

Kaul's arrival re-energizes Rocket soccer

Written by Steve Ostermann
Wednesday, 05 May 2010 17:44

Former club standout has three goals, seven assists in first weekend games after joining girls' team

Early last week, Cedar Grove-Belgium girls' soccer coach Papi Pozo was scratching his head trying to mend a lineup that was struggling with injuries and inconsistent offense.

One week and one new player later, Pozo's outlook has taken a 180-degree turn.

"I think we should be able to beat anyone in the (Central Lakeshore) conference now," he said after watching new addition Hannah Kaul lead Cedar Grove-Belgium to three home wins in the Rocket Quadrangular last Saturday.

"Getting Hannah really gives us a big boost. She's one of the best players in the conference."

Kaul, a senior midfielder who accepted a soccer scholarship to play at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee this fall, had participated in club soccer the past two springs — a decision that made her ineligible for WIAA play.

However, when Kaul turned 18 during the off-season, she was no longer eligible for club soccer, giving her a chance to play for the Rockets. After WIAA officials confirmed her eligibility, she decided to join the team and got in one practice last Friday before her first game, Pozo said.

Kaul wasted no time making a favorable impression in her season debut, scoring a total of three goals and assisting on seven others in Saturday's games.

Fueled by Kaul's playmaking ability, Cedar Grove-Belgium rolled past Living Word Lutheran, 4-1, and then handled Lomira, 5-0, and Oakfield/North Fond du Lac, 6-1.

Kaul was playing her first WIAA soccer since her freshman year at Ozaukee High School, from which she transferred to Cedar Grove-Belgium last year. She used her ball-handling, passing and shooting ability to elevate the Rockets' attack.

"We have been struggling with injuries and not finishing on our shots, but having Hannah changes everything," Pozo said.

"The way she controls things out there, it's like having another coach on the field. The girls are just so excited to have her on the team."

Cedar Grove-Belgium, which improved to 7-4-2, got off to a good start Saturday.

After Kaul scored the first goal, she set up goals by Rachel Slotman and Brianna Weyker with corner kicks to give the Rockets a 3-0 lead at halftime. Mariah Keller added a second-period goal, assisted by Weyker.

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Against Lomira, the Rockets got a pair of goals from Liz Pritzl and one each from Kaul, Keller and Erika Kirst. Kaul had two assists, and Slotman had one.

Keller and Kaslin Ebbers led the assault against Oakfield/North Fond du Lac with two goals apiece, and Kaul and Caitlin Hausner had one each. Kaul had three assists, and Kirst added one.

"The girls played really well," Pozo said. "Hannah wasn't doing all the scoring, but she set up a lot of our other players for shots. She's very unselfish."

Cedar Grove-Belgium played Saturday without Taylor Ansay, who was injured, and Halie Schieffer and Alex Buechler, who were missing due to other commitments.

The nonconference victories extended the Rockets' winning streak to five games as they returned to Central Lakeshore play this week. After facing Elkhart Lake on Tuesday, they will play 6 p.m. home games against Howards Grove on Thursday and Sheboygan Lutheran/Kohler on May 11.

CG-Belgium 1, Sheboygan Christian 0

A goal by Schieffer in the 51st minute gave the Rockets a road win that evened their CLC record at 3-3 on April 29.

Schieffer, a freshman forward, scored off a free kick by Ashley DeSmidt.

"We played really well, but were a bit short-handed," said Pozo, who noted Ansay and Keller were both sidelined with injuries.

CG-Belgium 2, Manitowoc Roncalli 1 (2 OT)

A breakaway score by Schieffer 30 seconds into the second overtime allowed the host Rockets to avoid an upset in a nonconference game April 27.

Just 30 seconds into the extra period, Schieffer scored on a breakaway, with an assist from Hausner.

Hausner, a freshman, had an unassisted goal in the 25th minute to give Cedar Grove-Belgium a 1-0 lead.

Roncalli battled back to tie the game in the 70th minute. The score remained deadlocked for the next 20 minutes.

The Rockets finished with a 28-13 advantage in shots.