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They barely beat one of their biggest rivals and instantly became their biggest fans.

Such was the case for the Cedar Grove-Belgium Rockets, who kept alive their hope of winning a share of the Central Lakeshore Conference girls' soccer title by edging Ozaukee, 3-2, on May 24.

Cedar Grove-Belgium had to win to remain one game behind first-place Howards Grove in the CLC title chase. The Rockets came through but still needed Ozaukee to defeat Howards Grove in a makeup game Tuesday, May 29, to get a share of the crown.

Host Ozaukee tried to be the spoiler by grabbing a 1-0 lead on a goal by Mickey Burns, assisted by Katie Bares' corner kick.

However, the Rockets pulled even when Ashli von Heimburg scored off a free kick by Alex Buechler.

After having an apparent goal by Natalie Clark called off on a delayed offsides call, the Warriors found the net again. Clark broke free down the right side and passed the ball to Lizzie Janke, whose goal put Ozaukee up, 2-1.

The second half belonged to the Rockets. After Ashley DeSmidt scored to tie the game in the 42nd minute, Halie Schieffer capped the comeback with the winning goal at 62 minutes.

"At halftime we spoke about the importance of playing well, staying healthy and competing at a high level," Cedar Grove-Belgium coach Elias Garza said.

“There was added incentive in regards to the conference but little did that matter if we were not able to play a much better second half.”

The win left the Rockets with a final CLC record of 12-2, one loss behind first-place Howards Grove (12-1) in the standings. Cedar Grove-Belgium had a chance to share the title if third-place Ozaukee (9-4) was able to defeat Howards Grove in a makeup game Tuesday, May 29.

With an Ozaukee loss, the Rockets will finish alone in second place.

Ozaukee 4, Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah 1

A second-half surge lifted the Warriors to conference road win May 22.

Ozaukee fell behind early but tied the game with a goal by Janke. In the second half, the Warriors pulled away with a penalty-kick score by Bares and goals by Janke and Emma Yanke. Bares’ goal came after Clark drew an Elkhart Lake foul in the box.

Rockets, Warriors start playoffs Thursday

This week, Cedar Grove-Belgium and Ozaukee will both open WIAA tournament play with Division 3 regional semifinal games Thursday.

The Rockets reached a No. 6 seed and will host Whitefish Bay Dominican (11) at 6 p.m. The winner will play the winner of a game between Brookfield Academy (3) and Racine St. Catherine’s (4) in a regional final Saturday.

Ozaukee (8) will host Kenosha St. Joseph (9) at 5:30 p.m. The winner will face top-seeded Prairie School for a regional title Saturday.

Regional finals will be played on the home fields of the higher-seeded teams.

Image Information: A FREE BALL had Cedar Grove-Belgium’ A.J. Caldwell (left) and Ozaukee’s Bridget Hoffmann battling for possession during a Central Lakeshore Conference game May 24.

Cedar Grove-Belgium rallied for a 3-2 win that kept alive its hope of sharing the league title. Photo by Sam Arendt