

Anoka-Hennepin wins triple crown in adapted sports

The Mustangs won the soccer title in CI; the Robins won in PI division.

By HEATHER RULE, Star Tribune

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Having already won the floor hockey and softball state titles this year, all that was left for Anoka-Hennepin was a soccer championship to complete the grand slam of adapted sports.

The Mustangs achieved that feat with a 5-4 victory over defending champion Park Center in the CI division of the adapted soccer state tournament Saturday at Stillwater Area High School.

It was the first CI adapted soccer state title for Anoka-Hennepin since 1993. The Mustangs were the runners-up in 2007.

Something had to give between two teams that came into the tournament with identical 8-0-1 records. The difference in the game was junior Zach Theroux, who scored all five goals.

"Zach is one of the hardest working kids that I have ever had," said head coach Ted Johnson. "He never gives up, he never quits. He just goes out and works every day."

Scoring began as a back-and-forth battle between



Theroux and Park Center sophomore Auggie Wodrich. Each accomplished a hat trick in the first half, going into the break knotted at three goals apiece.

"Park Center is an amazing team," Theroux said. "They play good, they play hard."

Tight battles for possession of the ball continued into the second half, but the turning point came on a penalty kick with a little more than 12 minutes remaining. Theroux put his team up 4-3 with a hard shot to the left side of the goal.

It was a nail-biter until the end. Theroux added his fifth goal with about three minutes left. But Park Center fired right back with a goal from center, keeping pace at 5-4.

With the sound of the final buzzer, there was jubilation on the floor. The Mustangs celebrated a year of state championships.

"This is amazing," Theroux said.

PI Division

Senior Erin Nickell went on a scoring spree to help the Robbinsdale/Hopkins/Mound-Westonka Robins come away with a third PI state championship in a row.

It's no surprise that the program's leading goal scorer came up with seven goals on the way to an 8-1 victory over Dakota United. The victory also gave

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the Robins an undefeated season.

Nickell says soccer is her sport, and it showed. The forward was always on the lookout for the next opportunity to get a pass and connect.

"I think it really worked in our favor that they [Dakota United] really didn't have an answer for Erin Nickell," Robins head coach Marcus Onsum said.

Nickell had a hat trick in just over two minutes time. The Robins kept up the intensity and never looked back. Seventh grader Grayson Nicolay scored the lone goal for the Hawks at the start of the second.

With a lot of new team members this year, an undefeated season and a state title weren't exactly expected, Onsum said. But with Nickell's leadership and other veteran players, the new kids fit right in.

"It means a lot to me that we can win it all, especially my senior year," Nickell said. "A goal is nice, but just winning is enough."



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