

Des Moines Caps deny Metros

By Tom Block
Journal sports writer

The Des Moines Capitals denied Sioux City's bid for an unprecedented third consecutive Iowa High School Hockey League state tournament championship 3-0 Sunday at IBP Ice Center.

The Capitals, who reigned as regular season league champions for the third year in a row, won their first state tournament title. The last champion to come from the Des Moines area was a combined West Des Moines Valley/Dowling squad that

beat Sioux City in the finals of the 1993 tournament.

Sioux City was making its eighth appearance in the state title game since 1990. The Metros earned five state tournament championships in the 1990s and finished second twice during the decade.

"It was a pretty big game," said Capitals Coach Scott Krueger, whose team fashioned a 19-3 regular season record. "We have 12 seniors on this team and they sucked it up today. They wanted it bad."

Des Moines forward Scott Long, who led the IHSHL with 31 goals

and 55 points during the regular season, scored twice in the first period of Sunday's state championship game.

Long's initial red-lighter came on a shot from the right side 3:57 into the first period. The senior camped out in front of Sioux City's net for his second goal on a power play at the 7:22 mark of the opening stanza.

He also figured in Des Moines' third red-lighter, getting the first assist on Ben Furneaux's goal at 2:12

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in the second period.

The Capitals kept the puck in their offensive zone for most of the first period, and it paid off in the form of 17 shots on goal to Sioux City's six. The Metros took six penalties in the first stanza, resulting in three Des Moines power plays.

"Our key to the game was to make sure we didn't get into the penalties with them," said Krueger. "We're deeper than they are so our game plan was to wear them out. We wanted to keep (the puck) out of our zone. I don't think it was in our zone much, and the shots they did get our goaltender made some great saves."

Things evened out in the second and third stanzas for the Metros, who held a 9-5 advantage in shots during the second period. Third period shots were 6-5 in favor of Des Moines.

The Metros, 14-7-1 during the regular season, skated with a 5-on-3 advantage for a brief time in the third period but were unable to capitalize.

"We had some chances but we

didn't put the puck in the net," said Sioux City Coach Walt Johnson. "We weren't shooting very much.

"We had a lot of good individual efforts but we just couldn't get the passes and shots to capitalize on our opportunities. Des Moines is a big, strong team that plays tremendous hockey."

Sioux City defenseman Tim Johnson suffered bruised shoulder after being driven into the boards early in the second period and was unable to continue. That forced the Metros to use first-line forward Ricky Nearman on defense the rest of the way.

"Our lines were all out of sync," said Walt Johnson. "We had to kill a bunch of penalties right at the beginning of the game.

"It was a strangely officiated game. It seemed like they were calling everything on us in the first period and in the third period they called everything on them to even it out."

Sioux City had four players selected for the IHSHL all-star team that will compete in the upcoming Chicago Showcase Tournament.

Representing the Metros on the team are Brian Swanson, Brandon Lake, Robby Lessard and Ben Deck.

Waterloo claimed third place in the state tournament with a 6-1 win over Dubuque Sunday. No other details were available for that game.

The fifth-place game between the Omaha Gladiators and Omaha Junior Lancers lasted four overtimes before the Gladiators emerged with a 3-2 victory. Mike Markey scored the game-winner for the Gladiators 1:39 into the fourth extra session. The Junior Lancers took a 2-0 lead in the game but the Gladiators rallied to tie it on a shot by Tony Roth with 3:05 remaining in regulation.

Mason City edged Lincoln 3-2 for seventh place. Miles Kildare scored both Lincoln goals after the Mohawks had built a 3-0 lead.

■ **ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:** The following Sioux City players earned Academic Achievement Awards for maintaining a grade point average of 3.0 or better: Mike Axelson, Jesse Cowles, Ben Gill, Brandon Lake, Robby Lessard, Aaron Limoges, Casey Mills, Ricky Nearman, Ross Patrick, Chris Porter. Also recognized were Sioux City cheerleaders Alicia Baier, Christina Goeden, Laura Goeden, Jennifer Lee and Carole Reeves.