

Cougars earn date with No.1 IC West

Written by Jim Ecker

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DES MOINES - Cedar Rapids Kennedy assistant soccer coach Doug Graham gave junior Nate Waterhouse an affectionate kiss on the cheek Thursday afternoon at the state tournament in Des Moines.

It was the kiss of success.

Waterhouse scored the game-winning goal with 20 minutes, 45 seconds left in the second half as the Cougars trimmed Sioux City West, 2-1, in the opening round of the Class 3A tournament at the Cownie Soccer Park.

That prompted the smooch from Graham.

"He's a loving guy, isn't he?" joked Waterhouse, who took the kiss in good nature.

Kennedy (17-3) will face top-ranked Iowa City West (18-1) in the semifinals Friday at 5 p.m. in a Mississippi Valley Conference showdown in the state capital.

Iowa City West is the defending state champion and defeated the Cougars, 1-0, in Iowa City on May 11, but the Cougars like their chances in the rematch.

"I think we can play well against them," said sophomore Andrew Sheeley, who scored Kennedy's first goal. "We only lost to them 1-0. It was a back and fourth game. We had our

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chances.

"Anything can happen," said Sheeley. "I favor our chances."

Iowa City West blanked Cedar Rapids Washington, 3-0, in the opening round Thursday.

Sioux City West came flying out of the gate against Kennedy and took a quick 1-0 lead on a goal by Mukhtar Ali with less than 3 minutes elapsed in the first half. The Wolverines were not big, but they were quick and athletic.

"We were playing a little tight and nervous," said Kennedy co-coach Steve Robertson. "We were playing the first 10 minutes not to lose. And they came out with a ton of energy, a ton of emotion.

"We had talked to some coaches and they said they are a very emotional team, they play with a ton of emotion, they're going to come at you. But you can, if you possess the ball, wear them down. Which is kind of how the game went."

Sheeley tied the game, 1-1, late in the first half when he shot from about 30 yards and was surprised to see the ball slip past Sioux City West goalie Felipe Barbosa and into the net. Barbosa seemed to fan on the shot.

"It's probably the luckiest goal I've ever scored," said Sheeley. "But it came at the right time when we needed it. I'll take it. Any day."

Kennedy survived its rocky start and gradually took control of the contest. The Cougars had an earlier goal by Nikolas Newcamp waved off by a controversial offsides call, but Robertson thought it was a breakthrough of sorts for his team.

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"Although it didn't count, it kind of set the tone and said: 'OK, they're coming,'" he remarked.

The soccer gods smiled on the Cougars midway through the second half when Waterhouse lofted a shot on goal. It was a harmless looking shot, but was placed perfectly near the back of the goal, just under the crossbar.

Barbosa, a relatively short keeper, leaped as high as he could, but the ball went over his head and settled into the net to give Kennedy a 2-1 edge.

"It was good to get a couple of sloppy goals," said Robertson. "We haven't been getting those."

The Kennedy coaches moved Waterhouse from his normal defensive spot on the field to an attacking midfield position during the course of the game and the adjustment paid instant dividends.

"It was a new position for me," said Waterhouse. "I didn't really know what to do. All I knew was that I was going to score a goal. I was going to try my hardest until I did."

Waterhouse said the Cougars did not panic when Sioux City West took its early lead.

"Once they scored that goal, we didn't let it faze us," he said. "We kept going and we kept doing what we usually do."

Kennedy goalkeeper Nathan Althoff did not have a lot of business Thursday after West's initial flurry, but he made a couple of diving saves to keep Sioux City off the board.

Kennedy's next assignment is upsetting the No.1 seed and defending state champs in the semifinals when they face Iowa City West on Friday.

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"We're not going to be able to take that five-minute break and give a goal away, because that's not going to be a recipe for success against a team like that," said Robertson. "We have to put our best game on the field. If we do, it should be a hell of a game to watch."

The Cougars, seeded No.5, are looking forward to the challenge.

"I'm kind of excited," said Waterhouse. "A little nervous. I kind of want to get some revenge."

BOYS STATE SOCCER TOURNAMENT At Des Moines

Thursday

Class 3A

First Round

Iowa City West 3, CR Washington 0

CR Kennedy 2, Sioux City West 1

Johnston 2, Ankeny 1

Iowa City High 3, WDM Dowling 1

Class 2A

First Round

CR Xavier 3, Dubuque Wahlert 2

Pella 1, Norwalk 0

Waverly-Shell Rock 3, ADM 1

Storm Lake 3, Mount Pleasant 1

Class 1A

First Round

Dyersville Beckman 3, DM Christian 0

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Nevada 3, MOC-Floyd Valley 2
West Liberty 2, Waterloo Columbus 1
Iowa City Regina 4, Riverside, Oakland 0

Friday

Class 3A

Semifinals

Iowa City West (18-1) vs. CR Kennedy (16-3), 5 pm

Johnston (19-1) vs. Iowa City High (16-2), 5:05 pm

Class 2A

Semifinals

CR Xavier (12-5) vs. Pella (14-5-2), 2:30 pm

Waverly-Shell Rock (13-4) vs. Storm Lake (14-1), 2:35 pm

Class 1A

Semifinals

Dyersville Beckman (16-0-1) vs. Nevada (13-4), 12 pm

West Liberty (10-6-3) vs. Iowa City Regina (13-1), 12:05 pm

Saturday

Class 3A

Championship

Semifinal winners, 5 pm

Consolation

Semifinal losers, 4:10 pm

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Class 2A

Championship

Semifinal winners, 2:30 pm

Consolation

Semifinal losers, 1:40 pm

Class 1A

Championship

Semifinal winners, 12:05 pm

Consolation

Semifinal losers, 11:10 am