

Oak Leafs' repeat feels sweet



DAVID PETERSON/THE REGISTER

Des Moines Oak Leafs goalie Jordan Buenting, bottom, celebrated with his teammates. See more photos at www.DesMoinesRegister.com/photos.

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Des Moines Oak Leafs hockey sticks, dark blue gloves and helmets went flying into the air at Urbandale's 95KGGO Arena when the final buzzer sounded on a second straight championship Sunday.

The top-seeded Oak Leafs beat the No. 2-seeded Omaha Jr. Lancers 2-1 in a tight, physical Midwest High School Hockey League Tournament final.

They celebrated by engulfing goaltender Jordan Buenting at

PREP HOCKEY

Midwest Hockey League Final

the end boards.

Points leader Josh Twinn tallied the winning goal at the 10:44 mark of the third period, assisted by tournament most valuable player Troy Du Bay.

The Oak Leafs (29-4-1-2) became the ninth team in the league's 31 seasons to win back-to-back titles. The Oak Leafs won their first league title in 2006.

"This one just feels like a lot

more," said Du Bay, who had six points in three tournament games, including the overtime goal in Saturday's semifinal. "It feels bigger than last year."

Du Bay's grandfather and dedicated Oak Leafs fan Richard Du Bay, 89, died less than two weeks ago.

"I felt him there," Du Bay said. "The whole team felt him there."

The Oak Leafs entered the championship game as the top defensive team in the 12-

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DAVID PETERSON/THE REGISTER

Des Moines Oak Leafs' Josh Twinn, center, celebrates after scoring the decisive goal late in the third period of a 2-1 win over Omaha Sunday. The Oak Leafs won their second straight Midwest High School Hockey League title.

Oak Leafs' Buenting brick wall

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team league.

They allowed 35 goals in 33 regular-season games and maintained their average Sunday, thanks to 24 saves from goaltender Buenting, an Ankeny senior.

"We are always in a game with a goalie like Jordan," Oak Leafs coach Doug Borud said. "He has been a key player all year."

Buenting established himself as the league's top goaltender with a 1.02 goals-against average, .957 save percentage, 26 wins and seven shutouts in the regular season.

"I don't know where we'd be without him," said Du Bay, a Johnston junior.

The Oak Leafs controlled play despite early jitters and took a 1-0 lead out of the first period from an unlikely scorer.

Valley sophomore Tyler Belling scored his third goal of the season at the 13:28 mark.

Third-place game

Senior defenseman Robbie Anderseng sealed a 4-3 shootout win for the Des Moines Capitals after sophomore forward Bryce Johnson forced overtime against the Quad City Blues.

Brady Johnson and Patrick Rice also tallied goals for the Capitals in the five-round shootout they won 2-1. The Capitals, who entered the tournament as the No. 4 seed, finished with a 21-10-4-1 record in head coach Scott Long's first season.

He backhanded a fine feed from Michael Pratt.

"He gave me a nice pass off the wall," Belling said. "I took it to the net hard. That was as best of a time as ever (to score)."

Both teams went scoreless in the second period, but Omaha came out fast in the third and tied the game with an unassisted goal from Aaron Kind

at the 3:30 mark. Omaha goaltender Josh Pijewski made 24 saves in the game.

"I predicted this would be a low-scoring, 2-1 game — but with us having the two," Omaha coach Chuck Nano said. "It came right down to the end. That was how we played each other during the year, too."

Twinn, a Johnston senior, notched the tiebreaking goal with less than five minutes left in regulation. He picked up eight points in three tournament games.

The Oak Leafs then killed off a penalty in the final four minutes amid cheers of "Let's go Leafs" ringing from the stands.

The Jr. Lancers (23-10-3-0) were one of two teams to beat the Oak Leafs in regulation this season. The Des Moines Capitals, who lost to the Oak Leafs in Saturday's semifinals, also beat them during the regular season.

The Oak Leafs' other two regulation losses came when the team had to forfeit two games in Lincoln because they were unable to travel because of inclement weather.

The Oak Leafs maintained a Des Moines hockey trend with Sunday's win.

A team from Des Moines has played in the last eight league championship games and won the last four. The Capitals claimed the 2004 and 2005 titles.

"We are building quite a tradition for Des Moines hockey," Borud said.

SCORING BY PERIODS

Omaha 0 0 1-1
D.M. Oak Leafs 0 0 0-2
First period—Des Moines: Belling (Pratt) 13:28; Anderseng (Johnson) 15:30; Senior D.M. history 14:57.
Second period—Pinesdale-Stewart: D. High (Kavanaugh) 7:06; Swanson, O. (Trigg) 11:28.
Third period—Omaha: Kind (unassisted) 3:30; Des Moines: Twinn (Du Bay) 10:44; Pennington—Swanson, O. (Hasting) 1:14; Krutz, D.M., High (shooting) 11:29.

SHOTS ON GOAL

Omaha 6 10 9-25
D.M. Oak Leafs 12 19 9-26
Power-play opportunities—O. 0-2; D.M. 1-4.
Goaltending—O. Pajewski, 1, 28 shots-24 saves; D.M. Buenting, 6, 23 shots-24 saves.