

Warriors fall in shootout to No. 1 Ankeny

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MUSCATINE -- As the last of the penalty kicks sailed into the net, Washington goalkeeper Sophie Malcom stayed stretched out on the ground where she landed, but the entire Washington team, in a show of solidarity, ran into the goal and picked her up.

"It's hard to be the goalkeeper in those," Coach Sean McCoy said. "Ankeny has five great shooters and they hit four great PKs. Sophie did her best. That kind of embodies us. It is not about individuals, it is about the group, and our group went over there to make sure she knows she played a heck of a game."

The fifth-ranked Warriors (16-4) lost a heartbreaker against top-ranked Ankeny (19-1) on Thursday in the first round of the state tournament at the Muscatine Soccer Complex. The game was tied after regulation and two overtimes, so went to a penalty kick shootout. Ankeny made its four kicks, Washington converted two of four.

It was the Warriors first trip to the state tournament and the team collectively held their heads high after the tough loss.

"I'm really happy with the way they are handling this," McCoy said. "It is really disappointing to work this hard and not come out on the positive side of the result, but you've got to put things into perspective. This is a team that has never gone to state, a team that has never gotten this many wins, a team that has never allowed so few goals. We overachieved all year and this is another example of that."

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The Warriors fought hard and played toe to toe through the entire 100 minutes of regulation and overtime with the Hawks, who outscored their opponents 93-5 during the regular season. The game was a rough battle in the midfield and every time either team would get close to the other's goal, the defense came up big and turned them away.

"It starts from the forwards on down, that is part of the good thing. It is team defending, it's not just 1 (versus) 1," McCoy said of the Warriors' defense.

After the game, McCoy told his players that he would not be returning as Washington's coach next season. He is planning on moving to Omaha for a job. But he said he couldn't be prouder of what his team accomplished this year.

"When they are plugged in and when they buy into a system, they can do anything," McCoy said of this year's squad. "We set five or six school records, we went to state when nobody has ever done that, and we took one of the best teams in the last couple years into a shootout. It feels like this team has overachieved and that is a special feeling."