

# IOWA'S GREAT ONES



MOLLY MAQUEN/THE REGISTER

**Meeting their public:** The newly crowned state champion Des Moines Capitals acknowledge their supporters in Urbandale on Sunday.

## Capitals skate past Mason City to bring D.M. a state crown

By LISA COLONNO  
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Spencer Krohn became an unlikely hero.

The Des Moines Capitals senior forward, who scored four goals during the regular season, just wanted to close out his last high school hockey season in style.

He finished with more than fashion points.

Krohn scored a team-leading two goals and a state championship before the final buzzer sounded on his

### Oak Leafs third

Brian Spring's hat trick lifted the Des Moines Oak Leafs to a 4-2 win over Kansas City in the third-place game Sunday — a team-best 22-11 record for the season.

"This is the next-best thing to the championship," he said.

Coverage, Page 5C

high school career.

The Capitals' defeated Mason City, 6-3, in the Iowa High School Hockey League

state championship game Sunday afternoon at the ice arena in Urbandale to win the city of Des Moines' first state trophy since 2000.

"These are the best three games I've played in my life," Krohn said. "I went over the top this weekend. It's nice to know I helped the team win."

Krohn, who attends Roosevelt, had eight points in 27 regular-season games.

He finished the Capitals' three-game tournament run

with four points — on three goals and one assist.

"His play has been fantastic," Capitals coach Scott Krueger said. "A senior going out that way is great."

The Capitals also finished on top as a team.

They won the regular-season title and entered the state tournament, which they hosted, as the top seed.

The Capitals won 23 of their final 24 games.

"It's unreal," Capitals forward Brad Krueger said.

Krueger scored what ended up as the game-winning goal 15 seconds into the third period.

As the final seconds ticked off the scoreboard clock, sticks, gloves and helmets became airborne. The equipment scattered across the ice as the Capitals jumped over the boards to surround winning goaltender Steven Erbstein.

Erbstein, who had 16

See HOCKEY, Page 5C

## Capitals' state title concludes big season

HOCKEY, from Page 1C

saves Sunday, allowed five goals in three tournament games.

The Capitals finished the regular season with the fewest goals allowed in the league.

Sunday's championship opponent, Mason City, had two of the league's top-five goaltenders in Tyler Brown and Brent Frein, and the league's points leader in Cole Despenas.

The Capitals, who beat Mason City three times during the regular season, shut down the Mohawks for two periods Sunday and took a 4-0 lead with Krueger's goal.

Capitals junior forward Brett Ferguson put Des Moines' first point on the board with nine seconds left in the first period with a power-play goal.

Ferguson skated around the back of the net and got the puck to ricochet off Mason City goaltender Brown and into the net.

"He's good behind the net with the puck," Capitals coach Scott Krueger said.

Derek Elliott, Krohn and Brad Krueger bumped the score to 4-0 before Mike Murtugath scored Mason City's first goal 6:01 into the third period on a power play.

Krohn regained a four-goal lead, but then the Capitals got into penalty trouble, giving the Mohawks a 5-on-3 skater advantage. The Mohawks scored on both power plays to cut Des Moines' lead to two goals with 3:53 left in the game.

"The game kind of got away from us," Brad Krueger said.

Tim Ramsey's empty net goal in the final minute sealed the win for the Capitals.

"We had a slow start this season and are on fire now," Brad Krueger said.

Capitals defenseman Roch Naert was named the tournament's most valuable player. The Urbandale senior helped the Capitals finish the season with a 28-5-0 record.

Mason City closed the season with a 24-6-1 record.