That was followed by another three pointer, then Antonio Brown and Ethan Brown each scored to make it a 37-23 game at the break.

DeLapaz took control in the first three minutes of the second half with a three pointer, followed up three minutes later with another three and then a pair of free throws. Meanwhile, Ada put up five points making the gap 45-28.

The Panthers continued to dominate the second half scoring an additional 29 points, while ADA added 30. That left the Panthers with a 66-53 victory.



The Cass Lake-Bena basketball team holding up the Section Championship Trophy for the first time at the Ralph Engelstad Arena. The Panthers defeated Ada-Borup 66-53.

Photo by Allan Olson.

"This feel's good," Assistant coach Martin Wind said. "I've been watching these kids grow up both on and off the court, and now I've been able to be part of the coaching team that got them to state and it feels really good."

Wind noted that they still need to work on their defense as it broke down from time to time on the court.

"Overall, we did really well, we were able to minimize the damage from their big guy and our players executed well," he said

"This feels really good," said Ethan Brown. "I didn't score much, but I did everything I could to help the team. I wasn't intimidated by their bigger players, and I wasn't worried about it. I was just going in to win."

Brown also said that he remembers looking up at the team that went to state when he was in third grade.

"I looked up to Martin. I wanted to be like him, and as a coach, he has taught us a lot. I'm very happy we are going to state."

"It feels really great, I'm proud of the team and what they accomplished," Kingbird said. "The whole team, from the starters to the bench, came out and helped us put up a good lead. The bench played really well, and I'm very happy with our teammates. We plan to keep doing what we have been. That's what made us successful and got us to state."

Head coach John Wind who has been in the basketball coaching program over the last 20-plus years was also part of those teams that went to state back to back to back.

"It's taken a little while but we are finally back. We are planning to go down to state and do something. We want to win. They focused on a couple of our players, but we had others to count on. We wore their big guys down in the first half and continued the pressure in the second. Our team stayed fresh with all the sub changes and it all worked out well for us."

"This feels amazing," DeLapaz said. "I've wanted this since I started playing and we aren't finished yet. We want to do really well in state. It would be great to be the top team."

DeLapaz noted that he wasn't intimidated by the size of some of the opponents.

"It wasn't any big deal; we were prepared for it and just played our game."

"I'm speechless we've been working hard for this moment since we lost the subsection to Red Lake last year," Raul Washington said.

He also commented about the team's missing player - #44 Jeremy Jourdain (Worm) "If he were here, he would be grinding big, I can see it," he said with emotion.

**CL-B 66, Ada-Borup 53**

Raul Washington 17 points, Jarell Jacobs 14, Noah DeLapaz 11, Antonio Brown 7, Ethan Brown 6, Miguel Reyes 6, Michael Reyes 3 and Coltin Mitchell 2.




Raul Washington dumped in a bucket for the Panthers as they cruised their way to victory.



The Panthers' bench intently watched the game.





Jarell Jacobs got the shot off and in around the defender on Friday in Thief River Falls.



## GOOD LUCK AT STATE PANTHER BASKETBALL

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## CASS LAKE-BENA ISD 115