

Linn-Mar boys eye spot in state history

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 28 February 2011 16:24 - Last Updated Monday, 28 February 2011 16:25

The Linn-Mar Lions can make history Tuesday night if they beat North Scott and earn their eighth straight trip to the boys state basketball tournament.

Tipoff is scheduled for 6:30 Tuesday night at the U.S. Cellular Center in downtown Cedar Rapids.

Linn-Mar is currently tied with Cedar Rapids Regis for the longest streak in history with seven consecutive trips to state. Regis, which combined with LaSalle to form Xavier High School in 1998, made seven straight trips from 1989 through 1995.

Davenport High School (1947 through 1952) and Hull Western Christian (1988 through 1993) made six straight trips to the boys state basketball tournament, according to records posted on the IHSA website.

Linn-Mar began its streak when it won the Class 4A title in 2004. The Lions also won the 4A crown in 2007. They finished second in 2005 and 2009, placed third in 2008 and 2010, and were fourth in 2006.

The top-ranked Lions have compiled a gaudy 182-18 record during the past eight seasons heading into Tuesday night's game against North Scott, including a 22-0 mark this season.

Cedar Rapids Washington (16-8) and No.8 Cedar Rapids Jefferson (16-5) also are playing in Class 4A substate finals Tuesday night.

Washington will face Dubuque Hempstead in the second game of Tuesday's doubleheader at approximately 8 p.m. at the U.S. Cellular Center, following Linn-Mar's game with North Scott. Hempstead upset Kennedy Friday night to reach the substate finals, denying Metro fans a chance to see the Warriors and Cougars tangle for a third time this season.

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Jefferson will travel to the McLeod Center in Cedar Falls to face Waterloo West in the substate finals there. Waterloo West upset Cedar Falls to reach the finals.

Washington and Jefferson qualified for the 2010 state tournament, but both teams lost in the first round.

The Class 4A state tournament will be staged at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines from March 9-12.