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Late goal helps Port soccer team put its best feet forward in opener

There's nothing like a win to start the season, especially one highlighted by late heroics.

After taking charge early in its 2012 debut last Friday, the Port Washington High School girls' soccer team saw a 2-0 lead disappear in the second half of a nonconference game against Brown Deer.

Undeterred, the host Pirates regained their footing and escaped with a 3-2 victory on a goal by Abby Becker in the 79th minute.

"It was fantastic, a great start for us," Port coach Mike Bultman said.

"We outplayed them for the majority of the game, especially in the first half. In the second half, we made some substitutions and lost our focus for a while, but we got it back and pulled it out."

With the game deadlocked at 2-2, the Pirates stepped up their pressure and created several scoring chances. They failed to convert a penalty kick in the 75th minute, but maintained their attack down the stretch.

At 78:50, Becker provided the game-breaker with an unassisted goal. The freshman forward drove a shot that skidded under the hands of Brown Deer goalkeeper Lindsay Halmar and into

the net.

Bultman praised his team's aggressive offensive play, which produced a 16-8 advantage in shots.

"Our first option is to shoot, and we did that most of the time," he said.

The Pirates grabbed a 1-0 lead in the ninth minute on a goal by Miranda Wick and made it 2-0 when Caity Tydrick scored at 36:05.

But Brown Deer fought back with a pair of second-half goals by Emily Kozak. Her second score came on a penalty kick in the 51st minute after Port was called for a hand-ball violation.

Except for a few lapses early in the second period, the Pirates' defense was sound, Bultman said. He singled out the play of Gina Greisch, Tatiana Ortiz, Beca Leiviska and Jessica Moeller.

"The defense did a very nice job. They corrected their mistakes and were pretty solid," he said.

Bultman also praised the work of keeper Sarah Maechtle, who had six saves and "stopped everything she could have."

This week, Port opened North Shore Conference play with a Tuesday game against Milwaukee Lutheran.

On Thursday, the Pirates will have a 6 p.m. nonconference road match against Cedar Grove-Belgium.

Image Information: PORT WASHINGTON'S Miranda Wick battled a Brown Deer player for possession of the ball during a nonconference game last Friday. Wick scored the first goal for the Pirates, who opened the season with a 3-2 win. Photo by Sam Arendt