

Metros win state hockey title

Nate Solma's OT goal lifts Sioux City past Oak Leafs

DAVE DREESZEN
ddreeszen@siouxcityjournal.com

WEST DES MOINES — Nate Solma's unassisted goal in overtime lifted the Sioux City Metros to a 5-4 win over the Des Moines Oak Leafs in the Midwest High School Hockey League Tournament Championship game Sunday afternoon.

The Metros, comprised of players from Sioux City and several

surrounding schools, captured their eighth state tournament title and the first since 2018.

Solma was named the Most Valuable Player of the three-day tournament in West Des Moines this weekend. The Bishop Heelan junior scored six goals, which included a hat trick in Sunday's championship game.

The Metros finished fourth in the MHSHL regular season standings, earning the fourth seed in the postseason tournament. After edging fifth-seeded Lincoln, 4-3 in the quarterfinals Friday, the Sioux City upset the three-time defending tournament champion



Solma

Harder

Hope

Kansas City Jets, 7-4, in the semifinals Saturday night.

In Sunday's title game, the second-seeded Oak Leafs took a 1-0 lead 7:58 into the first quarter on a power play goal by Cooper Michael. The Metros quickly took a 1-0 lead on an unassisted goal

by junior defenseman Grant Harder at the 11:27 mark.

In the second period, the Metros broke the tie on Solma's goal, assisted by sophomore forward Karson Fitch at 6:43, and took a 3-1 lead on senior defenseman JoJo Hope's unassisted goal less than six minutes later. Charles Lorbiecki then scored for the Oak Leafs at 15:02 to cut the advantage to 3-2 heading into the final period.

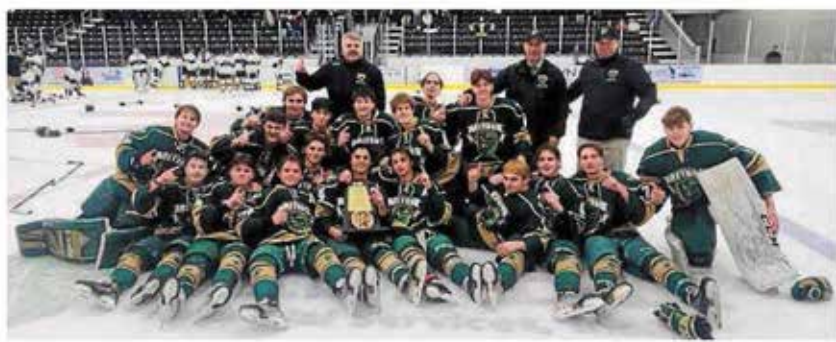
Solma's third goal of the afternoon, with an assist by Hope, gave

Sioux City a 4-2 lead less than five minutes into the period.

The Oak Leafs' Carson Clemmesen then scored two straight goals, the first on a power play at 8:46, and the last on an assist from Jakub Tomecek at 15:39 to tie the contest at 4-4, sending the championship match to overtime.

Solma's unassisted goal 7:58 into the sudden-death extra period set off a wild celebration by the Metros and their fans at the MidAmerican Energy RecPlex.

Please see METROS, Page B2



SIoux CITY METROS

Members of the Sioux City Metros gather with the championship trophy after winning the Midwest High School Hockey League Tournament with a 5-4 win over the Des Moines Oak Leafs in overtime Sunday in West Des Moines.

Metros

From B1

Despite the loss, the Oak Leafs qualified for the USA Hockey High School Division II National Championships in Plymouth, Minn., based on having the best record vs. Iowa teams. The Oak Leafs beat Dubuque in the quarterfinals Friday and Omaha in the semifinals.

The Metros won the national tournament in 2018.

In Friday's MHSHL quarterfinal win over Lincoln, the Metros scored three times in the second period on a Noah Graham unassisted goal, a Solma penalty shot for a score and another Solma goal, assisted by Hope. Heath To-

pil's power play goal at 16:44 cut the Sioux City lead to 3-1.

In the third period, Andrew Olsen's power play goal at the 4:40 mark brought the Stars to within one score. But Harder's unassisted goal at 5:21 put the Metros back up by two, 4-2. Olsen scored the final goal on a power play at 8:23.

In their 7-4 upset win over Kansas City in Saturday's semifinals, the Metros scored seven of the first eight to take a 7-1 lead early in the third period. Sioux City held off the three-time defending champs as they scored three times in the final minutes.

Forward Landon Topf, a senior from Sioux City East, opened the scoring with a goal at 5:11, assisted by East junior forward Cash

Frigge. Hunter Echter, a sophomore from Sergeant Bluff-Luton, followed with a score at 8:19, assisted by Blaze Blazer.

Bauer, a sophomore forward from Dakota Valley, scored the first of his two goals at the 15:41 mark, with assists from Frigge and Hope.

Harder, a junior defenseman from Dakota Valley, scored a short-handed unassisted goal with just 41 seconds gone in the third period to put the Metros up 5-1. Blaze's second goal, assisted by Hope, came less than six minutes later, increasing the advantage to 6-1.

A Frigge goal, assisted by Harder, put the Metros up 7-1 with just 8:59 gone in the final period.