

Adams saves Lions against No.1 Johnston

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 05 June 2015 20:01 - Last Updated Friday, 05 June 2015 20:23



DES MOINES - Phil Adams spent his first three years on the Linn-Mar soccer team as a defender and midfielder, but when all-state goalkeeper Jared Belin graduated after the 2014 season he volunteered to play between the pipes as a senior.

Now he's one of the big reasons the Lions will be playing for the Class 3A state title Saturday against Ankeny Centennial.

Adams made a brilliant save on a penalty kick in the second half Friday to help the Lions upend top-ranked Johnston, 2-1, in the semifinals of the state tournament at Cownie Park.

Adams made his final save with just a few seconds left in the match and held onto the ball for dear life until the horn sounded.

"When Jared graduated last year -- he was an all-stater and he's playing college soccer now -- I kind of thought I could at least come up and put some pressure on the other goalies to make it the best team, and I ended up getting the spot," he said.

Adams shared time in goal this season with sophomore Cody Ritter, but Adams has been the main in the crease for the tournament.

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Belin, now at Briar Cliff, helped Linn-Mar reach the semifinals of the state tournament last year against Johnston, a fierce battle that ended with a 1-0 loss to the Dragons. The Lions got their revenge Friday in Des Moines.

The game was tied, 1-1, when Johnston was awarded a penalty kick with 22:48 left in the second half. Darius Doswell, a dangerous man, took the shot for the Dragons and fired toward the right corner of the goal. Somehow, Adams anticipated the shot and made a diving save to his left.

"Amazing," said Linn-Mar Coach Corey Brinkmeyer. "Any time you can save a penalty kick, you're in the minority.

"I think he watched the kicker, he moved the right way, he got as big as he could and he got two hands on the ball. It was a great save."

Adams played a hunch.

"For the most part, you just have to pick a side and commit," he said. "It worked."

That kept the score tied at 1-1, but not for long. Linn-Mar speedster Daniel Luzindya raced down the left side of the field and attacked the goal before feeding fellow speedster Leroy Enzugusi in front of the net. Enzugusi poked it home for a 2-1 lead with 19:42 left and leaped high in the air in celebration.

"There was so much adrenaline pumping," Enzugusi said about his sky-pump. "I was so excited. It was a good feeling."

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