

## Kea steers Prairie to substate finals

Written by Jim Ecker

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Dave Kea did not know all of his players' names at Cedar Rapids Prairie when he became the new head coach of the girls soccer team on the eve of the 2015 season in April.

Doug Graham, who recruited Kea to coach the goal-keepers this year, stepped aside as the head coach just a few days before the season began and Kea was thrust into the job.

He was still learning their names and suddenly he was the boss.

"I still have trouble," Kea admitted Wednesday night. "I sometimes call them the wrong name, but they understand."

Winning helps.

The Hawks made a smooth transition to their new coach and are now one victory away from reaching the Class 3A state tournament for the first time in school history.

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Prairie defeated Jefferson, 1-0, in the regional semifinals Wednesday on a free kick by Hannah Kousheh and will visit second-ranked Iowa City West for a berth in the state tournament Monday night.

The Hawks are ranked No. 6 in the state with a 13-3 record, so changing coaches at the last minute did not hurt a bit.

"Everybody was thinking it was going to be hard," said Kousheh, "but honestly when it happened I think it made us all that much more determined to come out and do well in the season. We made the transition amazingly.

"The first practice we came out and had one of the best practices I've seen us have."

Kea is new at Prairie, but he's no neophyte. He's been a club soccer coach and has helped with national teams.

"I think we took really well to losing the first coach," said Mackenzie Serbousek, who leads Class 3A in scoring with 24 goals. "Dave Kea obviously worked with us pretty well. I'm really proud of everyone. We stepped up and had a great season.

"We lost a couple of games, but against ranked teams," she noted. "So you can't really complain."

Prairie's three losses have been to No. 2 Iowa City West, No. 3 Dubuque Hempstead and No. 4 Kennedy. The Hawks lost to Iowa City West, 2-1, in the third game of the season April 21 when Kea was really struggling with everyone's name.

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