

High school hockey: Dubuque trio earns MSHSL post-season recognition

Three members of the Dubuque Saints earned first-team all-star recognition from the Midwest High School Hockey League this weekend during the league's postseason tournament.

Carter Kerkenbush, Bryce Bechen and Colton Stoll made the squad, which featured nine forwards, six defensemen and three goaltenders. Kerkenbush also landed one of just eight spots on the all-MSHSL Team, and Dubuque's Austin Willenborg won coach of the year accolades.

Kerkenbush, a senior forward from Platteville, led the Saints with 27 goals and 47 points in 30 regular-season games and added a goal and three assists in two MSHSL tournament games as the Saints advanced to the semifinals. He was a unanimous selection to the all-MSHSL team.

Bechen, a senior defenseman from Dubuque Hempstead, led the team with 22 assists and added five goals in 31 regular-season games. He also chipped in a goal and three assists this weekend in the MSHSL tournament.

Stoll, a junior goaltender from Dubuque Wahlert, went 20-10-1 with a .923 save percentage and 2.60 goals against average this season after posting a 3-3-2 record, 3.84 GAA and .877 save percentage last winter. He stopped 69 of 76 shots this weekend in posting a 1-1 record at the state tournament.

Willenborg, 33, starred for the Dubuque high school team in 2007-08 and 2008-09 and played three seasons of Junior hockey that included a brief stint as the emergency backup goalie for the USHL's Fighting Saints in 2011-12. He began his coaching career as an assistant at Iowa State University in 2021-22 and spent last season as Tim King's assistant on the Dubuque high school team.

Dubuque also had five players earn the MSHSL's President's Senior Academic Achievement Award. Bechen, Korbin Deutsch, Gavin Nethery, Nicholas Ruiz and Nikolai Sookochoff have all carried grade point averages of 3.5 or better during their high school careers.

Dubuque's Trevor Breen was one of four junior varsity goaltenders to receive the MSHSL's Silver Glove Award. He went 11-4-4 with a .927 save percentage in 27 junior varsity contests this season.

The top-seeded Sioux City Metros defeated the second-seeded Des Moines Capitals, 6-3, in the MSHSL varsity state championship game. Lincoln edged the Capitals, 3-2, in the junior varsity state final.