

Nobody better

Warriors cap 34-1 season with title

By ROD PAYNE
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AMES — Calling a timeout with 40 seconds on the clock doesn't seem especially important, but it's something Waterloo Warriors coach Doug Dietz has always dreamed of.

The Warriors (34-1) led Kansas City, 4-2, and were just seconds away from claiming the Midwest High School Hockey League championship when Dietz stopped play.

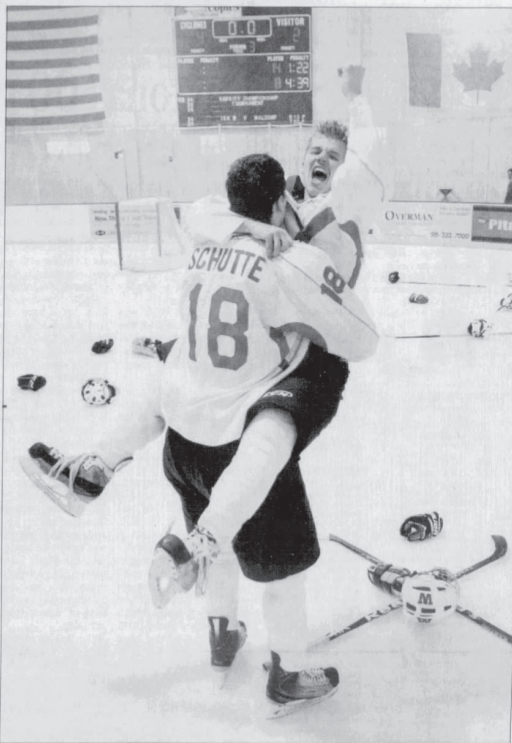
"This is just something I have always dreamed of happening and it was as if I wrote this script," Dietz explained. "Ever since we won the championship in my senior year (1983) and I started coaching, I have always wanted to be in the position of being in the lead and taking a timeout with 30 seconds left so the guys can take in this very special moment and remember it for the rest of their lives."

The scene was bedlam as the Warriors approached the bench, then turned to their fans and began their salute.

"There is nothing like it, knowing we were going to win and you see everyone cheering," senior defenseman Collin Brecher said. "It is just a great feeling and it couldn't get any better than right now."

Brecher scored for the Warriors four minutes into the second period after his squad surrendered an early breakthrough goal to the Jets (30-5), who brought a 24-game winning streak into the finals.

With the Warriors trailing 1-0, Brecher broke clean in front of the crowd and launched a drive on goal as he was tumbling to the ice.



MATTHEW PUTNEY / Courier Photo Editor

Lee Jensen of the Waterloo Warriors jumps into the arms of teammate Alex Schutte after Sunday's 4-2 victory over Kansas City in the championship game of the Midwest High School Hockey League tournament in Ames.

See **WARRIORS**, page B3

Waterloo Warriors head coach Doug Dietz directs his players in the third period of Sunday's Midwest High School Hockey League tournament championship.

WARRIORS

Waterloo was first to bury title since 2008-09

From page B1

The crowd and horn let Brecher know he had tied the contest.

"I kind of fumbled it and just thought of making it go in," Brecher said. "We knew we had to get one here to break the ice. We could not let them get away."

The Jets answered Brecher's offering one minute later, taking the lead for the last time on an bad goal that tamped over Warriors' reminder Chance Krenner's mitt.

Waterloo West junior David Becker delivered the equalizer 60 seconds later, setting the stage for a showdown third period.

"I'll tell you, these guys stayed focused the whole weekend," Dietz said. "They stayed pretty focused all year and knew what they were after. The prize. On the bus ride down all you could hear was the engine of the bus, these guys were that focused."

The Warriors zeroed in on their championship run in the final frame as Waterloo East senior Jake Lichty performed surgery on the Jets' defense with his winning goal 1:34 into the third.

Battling between two defenders Lichty let fly with a blast that caromed off Jets goalie Blair Sanders, then parked his winner stick-side with both men hanging onto his sweater.

"I am really not a very good breakaway guy so I was just going down to shoot and throw it at the net," Lichty said. "The rebound just happened to come back at me and I didn't really have time to think as I just swung it and hoped it would go in. I didn't even think I hit it until I saw it hit the net."

Lichty's goal helped him capture the tournament's MVP award, as he registered two assists and three goals.

"There is no explanation on how I feel right now," Lichty said, hugging his trophy. "Most of us guys have grown up together and this is what we have always



MATTHEW PUTNEY / Courier Photo Editor

Waterloo's Jake Lichty, left, celebrates with Kansas City's Jaeger Zwargard during the second period.

"Most of us guys have grown up together, and this is what we have always dreamed about."

Jake Lichty

Waterloo Warriors senior and tournament MVP

"The guys were loose in the locker room going into the final period," Dietz said. "It was like the calm before the storm, and boy the storm really hit."

"This was special for me because a lot of these kids that I coach now, I had played hockey with their dads. It was cool seeing the generations, and now we are bringing something back to Waterloo. "We are bringing home the prize."

SCORE BY PERIODS

1 1 0-2

2 2 2-4

3 0 0-0

Final: Waterloo 4, Kansas City 2

Goaltending: Waterloo (D. Sanders), Kansas City (B. Sanders)

Referee: J. Sanders

Linesmen: J. Sanders, D. Sanders, D. Sanders

Officials: J. Sanders, D. Sanders, D. Sanders

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