

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Five area girls' teams, three from the SPVA Conference, are in Lincoln this week for the Nebraska State High School Basketball Tournament.

And, Chase County's other high school, Wauneta-Palisade, also made the Class D2 tournament and McCook will compete in Class B.

The 48 teams were finalized last week at district games, some of which were postponed a day or two due to the weather.

One of the biggest first round games area fans will be watching is in Class C2, where two SPVA teams, Hershey and North Platte St. Pat's, play today (Thursday) at Lincoln East. Tip-off is 10:45 a.m. CT

Today's game marks the fifth time the two teams have met this season. Each team has won twice.

The most recent contest was the C2-11 subdistrict final, when St. Pat's won a double overtime game against Hershey, 48-43, then beat Bridgeport in the district final for a state berth.

Hershey, with a 20-4 record, made the state cut anyway due to point standings, and have a higher state seed than St. Pat's. Hershey is No. 3, while the Lady Irish, 22-3, are No. 6.

In Class D2, Wauneta-Palisade earned the No. 7 seed at state, after beating Brady in last week's district final, 59-48.

That was a big win for the Lady Broncos, who lost to Brady twice during the regular season.

Wauneta-Palisade, 18-6, will face No. 2 seed Lindsey Holy Family, 24-1, on Thursday at 7 p.m. CT at Lincoln East.

The other SPVA team at state, Sutherland, qualified in D1 after a big win over Crawford at districts, 47-24.

The No. 5 Lady Sailors, 20-5, will play No. 4 St. Mary's, 22-2, in first round action Thursday at 8:45 p.m. CT at Lincoln Northeast.

In Class B, McCook, 21-4, goes in with the No. 6 seed and is matched up against No. 3 Grand Island Northwest, 22-3, in Thursday's opener at the Devaney Sports Center, starting at 8:45 p.m. CT

Chadron, who represents the western part of the state in Class C1, beat Gothenburg last week in the district finals, 76-49, to make it to state. Chadron, 22-2, is the top seed in C1.

Only one team at the girls' tournament this year is undefeated. Crofton is the top seed in C2 with a perfect 24-0 record.

Brackets of all six state tournament classes can be found on the NSAA website at: www.nsaahome.org. Click on the basketball link on the left side of the page.

Saturday's finals in all six classes will be aired on Nebraska NET public television.