

Cougars tame Lions in a shootout

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It was an exciting, fast paced boys soccer game when Kennedy met Linn-Mar on Thursday night, and both teams got their fair share of opportunities.

Neither team could separate themselves after 100 minutes of play, however. Kennedy sneaked away with a 2-1 victory on a shootout at Linn-Mar Stadium.

Both teams hit their first three shots in the shootout, but the Lions' final two shots were off target and Linn-Mar keeper Justin Green could only keep one out of the net as Kennedy got the win.

"It was a tough game," said Kennedy sophomore Sho Takaoka. "The Lions played very hard."

With both teams stuck in a bit of a losing streak after dropping a pair to Iowa City West and Iowa City High, each team was intent on getting back on track on Thursday.

The sixth-ranked Cougars (8-3, 5-2 Mississippi Valley Conference) seemed to put most of the pressure on early, putting Green to the test, but he stepped up big for the No. 15 Lions (4-7, 2-7), making several nice saves including a one-on-one save against the Cougars' leading scorer, Garet Christianson.

"He made some good saves to keep them in the game," said Kennedy co-head coach Mike Robertson. "He did a really good job."

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Kennedy finally got the ball past Green when Takaoka got the ball deep in the Lions' box in the 22nd minute.

"The cross came from the right side, I tried to hit it with my head but it hit the side and went into the air," Takaoka said. "The ball dropped and I tried to (swing around and hit it). I couldn't see the goal, but I thought it was there."

It was, and the Cougars had a 1-0 lead.

That wouldn't be enough for Kennedy, however, as the Lions came out quickly in the second half, scoring in the 45th minute when Brian Simmons made a run down the sideline, drawing the Kennedy defense, then crossed to a wide open Michael Zimmerman who put the ball into the net.

The two overtime periods were also highly contested. In the first period, the Cougars thought they won when Gabe Christianson made a run and got the ball behind the Linn-Mar defense and put the ball past the keeper. The referee signaled that the game was over before noticing that the linesman had called offsides.

Despite getting the win, the Kennedy coaches were not happy with how the team played.

"We were mentally slow and physically slow," Robertson said. "There is a lot of stuff that we have to do still. The guys have to put in a lot of work because we are not there yet."

Robertson was particularly displeased with the way Kennedy started the game, not moving the ball around well or stepping to the ball. He thought the Cougars got a little bit better as the

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game went on, but they are not where he wants them to be as a team yet.

“We started playing a little better, especially in the first overtime,” Robertson said. “That first overtime was probably the best 10 minutes we played of the game. It just wasn’t a night to be very happy with the guys, honestly. They did some things well but overall it just wasn’t there.”

Kennedy hosts Xavier Friday night at 7.

Kennedy 2, Linn-Mar 1

Goals -- Kennedy: Sho Takaoka (22nd min). Linn-Mar: Michael Zimmerman (45th min). Assists -- Kennedy: none, Linn-Mar: Brian Simmons.

Shootout Goals -- Kennedy: Riley Galbraith, Garet Christianson, Nicholas Bruns, Grant Sheeley. Linn-Mar: Eric Pfau, Ben McClimon, Ryan Gingrich