



## Top-notch soccer gets cold shoulder

**PREPARE YOURSELF.** You are about to embark on a new sports experience.

It's Sunday afternoon and the excitement you will witness is a thriller. It pits two top teams, two of the nation's best. It is critical, an early season showdown with major playoff implications. It is high-spirited and well-played.

What is it not American.

Which should explain why there are no traffic snarls to circumvent or exorbitant prices to pay. Despite the excellence of the athletes involved, maybe 150 spectators will dial out the \$2 entry fee for Sunday's finals.

The game is soccer. And no college team in the state plays it better than Oakland University.

Not almighty Michigan (which has no varsity squad). Not prestigious Michigan State (its varsity has been beaten by OU three straight years).

OU's soccer unit has compiled a 40-9-3 record over the past three seasons. It has been ranked in the top 10 nationally in each of the past four years.

It is a carefully, capably constructed program, built by coach Gary Parsons, who in five years boasts a 76-17-8 ledger. Three times Parsons has guided the Pioneers into the NCAA Division II playoffs.

BUT NO ONE seems to care.

It's baffling. There were more fans at the Plymouth Salem-Walled Lake Central football game Friday night, a game (no disrespect intended) with virtually none of the implications of Sunday's OU-Gannon University match.

Is it a lack of recognizable names? That's been the long-standing argument against soccer for years.

On Saturday, OU battled New York Tech, the No. 1-ranked team in the NCAA's Division II. The game finished in a 3-3 tie, with the Pioneers narrowly missing a victory when Gray Halzel banged a shot off the goal post with two minutes left in overtime.

The scoring hero was Marty Hagen. He pumped in two goals and assisted on the third. Hagen prepped at Troy Athens.

Other OU players who get in plenty of playing time are forward Brian Fitzgerald and defender Erik Enyedy, both from Southfield, and defender Allan Schneck, also from Athens. Tom Duff, a forward from Birmingham Seaholm, scored a goal last week for OU.

NO RECOGNIZABLE names? No way.

Reason No. 2 is perhaps closer to the truth: Soccer is boring.

Is it? OU lost to Gannon 1-0 Sunday, so some might call the lack of offense sleep-inducing.

Of course, these are the same people who fill the Pontiac Silverdome on Sundays to watch two of the worst teams in professional football. Or they travel down to Tiger Stadium to see a pair of all-time-eliminated baseball squads. Or they jam into Michigan Stadium with 100,000 others to see U-M roll over a pathetic Oregon State.

Cripe, the same people who call this game "foreign" sit at home watching John Madden scribble pass patterns all over the TV screen in an attempt to diagnose what, in all the mass confusion on a football field, happened.

Foreign? If you want to hear something foreign, try listening to what these football-players-turned-analysts say. Their butcherery of the English language must make Noah Webster wonder why he ever bothered writing a dictionary.

**THE POINT is,** OU has a good product and can't sell it.

Maybe it's because the sport is too civilized. Americans like their sports down and dirty. Football players covered with blood and spitting at each other. Baseball players with dirt on their butts and tobacco juice drooling down their chins. Basketball players glistening with sweat.

The languages that describe each sport are unique. There are stunts, draws and flea-flickers in football. Baseball has bunts, Ks and "taters." Soccer, jams and skyhooks fill basketball.

Soccer has its special terminology, too, but instead of an illiterate jargon, you don't know what a verb is. Let alone how to conjugate one — describing a match foot game, it has an Englishman who sounds like a butler announcing "Dinner is served."

Instead of "The ump's a chump!" we get comments like "Ah, rubbish." Soccer coaches don't praise players on the fanny and implore fervently, "Stiek 'em! Stiek 'em!" Soccer coaches always seem to plead politely in a thick English accent. "Well done, lads, well done."

**EVEN WHEN** an Englishman curses it sounds formal.

Don't misunderstand. As incorrect as the notion is, soccer is considered continental, even snooty. Some consider it just a notch below polo.

When such misconceptions take root, they can be difficult to dislodge. And somewhere, soccer has acquired a reputation as a game for foreigners, a boring and tedious affair with a language far too regal for American sportsmen.

And you know what a job it can be to convince people that their opinion has no basis in fact. It may take years before the public accepts that soccer can be as aggressive, exciting, action-packed — and vulgar — as any team sport.

