

Top boys soccer teams on exhibition

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The boys soccer season has not officially begun, but Kingston Stadium played host to the Metro Jamboree at Kingston Stadium that featured exhibition matchups of many teams that expect to run into each other in June at the state tournament.

Included in the field were the preseason No. 1 ranked teams in all three classes: Iowa City Regina (1A), Xavier (2A) and Iowa City West (3A). The field also boasted teams ranked second, third, fourth, sixth and 15th in their respective classes.

The teams were using the Jamboree, as a final tune up before the regular season begins Saturday. The matches were 40 minutes, half the time of a regulation game.

Here is a rundown of the matches:

Class 3A No. 2 Iowa City City High 1, Class 3A No. 3 Kennedy 0

The Little Hawks and the Cougars both showed a lot of energy as they traded opportunities to score.

The game was scoreless until the Little Hawks knocked home a penalty kick with 1:46 remaining after a foul was called in the box.

“Most of the things that we wanted to check, like how our defense was going to hold, was fine,” said Kennedy co-coach Steve Robertson. “We had one dumb foul in the end, which happens sometimes when you are learning.”

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The Cougars were glad for the chance to play their exhibition against a team that got to the state championship last season.

“I like the fact that we were playing a strong team instead of coming out and playing a team you are going to beat by a couple goals in a half,” Robertson said. “You learn more from a game like this.”

Class 3A No. 6 Washington 2, Class 1A No. 1 Iowa City Regina 1

The Warriors and Regals struggled back and forth, pushing the ball aggressively on offense. That resulted in a pretty goal from outside the 18 yard box early in the game for Warrior Jack Sundermann.

After Iowa City Regina tied it up, exchange student Boris Licon-Morena was able to pick up a goal on a ball that was bouncing around in front of the net, giving Washington the advantage.

“Overall, I think we took advantage of our chances and hit some nice shots,” said Washington Coach J.P. Graham.

Coming into the season, the big question for the Warriors was how they would replace their five suspended defenders. Graham said he was pleased with what he saw in that regard.

“Not too bad,” Graham remarked. “I was really impressed with Jake Bjornsen. He did a really good job of taking care of some of their counter attacks. I was pretty impressed for their first time together as a unit.”

Class 2A No. 1 Xavier 4, Mount Vernon 0

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The Saints took control of the game from the very beginning, seizing the ball and scoring three goals within the first 17 minutes. The first goal came just six minutes into the match.

Perhaps the highlight of the night for the Saints was when sophomore Daniel Cowden headed home a goal with just over 3 minutes left to secure the final margin.

"We realized that we were ranked No. 1 this week and we wanted to start off on a good note and that's what we did," Xavier Coach Amir Hadzic said.

Class 3A No. 15 Linn-Mar 1, Class 1A No. 4 Solon 0

The Lions and Spartans played a fairly even game as they got used to live competition again.

Linn-Mar took control of the game for a stretch that started with 28 minutes left as they played through balls, pestering the defense until Ryan Gingrich buried a through ball from Michael Zimmerman with 26:30 left in the game.

"Once we got a couple through balls, I think we got them back on their heels a little bit and put it in deep," said Coach Corey Brinkmeyer.

Brinkmeyer was also pleased by his teams effort and how they looked in live competition.

"I was happy to get almost everybody in and see how they handled the pressure," he said. "So far so good."

Class 3A No. 1 Iowa City West 1, Prairie 0

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Although the Trojans lost 16 seniors off of last year's team, they are still ranked No. 1 in the preseason poll and they showed why 10 minutes into the game as they scored on a magnificent touch shot over the hands of the Prairie keeper.

The rest of the game, Prairie was able to hang in with the two-time defending state champ, but couldn't find a goal of its own.

"We aren't doing the little things right, and that's what makes the difference between winning and losing, a touch here and a touch there," Coach Matt Erlandson said.

He was also pleased that his team showed visible improvement as the period went along.

"I could see some improvement through the half as we were starting to work better as a team and pushing forward," he said.

Marion 1, Jefferson 0

Jefferson controlled the play for much of the match, keeping the ball in Marion's half of the field, but the J-Hawks were not able to punch anything in against a stout Indians defense.

For their part, the Indians picked their places to counter attack and got several opportunities of their own before Colton Storla punched one in with just over 4 minutes left.

Jefferson Coach John O'Connor was a little bit disappointed with what he saw out of his less experienced players.

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"I wanted to find out about my bench today, and I think we found out that we are not as deep as I had hoped to be," he said.

O'Connor also pointed out that the team hasn't quite adjusted to their speed attack yet.

"We are certainly not able to use our speed yet," he said. "We haven't figured this system out and we are not using it to our advantage."

Marion Coach John Hauskins was happy to sneak in the goal at the end and was happy with how the Indians executed their game plan, though he hopes they won't have to play that way much in the future.

"That is probably one of the better teams we will play skill-wise so, hopefully, we will be the ones controlling things from now on," he said.