

## Wash girls making 1st state soccer trip

Written by

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By the end of the night, Washington girls soccer coach Sean McCoy was drenched and smiling from ear to ear.

After all, the eighth-ranked Warriors (16-3) are headed to the state tournament for the first time.

Washington beat No. 10 Linn-Mar in a hard fought 1-0 Class 3A regional final at Kingston Stadium on Monday.

"We have been working all year for this. People didn't think we could make it. It was a rebuilding year for us so we are just excited that we get to go," said Washington senior Ashley Piper.

"At the beginning of the year, we thought it was going to be a rebuilding year," McCoy said. "But these kids decided that we would work, we would buy into some things that maybe we wouldn't have in the past and the results have been phenomenal."

The Warriors will face top-ranked Ankeny in the first round of the state tournament Thursday at 8:15 p.m. at the Muscatine Soccer Complex. The Hawkettes (18-1) have been tough this season, outscoring opponents, 93-5, and have won 13 games by at least three goals.

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"Ankeny is the one team in the state that is a little bit above everyone else, but they are also a physical team and that's something that we can deal with," McCoy said. "If they were lightning fast like a Kennedy or a Valley we are going to struggle ... With the players they have, we will be able to match up and give them a game.

"It is going to be like 10 of the other games we have played this year where, on paper, they are a little bit better. But we are on a bit of a high right now and if we can train and focus, there is no reason we can't give them a good show."

The regional championship game was a physical matchup of two teams that went to penalty kicks earlier in the season with Washington winning.

"It was a rough game, it was a tough game," McCoy said. "Linn-Mar is a physical team and so are we. There were lots of fouls and lots of free kicks, and that's just how it is going to be when these two teams get together."

The Warriors scored the game's lone goal in the 57th minute when sophomore Sarah Keppler fed the ball ahead to junior Maddi Hines, who was able to find enough space on the right side to let loose on a shot. The ball went over the keeper's head and hit the opposite side post before rolling in for the decisive goal.

"She came out and I looked up and just hit it over her," Hines said. "I tried to kick it as hard as I can."

Hines said the reward of a state trip is a result of a lot of hard work.

"We pushed each other from spring break and conditioning all the way to yesterday morning," Hines said. "We were focused in the locker room and we just tried our hardest."

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Washington 1, Linn-Mar 0

Goals -- Washington: Maddi Hines (57th min). Assists -- Washington: Sarah Keppler.