

Lions outlast Jeff; Warriors outclass Bobcats

Written by Tom Fruehling

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It was a tale of opposites at Kingston Stadium Monday night as the Washington and Linn-Mar boys soccer teams advanced to Wednesday's Class 3A substate semifinals.

The Warriors skunked Western Dubuque 9-0 in the opener and didn't allow a single shot at the goal the entire match.

In the nightcap, meanwhile, the Lions were knotted with Jefferson 0-0 after two overtimes and won by outscoring the J-Hawks 4-2 in the shootout.

"I was certainly pleased with our effort," said Linn-Mar Coach Corey Brinkmeyer. "I wish we could have scored in regulation, and we had a couple of good chances.

"But we were able to hang around long enough, just like we have all season. And our sophomore goal keeper (Jared Belin) was tremendous."

The Lions (7-12) now face once-beaten and top-ranked Iowa City West Wednesday at 5 p.m. at Northwest Junior High in Iowa City. The Trojans won the teams' regular season match 3-2 in double overtime.

But Linn-Mar is looking to even the score.

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“We lost to Jefferson 1-0 the first time we played them,” said the Lions’ Eric Pfau. “We came back against them, and now we’re looking for revenge against West.”

Brinkmeyer is confident, as well.

“I’m really proud of the way our seniors played tonight,” he said. “With this team, the sky’s the limit.”

In his first year as the starting goalie, Belin said he played the game of his life against Jefferson.

“I was really on my game tonight,” he said. “And we knew everything was on the line. The winner goes on. The loser goes home.”

Belin stopped a hard shot by Jefferson’s Ali Al-Yasseri with 7:57 to go in the second overtime and stopped another right in front of the net as time expired.

Earlier, at the end of regulation, he deflected a sure goal over the net.

Two Jefferson attempts in the shootout hit the goal post, one on the side and one on top.

“The goal was our friend tonight,” said Linn-Mar’s Matt McKillip. “But there’s no question Jared saved the game for us.”

Al-Yasseri missed the only penalty kick of the night with 1:52 to go in the first half.

“It hurt to miss the penalty kick,” said Jefferson Coach John O’Connor. “That was kind of a

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momentum shift. But that wasn't when the game was lost.

"I thought we came out very sluggish and never did seem to find our rhythm. Both teams had some good looks, and both teams missed some opportunities. We just couldn't find a way to move the ball."

The J-Hawks end their season at 9-8.

Washington (11-7) moves on to face archrival Kennedy (8-8) Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at Kingston.

Washington beat the Cougars 1-0 last week in the final game of the regular season.

In the latest 3A poll, Washington is ranked 14th and Kennedy 16th.

The Warriors had no trouble at all with the Western Dubuque Bobcats of the Wamac conference. They scored early and often, building up a 7-0 lead at halftime and concentrating on ball possession the rest of the way.

Washington goal keepers Hunter Loushin and Max Newcamp had a lonely night as they didn't have a shot come their way.

A trio of Bobcat goalies, meanwhile, faced an onslaught of 34 shots. Warrior reserve Evan Fisher led eight different Warriors scorers with two goals and an assist.

"We had great team chemistry tonight," Fisher said. "I just try to distribute the ball to my teammates. But tonight I was in the right place at the right time."

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Washington Coach J.P. Graham said the lopsided tilt against a team that normally plays a 2A schedule was still a good tuneup for the rematch with Kennedy.

“We got to do what we wanted to do,” he said. “We were aggressive from the start and put the game away early.

“Our subs played the whole second half and got a lot of good experience. So it was a good game for us. And we know the game with Kennedy will be a battle.”

WASHINGTON 9, WESTERN DUBUQUE 0

Goals: Austin Bergstrom, Kimu Kasha, Evan Fisher (2), Flynn Heald, Max Versteegh, Boris Locana-Moreno, Riyadh Ajram, Evan Zalesky. Assists: Versteegh, Kasha, Heald, Jacob Jensen, Fisher, Mike Daughtery, Nathan Metzger.