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C-C 2, Nipmuc 1: Boys soccer team repeats as state champs

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GateHouse News Service

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Worcester — Stowe Simonton couldn't have picked a better time to score his first point of the season.

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The sophomore's goal scored off a corner kick with 32:30 remaining in the second half gave the Concord-Carlisle boys soccer team a 2-1 victory against Nipmuc Regional in the MIAA Division 2 state title game Saturday at Foley Stadium.

C-C (21-1-1) defended the state title it won last year and captured its third state championship in five years. Nipmuc, of Mendon, finished its season at 15-5-4.

"We've had a great run," said C-C coach Ray Pavlik. "We're 22-2 in tournament games in the last five years, with both losses in overtime. "We work so hard all year for this."

Simonton scored the winning goal after a series of four straight corner kicks. The play started to the right of the Warriors' goal, with Aaron Nickelsberg and Alex Puchrik taking a short corner kick on the ground. Nickelsberg kicked it out of the corner; Puchrik brought the ball toward the net and Simonton finished.

"Luckily it came at the right time," Simonton said. "It was a corner. I got the ball and I flicked it in. We do a lot of short corners with Aaron and Alex. I made sure I got it on goal and pressured them."

Said Puchrik, "All season long, we've been working on short corners with Alex."

Added Pavlik, "We're not the biggest team in the world, so we're not going to just bang it in the middle."

The game was tied, 1-1 at halftime. C-C struck first, with Mikey O'Brien scoring from in front of the Warriors' net with 26:44 left in the half. Ethan Atwood assisted.

With 23:47 remaining in the half, Nipmuc tied the game when Tanor Jobe scored off a direct free kick from just outside the penalty area.

Nipmuc's best chance in the second half came with 26:40 left. Chris Walker-Jacks fouled Tim Peterman 25 yards from the goal, setting up a free kick. The kick went to Jobe, whose shot hit the right post. C-C goalie Cam McGrory scooped up the ball and cleared it away from the goal.

Walker-Jacks also denied Peterman a scoring opportunity following a Warrior corner kick with 23:55 left.

"Our defense did well," Pavlik said. "We wanted to pressure their backs and their midfielders so they couldn't give quality serves to their forwards. We limited their quality balls."

McGrory made four saves for C-C.

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