



BRANDON POLLOCK PHOTO, COURIER STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Waterloo Warriors take possession of the MHSHL Tournament trophy after defeating Cedar Rapids 2-1 Sunday in Ames.

# Undisputed: Warriors are MHSHL champions

Waterloo captures tournament title with 2-1 victory

AMES — All season long, Waterloo stood alone at the top of the Midwest High School Hockey League.

All season long, Cedar Rapids coveted that spot as the exclamation point on its best season ever.

Sunday at the Ames/ISU Ice Arena, push came to shove as the two teams collided in the championship game of the MHSHL tournament. And in a matchup that lived up to its billing, Waterloo and its league-best defense edged Cedar Rapids and its league-leading offense, 2-1.

The Warriors (32-2-0-1) stand alone as the undisputed 2018-19 champions, while they also stand alone as the most successful program in the league's history with their eighth tournament championship.

Sunday's championship was the second in three seasons for Waterloo, but it was anything but



Waterloo's Carter Herbst goes to the ice to keep the puck from Cedar Rapids' Carter Benwick during Sunday's Midwest High School Hockey League tournament final.

easy. Cedar Rapids (29-6-0-0) handed the Warriors one of their two regulation losses two weeks ago, 4-1, and carried a 10-game winning streak into Sunday's showdown.

"I think our kids were a little nervous going into this game," Waterloo coach Brian Cook said. "Sometimes it is just difficult to keep the puck on the stick in a big game. I think we did a great

job on defense, not giving them good looks to score, and our top scorers really stepped up when needed."

The Warriors fell behind 1-0 after the first period and spluttered early on the attack. But as has been the case often this season, Waterloo's veteran leaders stepped up. Early in the second period, senior Carter Herbst of Denver gave his team

a big lift with a goal that tied the game at the 5:11 mark.

It was the fifth goal of the tournament, for Herbst, who earned MVP honors.

"It was a pretty slow first period for us and I was just going down there to score," Herbst said. "I just shot the puck at the net and was hoping for the best."

About five minutes later, league scoring champion Ben Sinnott converted a steal and breakaway for a 2-1 Warriors lead.

"I think (Sinnott) was a big goal, but having Ben (Sinnott) go down three minutes later and score, that one was huge," said Herbst. "It gave us momentum, and we were not going to let up."

"I didn't think it would be the game-winner, and we needed another one. Our defense took over and gave them nothing. After Brady Buckley went down on 17 (Cedar Rapids) stepped up in his place and everything just kept running smooth and things just started to come together for us. It was more than we could ask for."

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Waterloo's Nick Samuelson takes a shot between a trio of Cedar Rapids defenders during the MHSHL Tournament championship game Sunday in Ames.

## Warriors

From B1

Sinnott, a Waterloo Columbus junior who set the MHSHL single-season record with 56 goals, took advantage of what he saw on the ice.

"They had been throwing the puck down the boards all day and I blocked that one," said Sinnott. "I picked it up and went right after their goalie (Eric Wisnousky) and wanted to get the five-hole. I dropped down to block and I just took it to the left and flipped it in."

"I knew we would bounce back after the first period, and we did. When we get the momentum like that we are hard to stop," added Sinnott who collected his second championship trophy. "This one is sweet because the first one I was playing third line. This one is special."

"We knew we had to just go out there and grind this one out, and our defense played great."

Senior Keegan Smith had a lot to do with that defensive effort,

checking RoughRiders into the boards several times and taking away the puck. When Cedar Rapids did get the puck directed toward the Waterloo net, Warriors goalie Chase Pabst snuffed out every threat but one while making 28 saves.

"I'll tell you something right now," announced Smith. "There is not one team in this league that is better than us. We proved we were the best. They got a fluke goal and that's okay, because we have the guys that can step up and make it happen."

"This is the best defense that can handle any situation. That trophy is huge and getting it my senior year, it's the best way to end it."

When the final horn sounded, the Warriors' bench stormed the ice and equipment went flying. And when Herbst was announced as the tournament MVP, the Warriors' crowd went wild.

"I felt that the trophy could have easily went to Chase (Pabst)," Herbst said. "He played a great tournament giving up just three goals. Getting the honor of the award

though, just made the victory sweeter."

Waterloo head coach Brian Cook earned an extra piece of hardware, too, when he was named Coach of the Year.

"The award does mean a lot to me because it did come from the other coaches," said Cook. "But it is a coaches trophy. All my assistants put in so much time and contributed in a big way all year."

"The (players) said that they were coming down here to win it all and if we went to nationals without this trophy it would take a lot away from the great year we had."

### Waterloo 2, Cedar Rapids 1

#### SCORE BY PERIODS

Cedar Rapids	1	0	0	1-1
Waterloo	0	2	0	2-2
<b>FIRST PERIOD</b> — Cedar Rapids, Luke Edwards (unassisted) 15:12. Penalties — none.				
<b>SECOND PERIOD</b> — Waterloo, Carter Herbst (Kole Latukis) 5:11. Waterloo, Ben Sinnott (unassisted) 10:00. Penalties — none.				
<b>THIRD PERIOD</b> — no scoring. Penalties — none.				

#### SHOTS ON GOAL

Cedar Rapids	12	8	0	2-29
Waterloo	8	2	0	10-27
Goalkeepers — Cedar Rapids, Eric Wisnousky (25 saves), Waterloo, Chase Pabst (28 saves).				
Officials — Referee, Aaron Mostrom. Linesmen, Cody Clark and Trevor Hill.				