

# Warriors finish regular season



CHRIS ZOELLER, COURIER STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Waterloo's Brendan Shaner attacks the Cedar Rapids net on Thursday at Young Arena.

## Waterloo is top seed in MSHSL championship tourney

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The final horn sounded throughout Ames/ISU Ice Arena, a blaring notice that the Waterloo Warriors fell just short of their goal of a league championship.

With a 4-0 loss to the Kansas City Jets in the Midwest High School Hockey League championship game, the Warriors finished last season with a loss.

But, that was last season.

This season, the Warriors hit the ice unsure of how the team would rebound from its previous runner-up finish. However, according to team captain and

forward JT Metcalf, the Warriors used that loss as motivation heading into the 2021-22 season.

"Obviously, we had a pretty rough loss last year," Metcalf said. "We all came out with that spark under us. We wanted that redemption."

In order to find the redemption they sought, the Warriors needed to replace the production of three of its top five scorers. 2021 seniors Christian Heiser, Casey Winders and John Harrison combined to produce 83 of the Warriors' points in the previous season.

The Warriors started their redemption tour with a 5-4 shootout victory over the Des Moines Capitals which kicked off a six-game winning streak to start the season.

Following a 3-0 loss to the Omaha Jr. Lancers, the Warriors

resumed their winning ways with an eight-game winning streak, which included two wins over the reigning champion Jets.

On Dec. 18, the Warriors dropped their second game of the season in a 2-1 shootout loss to the Des Moines Capitals. Waterloo did not lose for another month as the Warriors started another seven-game winning streak.

After another 2-1 loss to the Capitals, the Warriors finished their season on an eight-gaming winning streak, which included a 4-1 win over the Des Moines Capitals on Feb. 12.

Waterloo completed its season as the top team in the MSHSL with a 29-2-0-1 record. With the first place regular season finish, the Warriors earned a spot in the

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## Warriors

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USA Hockey High School National Championships in Dallas, Texas.

Led by a quartet of seniors, the Warriors offense finished third in average goals per game with 4.16. Harrison Foss led the Warriors with 50 points (13G, 37A). Metcalf added 49 points (23G, 26A), Carter Frost scored 41 points (13G, 28A) and Braydan Kirchmann put up 36 points (22G, 14A) during the regular season.

However, the most notable performance came from netminder Caleb Raisty. The senior set new league high marks for season save percentage and career save percentage during his final season with Waterloo. In the 2021-22 season, Raisty recorded a .959 save percentage, a 1.22 goals against average and 11 shutouts.

Raisty's performance earned him MSHSL All-League Team honors.

"It is really a mindset game," Raisty said. "There is a lot of pressure on you, but you just have to clear your head and keep going."

Waterloo head coach Brian Cook said Raisty's play in net proved vital for the Warriors success and gave the team confidence.

"You cannot win in hockey without a good goaltender," Cook said. "We know he is going to give us a chance to win every night...We have had numerous games where we have scored one, maybe two, goals and we came away with W's mainly because he was in the net."

Senior defenseman Cale Neuendorf joined Raisty on the All-League Team as the Warriors led the MSHSL by holding opponents to 1.38 goals per game.

Nonetheless, even as the accolades roll in, Cook said the Warriors are not getting ahead of themselves.

"We have to stay focused and take it one period at a time," Cook said.

"If we keep it simple like that, we have been pretty successful not looking past teams."

The 2021-22 MSHSL Coach of the Year said that will continue to be the message to his team during the league championship in Des Moines this weekend.

"We cannot win the tournament in the first game, we cannot win it on Friday," Cook said. "We have to win the first period and then...my message for the second period will be to win the second period. Just keeping it simple as much as we can."

As the top seed, Waterloo received a first round bye and will face off against the ninth seeded Quad City Blues on Friday, March 4 at 6 p.m.

The Blues beat the Cedar Rapids RoughRiders on Thursday 4-2 to advance to the matchup with Waterloo. In the regular season, the Warriors outscored the Blues 19-1 in four regular season contests and swept the regular season series, 4-0.