

Jahlas juggles baseball and Shrine football

Written by Jim Ecker

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Kennedy Coach Bret Hoyer gave Josh Jahlas a big hug before practice Tuesday night, but it wasn't because Jahlas has hit .450 this season and patrolled center field like a vacuum cleaner in spikes.

Hoyer appreciates what Jahlas has done for the second-ranked Cougars, but the embrace was a tribute to the senior's extra hustle this week as he juggles playing baseball for Kennedy in the substate tournament and practicing in Ames for the 40th Annual Shrine Bowl football game that will be played Saturday night.

Jahlas had a three-hour workout in pads Tuesday morning and a lighter one-hour practice Tuesday afternoon on a sweltering day in Ames, then shot back to Cedar Rapids to join the Cougars for practice and a team picture Tuesday night.

"Yeah, I had two workouts, and after the second workout I came straight here," said Jahlas, looking fresh as a daisy. "I'm having a lot of fun, but it's felt a lot longer than three days."

Kennedy (31-6) hosts Cedar Falls (22-18) in the Class 4A substate finals Wednesday night, with the winner claiming a berth in the state tournament next week in Des Moines.

Also Wednesday night, No. 9 Linn-Mar (28-11) entertains Muscatine (26-11) in the 4A substate finals at Linn-Mar and the Marion Indians (29-12) face No. 6 Benton Community (34-7) in the Class 3A substate finals at Vinton.

All of Wednesday's games are scheduled for 7 p.m.

Kennedy has a strong senior class that features Cody Bell, Alex Hayden, Logan Ambrosy, Devon Jacobus, Adam Lloyd, Chico Lizarraga and Nick Appleget. Jahlas is a member of that

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class and has taken his place as an equal member, but he wasn't always one of the stars when they played for the Junior Cougars as youngsters.

"I think that benefitted him," Hoyer said. "I remember him when he was younger, giving lessons to the Junior Cougars at Perfect Game and Josh with his glasses. He didn't have much of a stroke at that age.

"But he just absorbed everything and he's one of those kids you fall in love with. You really root for him."

Jahlas, 6-foot-1, 190, developed into a four-sport athlete at Kennedy in football, basketball, track and baseball. He'll play strong safety for the North squad in the Shrine Bowl Saturday night and will be joining the Iowa State Cyclones as an invited walk-on this season.

Jahlas helped Kennedy defeat Waterloo East in the substate opener Friday night, then headed to Ames for the football workouts. He spent Tuesday night at home in northeast Cedar Rapids and will return to Ames for football practice on Thursday.

"I've always been busy and it's a lot of fun for me," he said. "I'm enjoying the experiences I'm having.

"It's been pretty hot the last couple of days and I've been getting sunburned a little bit, because we've been outside the whole time. But yeah, I feel fine."