

Metros goaltender Patrick the 'most' valuable player

By Steve Allspach

Journal sports writer

Scott Patrick, named the most valuable player Sunday in the Iowa High School Hockey League state tournament that concluded at Sioux City Auditorium, deserves an extra dose of congratulations.

The Sioux City Metros goaltender was playing with a heavy heart Sunday when the Metros defeated Waterloo Public 3-2 in two overtimes to finish third in the tournament.

The East High junior shut out West Des Moines Valley-Dowling in the first round and turned back most of eventual champion Mason City's firepower in a 3-0 semifinal loss.

"Pattie" was playing under a lot of pressure that people weren't aware of," said Metros Coach Jim Coyle.

"Scott's grandmother passed away Saturday morning and his father (Doug) and family they wouldn't inform Scott of her death until after the game," said Coyle.

"Doug's mother and Scott's grandmother had been ill for some time and I would have understood completely if Scott had decided he didn't want to play Sunday against Waterloo.

"It just shows what an outstanding young man he is," said Coyle.

Sioux City defeated Waterloo Public when Steve Nichol rammed home a goal at 5:17 of the second overtime.

■ Sioux City's Patrick, Mason City's Steward, tournament scoring leader Pete Dale of Urbandale and IHSIL scoring champ Marc Gillard headline the all-state hockey team announced after Sunday's championship games.

Along with Patrick, goalies honored were Pat Lanigan of Columbus and Jeff Curtis of Mason City.

Other forwards honored were Brian Wehr (Columbus), Troy Thelen (Mason City), Sean Murdoch (Ames), Tom Meyer (Waterloo Public), Tony Dressen (Valley-Dowling) and Del Donaldson (Waterloo

State hockey

Public).

Defensemen drawing all-state first-team plaudits were Chuck Armstrong (Valley-Dowling), Reece Bixby (Waterloo Public), Scott Jasper (Columbus), Mike Swartzel (Sioux City), Andy Hubbard (Mason City), Dustin Duea (Mason City) and Craig Becker (Columbus).

■ Mason City has now won state championships in football (1978), baseball (1972), boys basketball (1935-40-43), wrestling (1949-50), boys track (1929-30), boys cross country (1972-73), boys swimming (1975-79) and hockey.

■ Urbandale's Pete Dale was the leading scorer in the tournament with six goals and six assists for 12 points.

Mason City's Steward was second with seven goals and two assists. Steward's seven goals led the tournament.

Urbandale's Steve Tunks was the scoring leader after the first two days of the tournament with four goals and four assists, but Tunks did not play in Urbandale's only game Sunday in the consolation round-robin, a 10-7 loss to Ames.

Several Ames players wound up among the scoring leaders, but the Little Cyclone players had the benefit of playing an extra game in the tourney.

Ames was 1-3 in its four games, while the other six teams in the tournament each played three games.

■ Mason City's John Lloyd, named the Iowa High School Hockey League Coach of the Year in ceremonies after the championship game, is a retired air traffic controller.

"Actually, I was retired a little prematurely," mused Lloyd, who said he lost his job in a few years ago when the air traffic controllers union went on strike and many were eventually fired for striking.

Lloyd, who grew up in Wisconsin, is now kept busy with a farm operation and an extremely busy hockey schedule. He coaches all Mason City youth hockey teams from Pee Wees through high school.

Lloyd was an air traffic controller in Alaska for several years and also was an assistant high school coach at Farmington, Minn., before moving to Mason City in 1983, coaches all Mason City youth hockey teams from Pee Wees through high school.

■ Nichol, who got the winning goal for the Metros in the third-place game, has a penchant for being in the right place at the right time in athletics.

In a 1985 high school football playoffs, Nichol, then a junior at Heelan, intercepted a pass on West Des Moines Dowling's second play from scrimmage and rambled 29 yards for what proved to be the only touchdown Heelan needed in a 21-0 victory in the semifinals.

The victory over Waterloo Public Sunday was especially gratifying to the 6-foot-2, 175-pound Heelan senior.

"Before I moved to Sioux City from Ames just before my junior year, I played in Pee Wees and Bantams in Ames and we never ever beat Waterloo," said Nichol. "Then, when I was on the Ames High School team as a freshman and sophomore we never could beat Waterloo Public, either."

The Metros did earn a rare victory over the Waterloo Public School Warriors last season, 9-7, but had dropped a pair of 3-2 decisions and a 4-0 contest to the Warriors this season.

"It was nice to beat those guys in my last hockey game," said Nichol. "I've enjoyed hockey, but I probably won't play again."

Nichol is also an outstanding tennis player, but will pass up that sport this spring to put in some extra time getting ready for the summer baseball season where he is expected to be one of Heelan's leading pitchers.