

## Cougars breeze past Wash; Trojans up next

Written by Tom Fruehling

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The Kennedy boys soccer team won the right to a rematch with 3A top-ranked Iowa City West in Saturday's substate final by toppling Washington, 4-1, Wednesday evening at Kingston Stadium.

Next up for the No. 16 Cougars (9-8) is once-beaten West, who won the first go-around in the regular season 2-0. No. 14 Washington gave the Trojans their only blemish of the year, a 3-2 defeat in overtime.

"We know we're capable of beating them," Kennedy keeper Ben Feltes said. "We just need to focus on our game. And play with passion like we did tonight."

It was breezy Wednesday as well as balmy, and in a tournament game between two evenly matched, well-acquainted foes, the windy conditions may have played as much of a factor as anything. Though the Warriors won the opening coin flip, Coach J.P. Graham chose to have his guys go into the wind the first half and have it at their backs in the second.

"I thought if we could hold them the first half, we could score a few more goals with the wind," Graham said. "It didn't work out that way."

For one thing, it wasn't near as gusty in the second half. And, with a 2-1 halftime lead, Kennedy had momentum on its side.

"I think the wind limited Washington's play somewhat," said Kennedy co-coach Mike Robertson. "They're a team that likes to take big swings switching the ball to the weak side."

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The wind prevented them from doing it as much.”

In any case, the Cougars were clearly the more aggressive team from the start. They dominated ball possession in the first half with the Warriors backpedaling on their heels much of the time.

“We wanted to drive at the goal all night,” Robertson said. “And we used a lot of combination plays, with multiple players passing the ball.”

Kennedy’s first goal with nine minutes gone was more of a chip shot by Riley Galbraith. With the ball plopped at his feet right in front of the net, he faked one way and dribbled it in the other.

Playing with a gimpy foot hurt in practice last week, Galbraith seemed unaffected as he was on the field most of the time until the waning minutes of the match. It’s unlikely he’ll play in Saturday’s noon title face-off in Iowa City, however, as he hopes to be competing for a state tennis championship in Cedar Rapids at the same time.

“We knew that might happen,” Robertson said. “His teammates will have to step up.”

Washington’s only score came at the 27:35 mark in the opening stanza when Kimu Kasha drilled a penalty kick past Kennedy’s Feltes. It was the only goal Feltes allowed all night, despite a number of hard shots delivered his way.

“He had some key saves for us,” Robertson said. “Especially in the second half when they could have made a game of it if they’d scored.”

With an ice pack on his sore right shoulder after the match, Feltes shrugged off any accolades.

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"As a team, we played a great game," he said. "We defended as a team, attacked as a team, scored as a team and won as a team."

What turned out to be the winning goal was made by the Cougars' Tyler Pape halfway through the first half. Given a free kick from the far right side, he put a reverse spin on a line drive that hooked untouched into the net.

"I've worked on it in practice," Pape said. "I kicked it with the outside of my right foot and and it got past the keeper."

"It was a perfect shot," said Washington Coach Graham. "We had our chances after that to tie it up 2-2. But we didn't take the momentum.

"Some of it was self-inflicted. We had possessions in the second half, but we just didn't take advantage of our opportunities."

Kennedy did, on the other hand, as Pape scored again on an open breakaway with an assist from Eric Bertroche and Mark Schulz closed out the night with a ricochet shot off the goal post.

KENNEDY 4, WASHINGTON 1

Goals: CRK -- Riley Galbraith, Tyler Pape 2, Mark Schulz; CRW -- Kimu Kasha. Assists: CRK -- Eric Bertroche.