

# The best seat in the house

Ryan Paul, a sophomore at Chaska High School, started the Chaska Basketball Report as an outlet for a passion.

His second year into the website, [www.chaskabasketballreport.com](http://www.chaskabasketballreport.com), Ryan had branched into play-by-play live video, reaching hundreds of Hawk fans.

By the state tournament, District 112 officials had even directed Twitter followers to his Ryan's account to follow the action online.

He not only watched the game; he lived it. And we soaked up every moment of it. Every video. Every behind-the-scenes look.

So, I asked Ryan to sum up the experience. He certainly had the best seat in the house for it.

- Eric Kraushar



Ryan Paul

**78:** Number of total Chaska Hawks basketball games I watched (Sophomore, JV, Varsity)

**2,808:** Minutes of Chaska

Hawks basketball that I watched this season

**46.8:** Hours of Chaska Hawks basketball that I watched this season

**54:** Number of total wins by all three teams

This year's Chaska boys basketball players probably don't remember the 2004 State Basketball Tournament, in which the Hawks took their first ever state title. It's pretty much a given, however, that they won't ever forget what happened in March of 2017.

On December 3, 2016, the team that was still chipped from their section quarter-final loss to Prior Lake the year before, embarked on a mission. Their goal: the Target Center. It wouldn't be easy, the Hawks were tasked with one of the toughest non-conference schedules in the state.

It was a season full of emotion; the family that was the Chaska Basketball program grew bigger and tighter as the year went on. The team plowed through their regular season schedule, finishing with a record of 21-5.

Chaska senior Myles Hanson made history in his final season wearing the purple and yellow, becoming Chaska's all time leading scorer, and later scored his 2,000th career point.

It wasn't without his fellow seniors Andrew Kallman, Alex Strazzanti, Ryan Rodriguez, and Jack Perrill, that his team would be awarded the No. 1 seed in the section.

The section tournament brought out the best that Chaska had to offer. Taking wins against Shakopee, Edina, and Eden Prairie would



PHOTO BY ANDREA FRIEDERICK DODDS

The 2017 senior class for Chaska watches the final seconds of the season come to an end. The Hawks were 24-7 this season, qualifying for state for the first time since 2004.



PHOTO BY ERIC KRAUSHAR

Alex Strazzanti hugs Myles Hanson, the last of five Chaska seniors to exit the court March 23 in the team's finale against Lakeville North. The Hawks went 67-20 over the past three seasons with this senior group.

propel them to their first trip to state in 13 years.

It was the morning of Wednesday, March 22, that would go down in the history books for high school basketball faithful. Nearly 800 Chaska High School students filled multiple sections at the Target Center to watch their boys take on the No. 1 team in the state: Champlin Park.

The opposing Rebels featured the shifty feet of point guard McKinley Wright, and the 6-foot-10-inch build of Theo John.

The game hadn't even started and it was practically given to Champlin Park, by the public's eye that was drawn to the Rebels' undisturbed 29-0 record on the season. Chaska was determined to prove the naysayers wrong.

I had found my courtside seat on media row, gobbled down my strawberry frosted donut, and prepared myself for the game. Chaska jumped

on Champlin quickly, leading the game for almost the entire duration, all until the score really mattered.

It was with 0.9 seconds left that the sea of white and beyond would be shocked. Champlin Park's Sam DuBois caught a tipped rebound and launched it up with his left hand, and broke the game's tie as the horn sounded, giving Champlin Park the win, and crushing Chaska's hopes of pulling off the biggest upset of the Minnesota basketball season.

The stunned faces of the thousand-some Chaska fans will be an image that I never forget, but let us not forget the memories that were created along the way, that will also never be forgotten.

I enjoyed every minute of watching this team's journey, the players (my friends) became my family, and I cannot begin to applaud them for the effort that they put in

this season to make it such an experience.

To the supporters of mine who have been with me since I started with the freshmen last year: it was you that made this season as great as it was. I watched every minute of the Chaska Hawks sophomore team that won the Metro West Conference. I watched every minute of the Hawks JV team, and watched every minute of the Chaska Hawks varsity games.

While 0.9 seconds can mean the difference between celebration and heartbreak, it is the other 168,479.1 seconds of my Hawks basketball coverage that I will remember.

With that I say goodbye to this season of Hawks Basketball, and begin the first page of the next chapter. We will be back next season on the Chaska Basketball Report. Soar Hawks!



PHOTO BY ERIC KRAUSHAR

Chaska senior Myles Hanson and sophomore Cole Nicholson close out the 2016-17 basketball season together, as brothers.



PHOTO BY ERIC KRAUSHAR

Chaska coach Dana Kallman hugs the program's all-time scorer, Myles Hanson, who topped 2,000 points in his career finale March 23 against Lakeville North.

## More basketball

Myles Hanson of Chaska is among 40 of the state's outstanding senior boys basketball players selected to play in the 35th annual Minnesota High School All-Star Basketball Series.

Doubleheaders are scheduled for Friday, March 31, at Halenbeck Hall on the campus of St. Cloud State University and Saturday, April 1, at Leonard Center on the campus of Macalester College in St. Paul.

Hanson is on Team Green, which also features Ishmael El-Amin of Hopkins.

They play at 7 p.m. Friday with a second game at 2 or 3:45 p.m. on Saturday.

A dunking exhibition will precede each of the games and a halftime 3-point shooting contest will take place on both dates. Tickets at the door are \$8 for adults and \$6 for senior citizens and students (5 & under are free).