

Metros reach national finals

JOURNAL STAFF

PLYMOUTH, Minn. — Scoring is coming from different sources and it has enabled the Sioux City Metros to reach the finals of the USA Hockey High School National Championships.

Alec Nieman's power-play goal with 14 minutes remaining in overtime lifted the Metros to a 2-1 win over Plano West (Texas) Sunday night at Plymouth Arena. It was the first goal of the season for Nieman, a defenseman who during the regular season had three assists for Coach Dave LeGree's squad.

"We don't usually have Alec in there because he's 6-foot-2," said LeGree, whose squad will face the Colorado Monarchs at 9 a.m. in the championship game.

"We told him on the next power play, stand in front of the net, screen the goalie and it paid off. It was a good move. He hit at the right time and at the right place."

Drake Beller assisted on Nieman's goal for a squad that reached the finals with Sunday morning's 5-1 quarterfinal win over the Billings (Mont.) Bulls. Five different players scored in that triumph, including James Page, who had a goal and an assist.

"We're getting scoring from everyone just like we did at state," said LeGree. "It has been a real team effort like it has been all



Page



Nieman

Reece McDonald and Grant Newman.

Sioux City would carry that lead into the third period when the scoring barrage began.

Connor Sand increased the lead to 2-0 off an assist from McDonald and Page added another goal 7:47 into the period to make it 3-0. Newman would get in on the scoring act off an assist from Page on the power play, and Taylor Frerichs closed out Sioux City's scoring with a tally 10:39 into the third.

Billings averted the shut-out when Erik Reimche scored at the 15:26 mark. Blake Beller got the win for the Metros in net as he denied the Bulls on seven power-play attempts while Sioux City converted on two of its seven.

Page gave Sioux City a 1-0 first-period lead against Plano West with his fourth goal of the national tournament. Kolton Kane and Newman assisted on the goal, but Plano tied it later in the first.

Blake Beller had 26 saves in the semifinal win. He has been between the pipes in every game this season for the Midwest High School Hockey League's regular season and tournament champions.

The Metros will seek to avenge Friday's 8-1 pool play loss to the Monarchs.

"It's going to be a lot of fun tomorrow," said LeGree. "They're fast and they have good shooters. But their goalie isn't as strong as ours. We'll go in with a different game plan. We'll play one period, then worry about the second and see what happens."

year."

Chase Lewison, who had a hat trick for the Metros over Newark (Ohio) Saturday to reach the quarters, gave his team the 1-0 lead over Billings with a power-play goal in the first period off assists from