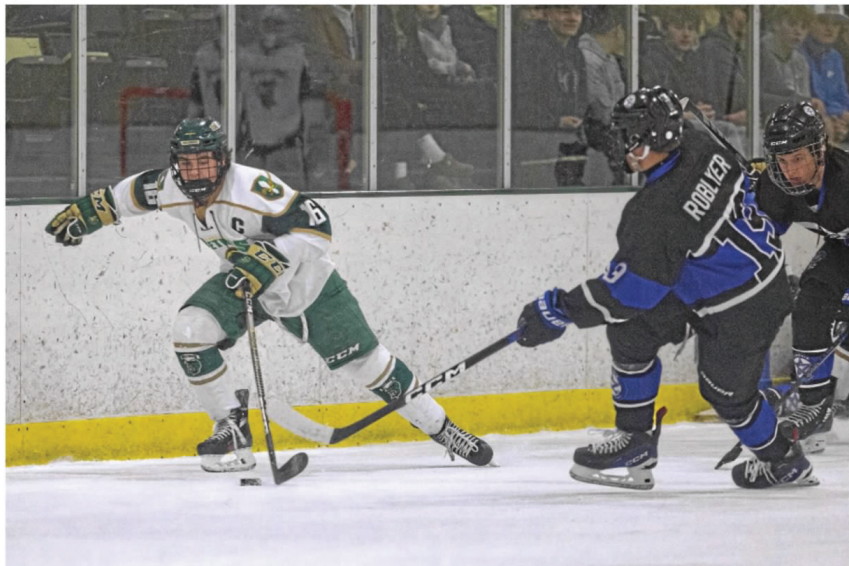


# SOLMA BREAKS METROS' CAREER GOALS RECORD



JESSE BROTHERS, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL

Sioux City's Nate Solma keeps the puck away from Lincoln's Randall Roblyer during Sioux City Metros vs Lincoln Junior Stars hockey action at IBP Ice Center in Sioux City on Saturday. The senior forward broke the team's career goals record on Sunday.

## Senior forward rebounds from scoreless game to set mark Sunday

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SIoux CITY — After taking control of the puck in a bottom corner of the IBP Ice Center rink Sunday, Nate Solma rolled up along the boards and tried to pass to a Sioux City Metros teammate in the center of the ice.



Solma

The puck, though, hit the skate of a Lincoln defender and bounced back to Solma, who skated to the center and then launched a shot from the top of the circle.

"It went right over the goalie's shoulder," Solma recalled Monday. "The place just went absolutely crazy. It was a pretty exciting moment."

With the goal, the senior forward established a new career mark for goals for a Sioux City high school

hockey player, breaking the old mark of 92 set by Dan Davies in 1992.

After the celebration died down, Solma quickly got another goal, his 94th in his career, increasing the Metros' lead to 6-1.

Solma said he wasn't aware he was approaching Davies' record until two weekends ago with one of his teammate's fathers brought it up while the Metros were in Fremont, Neb.

After tallying two goals in the Metros' 5-4 win over Omaha on Feb. 11, he entered Saturday's home game against Lincoln needing just one more to surpass Davies' mark.

"I had a ton of chances to score in the Saturday game, but I was just thinking about it a little too much," he said of the record.

After the game, Solma said he reminded himself of what he had already accomplished.

"I just started telling myself, what's one more goal," he said. "In

the Sunday game, I really was just focusing on playing how I know how to play, just sharing the puck with my teammates and not even thinking about (the record) too much."

With Sunday's 8-1 win over the Junior Stars, the Metros won their 27th game of the season, which also set a single-season high mark for the team, comprised of players from Sioux City and several surrounding high schools.

If Sioux City beats Waterloo twice at home in the final two games of the regular season this weekend, the Metros also will clinch a spot in this year's national tournament in March.

It would be the first appearance at nationals for Solma and the other seniors on the team.

The first-place Metros have already clinched a berth in the Midwest High School Hockey League's

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postseason tournament in West Des Moines next month.

Last season, Sioux City captured its eighth state tournament title and the first since 2018. Solma was named the Most Valuable Player of the three-day tournament, scoring six goals, including a hat trick in the championship game.

This year, the senior has scored 37 goals, second most in the

league.

What helps make Solma such a prolific scorer?

"One of my biggest advantages is my speed," he said. "I feel like my vision on the ice has just gotten better over the years."

And, of course, all the countless hours he has spent on the ice, working on his shot and his overall game. He started playing hockey at age 4.

Solma, a Bishop Heelan High School student, said he's still undecided about his plans after graduation. At the moment, he is

leaning toward enrolling at Iowa State University and playing on the school's club hockey team. But he also hasn't ruled out trying out for a team in Junior A, amateur-level ice hockey for 15- to 20-year-old players.

Regardless of where he ends up next, he will wrap up his Metros career with more goals than any other player in team history.

"I feel like all the hard work has really paid off," he said. "It really means a lot to me knowing I hold the record now and wondering how many years it will stand."