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SPORTS

C-C Boys' Soccer Shuts Out Dracut to Open Postseason

Patriots advance out of First Round with convincing 3-0 win over Middies.

By **Jon Pelland** November 9, 2010

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A two-goal lead at halftime wasn't enough for the Concord-Carlisle High School boys' soccer team to feel completely comfortable in its MIAA North Division 2 First Round matchup with Dracut High School on Monday afternoon.

The No. 2 Patriots took care of that problem quickly after the break, scoring 2 minutes, 25 seconds into the second half to effectively seal a win over the No. 15 Middies. C-C held on for the 3-0 victory at a chilly and soggy Doug White Memorial Field.

"The third goal is always huge," coach Ray Pavlik said. "There's a big difference between going up 3-nothing and 2-1. That third goal in a game is massive, so it was great to come out early (and score)."

Concord-Carlisle (16-1-1) looked solid in their postseason opener, showing no signs of rust from the five-day layoff that followed its loss to Lincoln-Sudbury in the regular-season finale. The Patriots also didn't seem to mind the conditions, as a light mist turned into a steady downpour by the time the second half got under way.

The Patriots move on to the Quarterfinals to face No. 7 Salem High School, which beat Lynn Tech 5-1 in the First Round on Saturday. C-C and Salem will square off at Doug White Memorial Field on Wednesday afternoon.

Against Dracut (7-6-4), junior forward Mike O'Brien salted the game away with the Patriots' third goal, his second of the night. Fellow junior Ethan Atwood setup O'Brien nicely with a cross directly in front of the Dracut net.

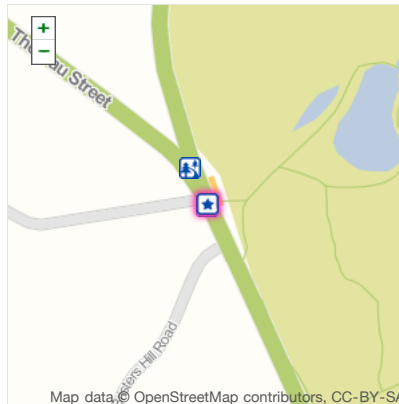
"When you get into the tournament people are playing for their lives, for their seasons," Pavlik said. "So to come out and score that goal within the first five minutes was huge. It takes a lot out of them."

After the goal, C-C remained in control of the game by packing it in and playing mistake-free soccer. Patriot goalkeeper Cam McGrory made several saves down the stretch, but the home team's lead was never in doubt.

Pavlik said his team was anxious start postseason play after enjoying a bye in the Preliminary Round. Though he said it had nothing to do with avenging the loss to L-S in the finale. It was the Patriots' first loss since falling to Lincoln-Sudbury 1-0 in the final game of the 2009 regular season.

"I think we were just looking forward to getting back (on the field)," he said. "There was nothing big about the L-S game. We did a good job of putting that in the past. Now it's one down, five to go. That's our mentality at this point."

O'Brien scored to open the scoring in the first half, and his score was followed by one from senior captain Seth Bird just before the break. During stoppage time, Bird made a nice run at the Dracut goal from the right side and re-directed a spot-on feed on the edge of the 6-yard box.



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