

# ConcordPatch

## SPORTS

### Patriots Earn Shot at Another State Championship

C-C boys' soccer team shuts out South champion Canton 2-0 in state semifinals.

By **Jon Pelland** November 18, 2010

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QUINCY – The Concord-Carlisle High School boys' soccer team has had enough postseason success in recent years to know tournament games aren't won on style points. When it comes to mid-November, wins are welcome in any form.

That proved true in the MIAA Division 2 state semifinals when the North champion Patriots defeated Canton High School, the South champion, 2-0 at Veterans Memorial Stadium on Wednesday night.

Concord-Carlisle's two scores, one on a bouncing ball in the box and the other a Canton own-goal, were far from pretty, but nevertheless the Patriots (20-1-1) are moving on to the state final. C-C will attempt to defend its D-2 state title when it faces Central champion Nipmuc Region of Upton at Worcester State College on Saturday.

"We tell the kids all year, there are so few goals that are scored from 35 yards out that is just a beautiful shot into the upper corner," Patriots coach Ray Pavlik. "In a game like this where you know it's going to be close, it's just a matter sometimes of inches."

The tournament ouster was especially hard for the Bulldogs to take considering it was their only loss of the season. Canton entered the game 17-0-4, but struggled from the start to solve the talented Patriots' attack.

"Congratulations to them, they were good everywhere and super organized," Bulldogs coach Danny Erickson said. "They were very difficult to break down."

Play was dictated by the Patriots from the outset. Their disciplined attack consisted of spreading the field in order to thin out the Canton defense.

But C-C's first-half dominance didn't translate much in the way of scoring. Canton junior goalkeeper Colby Gavigan stopped a point blank shot from by the Patriots' Gregoire Fauchet, but otherwise wasn't forced to work too hard.

Canton too had just one solid scoring opportunity in the first 40 minutes. Senior captain Igor Perun made a nice run at the Concord-Carlisle net, but was narrowly beaten to a loose ball in the box by Patriots senior captain and goalkeeper Cam McGrory.

"In the first half we were a little frantic," Pavlik said.

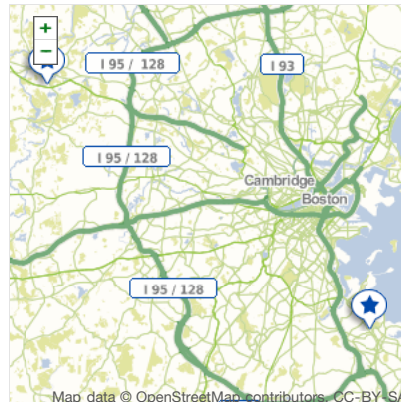
Erickson, on the other hand, was pleased with the first-half result.

"I thought we played as well as we were going to play in that first half," he said. "I thought we did some really nice stuff, but we just had some difficulty breaking them down and getting behind them."

Both coaches' emotions would change early in the second half.

Concord-Carlisle finally put the ball in the net 2 minutes, 20 seconds after halftime. Patriots' senior captain Seth Bird soared above the Canton defense to head a corner kick, but the ball clanged hard off the right post. It bounced into the middle of the 6-yard box and sophomore Mikey O'Brien cleaned up the rebound with a shot through traffic.

Confusion on the part of both teams gave O'Brien, the Patriots' leading scorer this year, just enough space to finish the play.



PHOTOS (4)



"It's funny, make the point all year, you do all this passing and you try to work on possession," Pavlik said "Then the game comes down to a loose ball in the box and everyone is scrambling."

If those plays aren't practiced, then the Patriots certainly don't plan for the way they extended the lead.

Some 23:20 after opening the scoring, Concord-Carlisle was the beneficiary of a costly Bulldogs mistake. Attempting to clear the ball out of harm's way, a Canton defender headed a ball in his own box, but in the direction of the Canton goal. The ball bounced once and slipped just inside the right post.

Patriots' senior captain Alex Puchrik was credited with the goal, which all but sealed the Bulldogs' fate.

Canton had nary a solid scoring opportunity in the second half as it further struggled to dissect the Patriots' gameplan.

"We didn't really have a cohesive attack when we got into the final third [of the field]," Erickson said. "I thought we played very good in the middle third, just as good as them. We just didn't get anything done up top."

McGrory finished out the game in net for Concord-Carlisle to pick up the shutout.

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