

J-Hawks' impressive streak ends in loss

Written by Jake Koolbeck

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The Cedar Rapids Jefferson boys soccer team had been very impressive in the last couple games.

The J-Hawks battled yet another highly ranked opponent, the third top six ranked foe in as many games, but came out on the wrong end this time.

Class 3A top-ranked Iowa City West edged the No. 16 J-Hawks, 1-0, Tuesday afternoon at lower Kingston.

"To be honest, we lost to a better team at this point in the season," Jefferson Coach John O'Connor said. "(The) good news for us is ours boys work hard. I would love to meet them again at the end of the season and have another shot at it."

No loss is fun and no loss is a good loss, but if anything came out of the J-Hawks loss it is that they believe they can play with anyone in the state.

"If that is a true No. 1 ranking (for Iowa City West), which I feel is deserved, then I feel pretty good about it," O'Connor said on competing with the top teams in the state. "I feel we can play with anybody."

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"I just feel if that was No. 1 ranked team then we have a really bright season in front of us," Jefferson senior Stefan Krohn added. "When it came down to it they beat us but we had our moments. In the end if we would have put those (scoring opportunities) away it could have put us even or ahead on the scoreboard."

Jefferson also received the good news that sophomore Hussin Al-Yasseri was cleared to play. Hussin was injured in last Tuesday's game at Kennedy (a 2-1 Jefferson win) and did not play in Jefferson's game last Thursday at Xavier (a 1-0 win).

"Yesterday he didn't practice and was still on crutches," O'Connor said. "He came in today and said he was fine. Our trainer texted me right before the game and said she put him through multiple tests and he passed every one with flying colors."

"He had an MRI scheduled for tomorrow but the way he played tonight we are feeling pretty good that it was just a really bad bruise on his knee," O'Connor added. "At this point he looks like he is ready to go."

Iowa City West (6-1, 3-1) controlled the possession in the first half and looked like the far better team with plenty of chances on goal. J-Hawk keeper Andrew Patience and the Jefferson defense held strong against the consistent Trojan attacks to keep the game all square at 0-0 going into halftime.

"He has saved our butts multiple times this season and continues to do so," O'Connor said of Patience. "That should give our defense some comfort that he is back there. We went from a flat back four last year to playing with a sweeper, stopper and they are not all together comfortable."

"We played this team the same way we played the last two. We gave the first half away," O'Connor said. "Somehow we found our way to a 0-0 halftime score."

The J-Hawk conditioning showed again as Jefferson (4-3, 2-2) was able to put some pressure on in the second half and looked a step quicker than their counterpart.

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"We came out in the second half and played a little bit better," O'Connor said. "In the second half we have a tendency to be a little bit fast. We were a little bit quicker than they were."

Despite the efforts, a string of little mistakes cost the J-Hawks greatly as Iowa City West's Mueng Sunday was able to slip a ball past Patience for what turned out to be the decisive goal.

"It started with a bad pass in the midfield then we stabbed at it and he went by us. Our two defenders didn't communicate and neither one stepped to him," O'Connor said. "Patience tried to guess on it and (Sunday) went the other way. Can't blame Andrew Patience, he does a good job but that time he couldn't make up the ground quick enough."

Jefferson got some opportunities in the final 20 minutes of play but was unable to score as West hung tough to escape with the win.

Jefferson goes to Waterloo on Saturday for games with both Waterloo East and Waterloo West.

After two game-winning goals last week, Jefferson senior forward Eric Jones was officially nominated for [KCRG's Athlete of the Week](#).

IOWA CITY WEST 1, JEFFERSON 0

Goals: ICW – Mueng Sunday