Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Rain-soaked soccer win at Slinger helps Grafton bounce back from defeat; Port goes 1-2 at invitational

Persistence pays, especially on the soccer field in the sloppiest of conditions.

Just ask the Grafton High School girls' team, which made the most of its best scoring chance in a nail-biting road win over Slinger on April 19.

After a scoreless first half, Grafton got the only goal it needed in the 45th minute of a nonconference game slowed by rain and wind. Zoie Bauer did the honors, finding the net off a pass from fellow forward Carley Pfannerstill in a 1-0 victory.

"It was a fun game in terrible conditions," said Grafton coach Don Arnold, whose team improved its season record to 3-2-1.

"We played poorly at times in the first half, but in the second half we created some opportunities. It was a battle, and we survived."

The Black Hawks made their lead hold up by controlling the ball and pressing its attack throughout the second half. Steady defense also preserved the win, including seven saves by goalkeeper Alissa Viste.

Arnold also singled out the play of midfielder Abby Freeland and defender Alli Demerath, "who both did great jobs."

The win was the Hawks' first in three 1-0 games this season — and gave them a much-needed boost after a tough North Shore Conference loss to Germantown two days earlier.

"There are going to be a lot of close games this season, so you have to find ways to make it happen," Arnold said.

"Nothing is going to come easy for us."

Germantown 1, Grafton 0

A goal late in the first half gave the Warhawks the edge in a tussle between two conference title favorites April 17.

Maddie Tezke scored in the 36th minute, and Germantown's defense held firm the rest of the way.

"We came out and played very well," Arnold said. "We created some great opportunities — one shot off the post and one on a breakaway — but we couldn't finish."

A defensive breakdown gave Germantown its score, which set the tone for the rest of the game, Arnold noted.

"We weren't out of the game after that, but it definitely changes things when you give up the first goal," he said.

Grafton fell to 0-2 in NSC games. Germantown improved to 2-0.

This week, the Black Hawks resumed conference play against Homestead on Tuesday and will participate in the Moynihan Cup tournament this weekend at Uihlein Soccer Park in Milwaukee.

Grafton will play Oak Creek at 5 p.m. Friday, followed by Saturday games at 10 a.m. against Verona and 2 p.m. against Madison West.

Grafton will be missing a number of players Saturday due to prom activities.

Pirates go 1-2 in tournament

The Port Washington girls' soccer team scored its second win of the season on the way to a 1-2 finish at the Redwing Invitational in Sheboygan last weekend.

After losing to Mukwonago, 5-0, on Friday, the Pirates bounced back Saturday with a 1-0 win over Sheboygan Lutheran/Kohler before losing to New Berlin Eisenhower, 2-0.

"We did OK. We're 150% better now than we were two weeks ago," Port coach Mike Bultman said.

"We're young, and we're overmatched against some teams, but we're learning and we're getting better."

Mukwonago held a 2-0 lead at halftime and scored three goals in the first nine minutes of the second period.

Against Lutheran/Kohler, the Pirates snapped a four-game losing streak with a second-half goal by Abby Becker, assisted by Brooke Buser.

“We came out flat. We could have had more goals, but we were able to get one and hold on,” Bultman said.

Port played one of its best games of the season against Eisenhower, Bultman said. However, failure to clear the ball out of the box set up both goals in the first half, he added.

“We played everybody in that game and got some good minutes,” he said.

Injuries hurt the Pirates during the tournament. In addition to playing without forward Caity Tydrick due to an ankle injury, Port lost midfielder Brianna Krueger with a knee injury.

The tournament left the Pirates with a 2-5 season record.

Homestead 7, Port Washington 0

The host Pirates couldn’t stay with a perennially tough foe in a North Shore Conference loss April 17.

Homestead got three goals from Shannon Greeley in the first half and added four scores in the second period.

“We tried to stay with them. The girls didn’t back down,” Bultman said. “Homestead is a very talented team and just has a lot more experience than us.”

This week, Port continued NSC play against Nicolet on Tuesday and will host Oostburg in a 7 p.m. nonconference match Friday.

On May 1, Port will resume its conference schedule with a 7 p.m. home game against Whitefish Bay.

Image Information: A CHASE FOR a free ball ensued between Grafton’s Carley Pfannerstill and Germantown’s Leah Beck during a North Shore Conference match April 17. Germantown prevailed, 1-0, in a defensive battle. Photo by Sam Arendt