

J-Hawks' season ends in a shootout

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The Jefferson boys soccer players sat in heavy silence on the bench after a heartbreaking 2-1 shootout loss to Marshalltown on Monday in the first round of the Class 3A substate tournament.

The season-ending loss dropped the J-Hawk to a 4-13 in a season marred by close loss after close loss.

“We lost another tough game,” said Coach John O’Connor. “That’s the story of our season, losing games that we have been in and dominated a lot of the game. We just haven’t been able to finish it out. It has not been by a lack of effort, not by lack of good kids, it just wasn’t our year for finishing out games.”

Marshalltown broke the scoreless tie just 5:30 into the second half when Bobcats forward Ty Steffensen headed home a goal off of a great cross from Josue Avila to cap off the counter attack.

“Second half, we came out with some energy and we got ourselves caught up a little too high and they snuck in that first goal,” O’Connor said.

The J-Hawks didn’t take long to answer as junior midfielder Ali Al-Yassery let fly a beautiful shot from about 30 yards out. The shot was just a little bit high. It bounced off the crossbar, hit the back of the diving Marshalltown keeper and went into the goal.

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After a physical and tightly contested second half and overtime couldn't decide a winner it came down to penalty kicks. Marshalltown made five, Jefferson four.

"This is a great group of guys," O'Connor said. "I have enjoyed every day with these guys. They made it fun even when we were having some struggles. We were continuously losing by one goal.

"You would think some young kids would just fold up shop frustrated, but they came back every day and did everything I asked them to do. So I will remember them for their tenacity and how they came back and worked extremely hard every day."

Marshalltown advances to Wednesday's substate semifinal against Kennedy at Kingston Stadium. It is the second game of a doubleheader and is scheduled to start at 7. Washington plays Dubuque Senior at 5 in the first game.

Marshalltown 2, Jefferson 1

Goals -- Marshalltown: Ty Steffensen (45th min). Jefferson: Ali Al-Yassery (47th min).

Assists -- Marshalltown: Josue Avila.