Odd couple: Seeds 5-6 clash for championship

WATERLOO

After a pair of semifinal upsets, the sixth-seeded Des Moines Oak Leafs will face No. 5 Sioux City for the Iowa High School Hockey League State Tournament championship.

Sioux City punched its ticket to the finals the hard way, with a 6-4 win over regular season champion Mason City. Sophomore center Kevin Lohry collected his second hat trick of the tourney as the Metros handed the Mohawks just their second loss of the season.

"That's what's so great about this tournament," said Sioux City coach Jeff Gray. "Everybody starts out 0-and-0, and No. 8 has just as good a chance to win as No. 1."

Mason City led the Metros by two goals at three different instances, but the Metros put the game away with four unanswered goals over the second and third periods.

Sioux City managed just 17 shots on goal to 31 for the Mohawks, but Lohry made his shots count, and goalie Beau Erickson bounced back from giving up seven goals in Friday's win over Waterloo.

"When you only give up 17 shots, you should win the game," said Mason City coach Mike Hicks. "We thought we had them beat, and we kind of gave in defensively. But give Sioux City the credit — they hung around and fought to the end."

With three goals and an assist, Lohry now has ten points in the tournament. Two of his goals Saturday came on unassisted breakaways, including one that tied the game, 4-4, with 5:21 gone in the third period.

In Saturday's second semifinal, the Oak Leafs slapped a 3-0 shutout on their rival Des Moines Capitals. It was goalie Geoffrey Miller's sixth shutout of the season, and the Oak Leafs' first win over the second-seeded Caps this year.

"Miller played an outstanding game," said Leafs coach Doug Borud. "We knew he had it in him, and he gave us everything we could ask for."

Lucas DuBay put the Oak Leafs on top with a second period goal, Mike Braune added an insurance goal on a long shot early in the third, and Jason Brown scored into an empty net with ten seconds to play.

In the fifth season of the Leafs' existence, they are playing in their first league championship. The Capitals were bumped out of the finals for the first time since 1999.

The championship game takes place at Young Arena today at 1:45 p.m.