

Bash title gives Warriors a quick start

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Bares-sparked rally in Brookfield tournament allows Ozaukee soccer team to open season with championship

After having its first two games this spring postponed because of unplayable field conditions, the Ozaukee girls' soccer team was eager to get the ball rolling.

A season-opening tournament last Saturday turned the trick for the Warriors, who made the most of their chances in winning the Brookfield Academy Bash.



Coach Eric Liebergen's squad won all three of its games, capping the run with a come-from-behind, 3-2 victory over St. Mary Central in the title match.

The Warriors fell behind, 2-0, but controlled play with a rally capped by Katie Bares' game-winning goal in the 47th minute.

"It was a fast start to our season," Liebergen said. "It feels pretty special for our team to battle back and get a quality win against a perennial state soccer participant.

"Central is a very good team. We hope to build off this experience."

Ozaukee had scored two shutout wins in the six-team tournament before facing its toughest test.

Central wasted no time jumping ahead, grabbing a 2-0 lead on goals by Molly Britt in the second minute and Kelly Conn at four minutes.

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With the tournament games shortened to 25-minute halves, Ozaukee had no time to waste in its comeback.

Natalie Clark got the Warriors on the board with an unassisted goal at 22 minutes.

Six minutes later, a Central foul helped Ozaukee draw even. When Emily Janke was tripped in the box, the Warriors were awarded a penalty kick.

Bares, a senior midfielder, converted the game-tying shot.

The match remained deadlocked for the next 19 minutes before Bares broke free for the title-clinching goal.

The Warriors finished with a 12-7 shot advantage. Ozaukee keeper Erika Karrels had five saves.

Liebergen said his team's aggressive play and hustle were crucial to the win.

"The fitness level of our players showed in that game," he said. "We kept pressing and winning loose balls."

The Warriors opened the tournament with a 2-0 win over Greendale Martin Luther, collecting a goal in each period.

Janke, a freshman forward, scored in the 14th minute with an assist from Micaela Burns.

In the 27th minute, Emma Yanke found the net with an assist from Bares.

Karrels had three saves.

In its second game, Ozaukee blanked Mauston, 3-0.

"That was our revenge game," said Liebergen, noting his team lost to Mauston, 1-0, at the same tournament last season.

"We thought we owed them one after last year."

Clark gave her team all the offense it needed with a goal in the 13th minute, assisted by Bares.

In the second half, the Warriors got unassisted goals from Emily Janke and Lizzie Janke at 31 and 38 minutes, respectively.

Ozaukee finished with a 14-4 shot advantage. Karrels had three saves.

In addition to opening the season with a championship, Liebergen was pleased with the Warriors' response to a short-game challenge.

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“With 25-minute halves, it puts a lot of pressure on teams to be crisp,” he said. “You can’t afford to squander any scoring opportunities.”

Ozaukee is scheduled to open Central Lakeshore Conference play this week with a 4:30 p.m. match Thursday against Howards Grove.

The game was originally to be played at Howards Grove but had to be moved to Ozaukee due to poor field conditions. Unless inclement weather postpones Thursday’s game, the switch means a May 6 game between the teams will be moved from Ozaukee to Howards Grove.

On April 16, the Warriors will host Sheboygan Lutheran/Kohler at 4:30 p.m.