



Pound for Sound: Wang's goal lifts Jags over Eagles

On a night to honor those affected by cancer, Bloomington hockey fans were the winners

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Jefferson senior captain Nick Hatton figured something special was going to happen during the second and final Kennedy-Jefferson boys hockey game this season.

Hatton is always the first Jaguar out of the locker room, giving high fives to the kids along the walk to the ice, a position he was in years before.

"The jitters were just unreal," Hatton said. "I've played a lot of games, I don't get nervous like that but it's rivalry night, and just so excited to get out there. I couldn't wait to get out on the ice. The energy was through the roof, we were just so happy to be there."

One of several homemade signs in the student section read: 'Pound 4 Sound,' serving as a "push-me" button for players to jump into the boards and make that crushing plastic-on-plexiglass sound.

Hatton recalled playing in the mites versus varsity game as a 7-year-old and after an interview, he returned to interacting with the kids outside the rink.

Jefferson came out on top of the high-energy rivalry game with a 3-2 win in what was a thrilling contest Feb. 2.

The game had a little bit of everything, from tipped-goals and end-to-end rushes to special teams goals, a penalty shot and deflection for a goal.

Jefferson senior captain AJ Wang celebrated his birthday by scoring the winning goal seconds



Jefferson senior captain AJ Wang, left, autographs a Jaguar jersey for 7-year-old Breckin Johnson after the Feb. 2 game.

(SUN NEWSPAPERS STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

after being stopped on a penalty shot five minutes into the third period.

During the penalty shot, Wang was looking for Kennedy goalie Dom Walton to move to set up his backhand but Walton stayed in his spot and calmly closed his glove to make the save.

Twelve seconds later Wang was behind the Eagles' goal with the puck, looking to find Joey Kubas in front when the puck deflected off a Kennedy player and into the goal.

"I feel like the hockey gods gave me that one," said Wang, who was equally as amped up as Hatton to get the game underway. "I had a test today in school and I'm pretty sure I failed it because I couldn't concentrate. Ever since the season started this has been on the calendar."

Gordy Gombold and Maximo San Roman set up Wang's winner.



Kennedy senior Logan Dosan points to the Eagles student section after scoring in the opening period.

(SUN NEWSPAPERS STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

To go from playing without a crowd as a junior last season to a closer-to-normal level of fans was surreal. "It was away better to play in front of the most fans I've ever played in front of," he said.

Kennedy coach Nick

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(SUN NEWSPAPERS STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)

Halftime hoops action

Members of the Jefferson girls traveling basketball fifth-grade team entertained the crowd during halftime of the Jaguars' Metro West Conference game against St. Louis Park Jan. 31 at Jefferson High School. Sophie Meinhardt (66) dribbles the ball up the floor.

Hockey

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Hanrahan knows the importance of this rivalry and said it was another fun experience, despite the outcome.

"This is a big game," he said. "Everyone has a lot of fun, the community can see it and it's unfortunate we are on the short end. But I love to see our guys play this game and we had our chances, it wasn't for a lack of effort."

Hanrahan hopes the number of close games his team has played this season can pay off in sections.

"This team is pretty experienced so we hope we can fly under the radar and get some bounces," he said.

"They work hard day-in, day-out and even our losses have been close and that's what we wanted to see in a tough schedule."

Kennedy will be

ready for sections with nine games in 19 days in February.

The level of experience and leadership helps, not just in knowing what to do on the ice in a varsity game but also how to prepare the team for a difficult season of hockey.

According to Hanrahan, the leadership has kept the team engaged.

"Sometimes you are close but keep losing and guys start drifting but these guys have done a great job," he said. "We need some victories to reward them."

Hanrahan pointed to sophomore Nick Manning as someone who was certainly on their radar for big things this season, but his 13 points (nine goals) in 18 games has been a welcome addition.

"He has a knack for the net and almost stuck it in late," the coach said.

Junior JD Coady had a short-handed chance in the third period and stuck

with the play, creating another scoring chance. He has four points on the season after starting the season injured.

"I felt all three lines and five [defensemen] played well enough to win tonight," Hanrahan said. "We just came out on the short end of the stick tonight."

Hockey Fights Cancer

With the game dedicated as a #HockeyFightsCancer fundraising event, there were several local families in the spotlight, including honoring the life of Jaguars Hall of Famer Tom Kurvers, showing support for Bloomington teacher and mom of hockey players Kris Trenary in her fight with leukemia and former Bloomington youth hockey player Josh Albert (#AlbertStrong). Names of those affected by cancer lined the hallway at BIG during the final opportunity for varsity hockey players from

the east and west sides of the city to play in front of a full crowd this season.

Albert, a 10-year-old whose family recently moved to Alexandria, was diagnosed with lymphoma in late January. To show support, Jefferson youth hockey is wearing green helmet stickers.

A silent auction included items like an autographed Minnesota Wild jersey and a hockey stick chair made by a Bloomington hockey parent who helped raise more than \$6,600 for the American Cancer Society.

After the game players from each team took a knee around the center circle for a brief pause before heading back to their respective home locker rooms outside of Rink 1.

Most of the players have grown up together, whether it be on the ice, in the classroom, on the baseball field or at church, adding another level of humanity to an

otherwise ruthless event.

The teams traded goals through the opening periods with the Jaguars converting first as Joey Kubas' tipped a Gordy Gombold shot home 12:25 into the contest.

Not to be outdone, Kennedy captain Logan Dosan scored on a power-play blast from just inside the blue line at the 14:57 mark set up by Nick Manning and Clayton Deutsch.

Kennedy's senior power forward Tyler Jost scored his third goal of the season 3:11 into the second period to take a 2-1 lead with assists going to Parker Magnusson and Roman Hauch.

Jefferson junior Sam Mickelson pulled even five minutes later with an assist from Hatton.

"I loved to be able to get Mick one," Hatton said of helping out on Mickelson's third goal of the season in as many games. "He's been grinding."

Mickelson added three assists in a 6-0 at New Prague Feb. 4 before adding another assist in a 3-1 win over the same Trojans squad at BIG the next day.

Shots

Both sides traded scoring chances with Kennedy earning a 42-27 shots edge in the contest. The Eagles outshot Jefferson 13-5 in the opening period and 12-10 in the second period.

Jefferson junior goaltender Luke Swanson made 39 saves.

After the wild penalty shot stop and an ensuing goal soon after, both teams made a huge push to find another goal.

Down to the final moments of the game, Kennedy tried everything possible to tie it up in front of the Jaguar student body but nothing was getting through traffic as the final buzzer sounded.

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