

Dobes finishes on high note

■ State tourney title caps stellar career for Warriors' goalie

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WATERLOO — While it's an honor to be chosen as one of the league's top players, participating in an All-Star game is about as pleasant for most goaltenders as a trip to the dentist.

The light above each net gets continuously illuminated as goalies are typically left to fend for themselves in the high-scoring exhibitions.

Being placed in a tough position is nothing new for Waterloo Warriors' goalie Brian Dobes. He started playing the position at age five and learned to defend with older brothers Scott and Jason pelting shots in his direction.

Dobes capped an outstanding prep hockey career Sunday when he made his third consecutive trip the Midwest High School Hockey League All-Star game. He surrendered a handful of goals and made 18 saves through 30 minutes as his East team earned an 11-10 win.

For Dobes, recent memories of success helped ease the pain of this All-Star game.

"It was a lot easier to play in after we won the championship last week," he said.

Prior to the All-Star contest, Dobes was busy leading the Warriors to their first postseason tournament title in 19 years. He recorded 60 total saves en route to back-to-back shutouts in the final two games.

The wins over the Des Moines Oak Leafs and Des Moines Capitals in the semifinals and finals ended Des Moines' streak of five consecutive varsity state tournament titles.

For Dobes and Waterloo All-Star teammates Jake Irey, Dawson Kuhlmann and Spencer Warren, it became evident Saturday that the Warriors had earned their opposition's respect.

"Waterloo has finally made a statement," Dobes said.



Brian Dobes
Named MVP of MSHL tournament

DOBES

Warriors' standout unsure about future in hockey

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"It's not that everybody looks up to us, but everybody knows that we're there now."

More than a week removed from the state title, Dobes still has vivid memories of holding a comfortable two-goal lead as time wound down.

"The intensity and speed of the championship game with just a few minutes left to go is what I'll remember most about the tournament," he said.

"There were a lot of thoughts going through my mind. The first one was not letting in any goals and not blowing it for my team."

The goaltender's postseason performance earned him the Al Murdoch Appreciation Trophy as the most valuable player. Waterloo's last player to receive the award was K.C. Doland, who was a goalie on the 1990 championship team. Following the state tournament, the two MVPs had a chance to get acquainted.

"I had seen him around the rink, but had never really gotten to talk to him," Dobes said.

"It was very interesting to hear what he had to say, what his experiences were and how they were similar to mine and how they differed from mine."

Dobes' performance this postseason is something Warriors coach Shawn Weinke will also find tough to forget.

"We talk about big-time players making big plays in big games," Weinke said. "He made some outstanding saves and made the saves he needed to make to keep the games close initially. He definitely came to play."

"Anytime you win a championship at any level, your

goaltending has to be there."

Dobes also believes his defensemen deserve plenty of the credit. Weinke pointed out that second-chance opportunities were rare, allowing Dobes to become more aggressive with his play.

"I think they deserve more credit than anybody," Dobes said. "If we didn't have the defense, then our forwards and I don't really matter."

Joined by Kuhlmann and Irey as captains, Dobes grew into a leadership role this season.

"What I noticed this year most about him was his maturity level on and off the ice," Weinke said.

"Not that he was immature by any means, but he focused on his game and when goals were scored this year he didn't lose focus. ... He's been an All-Star for us for three years so we knew what we had there, but he did take it to that next level maturity-wise."

Looking forward, Dobes said he has yet to decide whether he will continue to play hockey beyond the prep level. His recent success will make it tougher to hang up the skates.

"If I do end up going to school next year and not playing hockey, it's definitely going to be hard," Dobes said.

"It's going to be hard to do that, but at some point you've got to move on."

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