

Prep sports turn from spring to summer

Written by Scott Unash

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The transition is nearly complete.

The spring sports have had their championships, or are nearing their championships, and the summer sports are now in full gear.

Here are some observations:

Best of luck to the three Metro boys soccer representatives at the state tournament this week in Des Moines. Washington and Kennedy will be in the 3A field, while Xavier looks for another title in 2A.

The draw was unfortunate for Kennedy. The Cougars, despite having a very good squad, drew the No. 8 -- and last seed -- and will open against No. 1 West Des Moines Valley. The Cougars played a strong schedule and are somewhat penalized for it because the seeds are set up based solely on record and winning percentage. That is unlike other sports which seed their tournaments based on strength of schedule as well. Hopefully, we will see an all-Metro semifinal with Kennedy and Wash.

I had an opportunity to witness two of the top 4A baseball teams in the state battle it out Tuesday night as No. 1 Kennedy traveled to Iowa City to meet No. 4 West in a rematch of last season's state championship game. These two squads have talent galore up and down their lineups and it was all on display in their Mississippi Valley Conference opening doubleheader.

West showed its batting muscle in game one, winning 8-1 behind Ryan Rumpf, who outdueled Kennedy's Griffin Michael. The Cougars jumped out early in the nightcap and won it 10-8 behind junior pitcher Cody Bell, with senior David Yancey picking up his third save of the young season.

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These two teams have seen quite a bit of each other over the past few seasons, but will not meet again until the state tournament, if both survive their respective substates.

Speaking of the baseball 4A substates, kudos go out to the Iowa High School Athletic Association for doing a very fair and equitable job of splitting up the top teams in this year's substate fields. Kennedy and Iowa City West are separated, as are most of the top returning teams from around the state. Barring upsets, it could be an amazing state tournament field in Class 4A if all of the favorites survive.

Again, do yourself a favor and go out and catch a ballgame on a beautiful summer evening. It doesn't matter if it's baseball or softball, you'll be glad you did.