

No.6 Hawks nip No.3 Warriors in boys soccer

Written by Jim Ecker
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The Cedar Rapids Prairie boys soccer team has never won a conference title, never made the state tournament and until this year had never been ranked in the Top 10.

The times could be changing.

The sixth-ranked Hawks trimmed No.3 Cedar Rapids Washington, 1-0, Thursday on a goal by sophomore Logan Rindernecht with 1 minute, 51 seconds left in the second half on a cold, damp, raw night at Prairie.

Prairie has begun the season with eight straight victories and has defeated then-No.2 Johnston and No.3 Washington.

"Prairie soccer is at its finest this year," proclaimed Rindernecht, who said he'd never scored a bigger goal in his life.

The Hawks won their own tournament to start the year, highlighted by their victory over Johnston. They also won the Linn-Mar tournament last weekend with a victory over the 14th-ranked Lions.

"Are we deserving of our ranking? I guess by the results, I'd say we are," Coach Curt Lewis remarked.

The schedule is loaded with tough matches in the Mississippi Valley Conference, but Lewis likes the way his team dedicated itself to getting in top shape after graduating eight starters.

Prairie goaltender Adam Kueny and Washington keeper Gunnar Lenzen both made sensational saves during the match and it appeared the game was headed to overtime with less than two minutes to play. That changed quickly, and dramatically.

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Jonas Frank, stationed near the right corner, passed the ball in front of the net, trying to create an opportunity for a teammate. Lenzen got his hands on the ball, but it slipped loose and rolled to Rindernecht.

"Lucky I was there to pick up the garbage," said Rindernecht, who poked his eighth goal into an open net.

Washington senior Austin Bergstrom, a prep All-America midfielder, gave the Warriors (3-1) several scoring chances with his long uncanny pinpoint passes, but the Warriors could not convert. Kueny made several acrobatic saves, including a diving stop with 17 minutes left, and finished with his sixth shutout.

"That was a great soccer game, by both teams," said Lewis, in his 10th year as Prairie's head coach.