Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
Wednesday, 26 September 2012 17:19

Shutout wins in home invitational keep Grafton on roll as playoffs approach

The Grafton boys' soccer team appears to have picked a dandy time to get on a roll.

With the WIAA playoffs rapidly approaching, Grafton scored three shutout wins last week — including a pair in its own Black Hawk Invitational.

Coach Don Arnold's squad blanked St. John's Northwest, 8-0, in Saturday's title game after handling Luxemburg-Casco, 5-0, in Friday's semifinals.

Saturday's win was the Hawks' fourth straight, the last three by shutout.

"We're beginning to play our best soccer," Arnold said. "Hopefully we will continue to ramp up the level the rest of the way."

Grafton, which improved its season record to 9-6-1, had no trouble against St. John's. The Hawks scored four goals in the first 12 minutes even though their opponent used a tightly packed defense.

In the third minute, Grafton broke through when Matt Salm scored off a corner kick by Nick Bocanegra.

Aaron Hodges assisted on goals by Jake Kellett and Jake Demerath at five and eight minutes, respectively. At 12 minutes, Hodges scored with an assist from Demerath to make it 4-0.

“It started out a little awkwardly with St. John’s packing all 11 guys within 30 yards of the goal,” Arnold said.

“But when we got that first goal, it really loosened things up.”

Goals by Hodges (28 minutes, assisted by Demerath) and Bocanegra (37 minutes, assisted by Kellett) gave Grafton a 6-0 lead at halftime.

In the second period, Michael Stockhausen scored in the 47th minute with an assist from Sean Kearns, and Jake Wilde had an unassisted goal at 48 minutes.

Luxemburg-Casco gave Grafton a tougher challenge. However, the Hawks still grabbed an early 2-0 lead and remained in control the rest of the way.

Bocanegra set up a goal by Alex Lorbecki in the second minute and scored one himself at 14 minutes, assisted by Hodges.

In the second half, Grafton got goals from Wolfgang Pilarski at 45 and 51 minutes and Bocanegra at 60 minutes.

Pilarski’s first goal came on an unusual assist from goalkeeper Killian Mielotz, whose kick sailed over the head of the Luxemburg-Casco sweeper. Demerath assisted on Pilarski’s second score.

Grafton 3, Whitefish Bay 0

A huge second half gave the host Hawks their biggest North Shore Conference win of the season Sept. 18.

After a scoreless first period, Grafton took control of the defensive tussle by scoring three times in a 15-minute span.

Demerath, a freshman midfielder, led the charge with unassisted goals in the 59th and 63rd minutes.

Hodges capped the scoring with a goal, assisted by Willie McElligott, at 74 minutes.

“It was a real quality win, maybe our best in a few years,” said Arnold, whose team evened its NSC record at 2-2-1. “The game was pretty even, with both teams having chances.

“In the second half, we just stepped up our play.”

Grafton outshot the Blue Dukes, 18-15.

Arnold singled out Demerath, who “played a phenomenal game.”

“He’s a freshman who plays well beyond his years,” Arnold said. “His intelligence and work ethic are outstanding.”

This week, Grafton plays Milwaukee Lutheran on Tuesday and will travel to West Bend West on Thursday for a 7 p.m. game.

On Oct. 2, the Hawks will conclude NSC play with a 7 p.m. match at Port Washington.

Pirates fall twice at home

The search for answers continued last week for the Port Washington boys’ soccer team, which lost a pair of games on its home field.

After losing to Germantown, 5-1, in North Shore Conference play Sept. 18, the Pirates were edged by Manitowoc Roncalli, 2-1, in a nonconference match Friday.

“Our lack of focus and urgency was very evident,” Port coach Mike Bultman said of Friday’s game.

“We just didn’t have any fire to win the 50/50 balls.”

Roncalli cashed in by scoring goals in the 30th and 60th minutes. The Pirates answered with a goal by Alex Huebner at 68 minutes but couldn’t crack Roncalli’s tightly packed defense the rest of the way.

“We had numerous opportunities but couldn’t finish,” Bultman said.

The loss dropped Port’s overall record to 2-11-3.

Against Germantown, the Pirates gave up two goals in the first five minutes and couldn’t recover.

After trailing, 2-0, at halftime, Port saw the Warhawks add insurance goals at 56, 59 and 78 minutes. A goal by Huebner, who scored off a pass from James Klotz in the final minute, put the Pirates on the board.

“Germantown has a good team. After their first two goals, we played decent until the second half,” Bultman said.

Port fell to 0-5 in the conference.

This week, the Pirates played Cedarburg on Tuesday and will host Milwaukee King at 7 p.m. Thursday in their homecoming game.

Image Information: GRAFTON'S NICK BOCANEGRA found himself entangled with a Luxemburg-Casco player in a fight for the ball during the semifinals of the Black Hawk Invitational last Friday. Grafton won, 5-0, and defeated St. John's Northwest, 8-0, on Saturday to win the tournament title. Photo by Sam Arendt