

## Warriors nip Kennedy boys in soccer

Written by

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The fifth-ranked Washington boys soccer team secured a second place finish in the Mississippi Valley Conference's Mississippi Division on Thursday by beating its rival, No. 7 Kennedy, 1-0 at Kingston Stadium.

The game was fast paced and physical as Washington (14-3, 11-2) and Kennedy (12-5, 9-4) slugged it out in the regular-season finale.

"The game was fast paced all around," said Washington senior keeper Camron Harrison. "They attacked us hard and we attacked back. Our defense really pulled through and our boys up top did their job. This whole week we have been working on give and goes and it connected. It just seemed like their defense got lost when we put it to them."

The victory gave the Warriors a little bit of revenge for a 3-1 beating they received last year at the hands of the Cougars.

"It was a big win, because this is a big rivalry game and last year they beat us pretty good," said Washington Coach J.P. Graham. "We didn't show up to play and they hammered us. So this was just a chance, especially for our seniors, to come back and get us on the winning track against them."

The Warriors took the lead early in the second half when Brandon Besong found a streaking David Nega on the right side of the box. Nega dribbled it deep into the box and fired a shot at the opposite post. Kennedy keeper Ben Feltes made a diving stop, but the ball bounced away from him. Washington senior Charlie Parks won the footrace to the ball and slotted it into the net for the 1-0 lead.

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The Warriors had a bit of an edge in possession and chances, but the most dangerous opportunity of the game went to the Cougars with less than 30 seconds left in the first half. Gabe Christianson received a long pass and beat the defender to force a one-on-one situation with the keeper.

"I've been playing with Gabe and Garet (Christianson) for years on club (teams) and when it comes down to a one-on-one situation, I try to read it. You can't judge too early because if you go too early he can punish you. So at the last second I saw him trying to sneak it to the corner, so I dove full out and just got to it luckily," Harrison said.

But the ball still got behind him and looked like it may just creep into goal until junior defender Daren Mangold caught up to it and denied the goal.

"Whenever I go one-on-one the defense is crashing to the goal just in case," Harrison said.

The Washington defense was again placed under siege in the last couple minutes of the game as Kennedy was frantically seeking an equalizer.

"That last five minutes was a little sketchy," Graham said. "They started to throw some guys forward and we got a little nervous in the back."

Harrison came up big again, turning away multiple dangerous shots as the game came to a close.

"(Harrison) didn't do a whole lot the whole game, but the four or five times we needed him he came up huge," Graham said. "That's what it takes to be a good keeper and a keeper at the next level is those four or five times a game when you need to be big."

The Warriors' next game will be in the semifinals of the regional tournament. They will face the winner of Dubuque Senior and Dubuque Hempstead at 5 p.m. on May 25 at Kingston Stadium.

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“We have got to go with the mindset that every game is like this game – high intensity and just put teams away,” Harrison said.

The Cougars will face the winner of Jefferson and Marshalltown directly after Washington’s regional matchup at 7 p.m. on May 25.

Washington 1, Kennedy 0

Goals – Washington: Charlie Parks (46th min). Assists – Washington: David Nega