

Close matches suit Pirates fine

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Clutch play in two nail-biters give Port a soccer title

A season-long pattern of close matches continued last Saturday for the Port Washington girls' soccer team.

But this time, the Pirates were more than happy to tangle in defensive scuffles, which ended with a tournament championship.



Outlasting a pair of foes, coach Mike Bultman's squad emerged with top honors at the Kettle Moraine Lutheran quadrangular.

After edging Sheboygan Falls in a penalty-kicks tiebreaker in the semifinals, Port blanked host Lutheran, 1-0, in the title match.

"We're growing and we're learning," Bultman said.

"I'm very proud of all the girls. They kept pushing and working hard in both games."

Against Lutheran, the Pirates got the only goal they needed in the first half. Haley Zwicker sent a through ball to Alli Klotz, who found the net in the 25th minute.

"It was a very defensive-minded game. We had to hang there and protect the lead most of the way," Bultman said.

When Port wasn't controlling the ball, it got steady play from goalkeepers Allison Lessila in the first half and Sarah Maechtle in the second half.

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The Pirates had an even tougher test against Falls, one of the state's top Division 3 teams.

Falls took the lead with a goal in the 20th minute, but Port drew even at 65 minutes.

Blair Kennedy scored off a cross from Zwicker to tie the match, which like others in the tournament was shortened to 70 minutes.

In a tiebreaker to determine which team would advance to the title game, each side was 2-for-5 on the first set of penalty kicks. Lessila and Abby Becker scored for Port, and Lessila had two saves.

In single-elimination shots, the Pirates emerged on top when Laura Bultman scored after a Falls miss.

The tournament left Port with a 3-4-3 season record.

Oostburg 2, Port 1

An early goal wasn't enough for the Pirates in a nonconference home loss May 8.

Port jumped ahead in the fourth minute when Brianna Schnell scored with an assist from Klotz. Oostburg drew even at 30 minutes.

In the second half, the Pirates were called for fouls that gave the Lady Dutch two penalty kicks.

Lessila stopped the first shot at 45 minutes, but Oostburg converted the second in the 60th minute.

"It was a tough loss, but it's all about learning," coach Bultman said. "We kept playing hard for the last 20 minutes."

Port 2, Milwaukee Lutheran 1

Goals by Kennedy and Klotz propelled the host Pirates to a North Shore Conference win May 6.

Kennedy beat the Lutheran keeper on a follow-up shot in the 10th minute, and Klotz made it 2-0 when she scored on a corner kick at 42 minutes.

Lutheran's goal in the 65th minute came after a misplayed ball by the Pirates.

"It was a tale of two halves," coach Bultman said. "We played really, really well in the first half but didn't play a good possession game after we got a 2-0 lead."

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This week, Port was scheduled to resume NSC play against Grafton on Tuesday, host Cedarburg in a 7 p.m. match Wednesday and travel to Kewaskum on Friday for a 5 p.m. nonconference game.

On May 20, the Pirates will host Whitefish Bay at 7 p.m.

Image information: FORWARD ABBY BECKER helped the Port Washington soccer team win a pair of games on its way to top honors at the Kettle Moraine Lutheran quadrangular last Saturday. After getting past Sheboygan Falls on a penalty-kicks tiebreaker, the Pirates defeated Lutheran to take the championship.

Photo by Sam Arendt