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C-C 2, Canton 0: Boys soccer team to play for state title

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GateHouse News Service

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Quincy — Put some pressure on the defense and good things can happen.

A sustained second-half attack gave the Concord-Carlisle boys soccer team a 2-0 victory over Canton in the MIAA Division 2 state semifinals Wednesday at Veterans Stadium.

Concord-Carlisle (20-1-1) will play Nipmuc Regional in the state finals on Saturday at Foley Stadium in Worcester (11 a.m.). The Patriots will be attempting to win their second straight state championship and their third in five years.

The Patriots scored both goals in the second half while outshooting the Bulldogs, 4-1. Two minutes and 17 seconds into the second half, Mikey O'Brien scored, knocking in a rebound after Seth Bird's header hit the crossbar. The play started with Alex Puchrik taking a corner kick from the right side.

"It took a while for us to get adjusted to their style of play," said C-C coach Ray Pavlik. "We tried to move the ball quickly, but we wanted to be calm and possess it a bit. In the first half, we were kind of frantic. In the second half, we switched fields more and it gave us some room."

O'Brien, a junior, also scored the game-winning goal in the North final against Winchester.

"Mikey works very hard," Pavlik said. "Seth made a great effort on that play and we were able to put it away."

With 14:19 left, an own goal that went off a Canton player's head put the game out of the Bulldogs' reach. Puchrik received credit for the goal.

"Alex is fantastic," Pavlik said. "He's a very good technical player."

Cam McGrory made three saves for C-C while the back line kept Canton's forwards in check. Late in the first half, Aaron Nickelsberg made a defensive stop, fell down, got up keeping possession of the ball and moved it out of the defensive end.

"Aaron is a big kid and a really good athlete," Pavlik said. "He's certainly a good kid to have around."

Canton finished its season at 17-1-4. The Bulldogs are the second straight team to suffer its first loss against the Patriots.

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