# Gannon wins OU kick title

By C.J. Risak  
staff writer

Entering Sunday's final game of the National Invitational Soccer Tournament, things looked bleak for best Oakland University.

The Pioneers were using a guy in goal (Vince Aliberti) who wasn't even listed on the team roster. One defensive starter (Terje Ene) was experienced, but he last played with OU two seasons ago.

No, the situation did not exude optimism. Particularly since the Pioneers' opponent was Gannon (Pa.) University, a team OU is battling for an NCAA Division II playoff berth.

With so much stacked against them, it really should come as no surprise that the Pioneers lost to Gannon.

With new personnel on defense, an unproven keeper, and playing against the No. 4-ranked team in the country — yes, defeat seemed likely.

**BUT WAIT.** It might not have ended so. Because OU's defense, while not dominating, was good enough. It was the Pioneer offense that lacked the spark to finish a play in the 1-0 loss.

The victory was the Knights' second straight by that margin (they beat New Hampshire Saturday) and earned them the tournament title.

"For the amount of time we had the ball, we should have done more," said a puzzled Gary Parsons, OU's

coach. "I just don't know . . . Brian (Tinnion, OU assistant coach) and I are just looking at each other and wondering.

"For all the time we had the ball, we didn't create enough scoring chances."

Parsons' puzzlement is understandable. OU covered well defensively, battled evenly at midfield and set up its offense with crisp passing.

**BUT WHAT** the Pioneers didn't do was finish their plays. The last critical pass was blocked or missed its target. And the few times they did manage a shot, they couldn't get it past GU keeper Mike Celetti, who posted his fifth-straight shutout.

Perhaps Saturday's game against New York Tech, ranked No. 1 in Division II entering the tournament, drained the Pioneers. They went into overtime against Tech before settling for a 3-3 tie.

Parsons, though, was not convinced that his team suffered a letdown. "I was really proud of the guys and their work effort," he said.

What had concerned Parsons entering the tournament was the poor play of his wings. He felt the team was pushing the ball up the middle too much, instead of on the outside.

That wasn't a problem against GU. "I thought we had the ball wide enough. We just weren't getting it in-

side quickly enough. And we weren't switching the ball back (from one side of the field to the other) fast enough.

"We played into (GU's) strength and they held up well."

**THE KNIGHTS'** strength was defense. And despite OU's efforts, they were slightly off their game Sunday — just enough to wreck its chances against a team like GU.

The game's only goal was netted by Frank Brown, after an indirect kick from the right side of the net by Hans van Rheenen. Van Rheenen sent the ball to the opposite side of the net, and Brown headed it in.

Keeper Vince Aliberti, starting his first game for OU, never made a move on the shot. Aliberti was replacing Kurt Hanus, who twisted an ankle in Saturday's game. Hanus was elevated to the starting position when No. 1 Gleno Soave quit the team before the season started.

Brown's goal came with 14:48 left in the opening half. OU's lack of offense was reflected in the statistics: only two first-half shots.

The Pioneers were far more effective in the second half, but GU's defense proved nearly impenetrable. OU's best scoring chances were both by John Stewart. Stewart headed a centering pass from Marty Hagen right on target, but Celetti deflected it over the net in the waning seconds of the first half.

With 1:50 left in the game, Stewart again headed a strong shot at the net after an indirect kick, but it went right to Celetti for an easy save.

**IN THE TIE** with NYT, the Pioneers offense clicked behind Hagen and Gray Halzel. Hagen, a senior from Troy Athens, scored twice — once on a penalty kick — and assisted on Halzel's go-ahead goal with 26:11 left in regulation. NYT tied it 13 minutes later.

Both teams had goals called back. The Pioneers' goal was disallowed after an offside call, and NYT lost a goal on a violation. Halzel also banged a shot off the goalpost with two minutes left in overtime.

Halzel's effectiveness against NYT Saturday — it earned him the offensive Most Valuable Player award for the tourney — was nullified by GU's Glenn Cooper Sunday, who effectively shadowed Halzel throughout the match. Cooper won the defensive MVP trophy.

OU, which failed for the third time to win this tournament, tied for third with NYT. The Bears certainly didn't enjoy their stay. They were ranked No. 1 a week ago, but have since lost to New Haven (before the tournament) and New Hampshire (Sunday) and tied OU. New Hampshire placed second in the tourney.

OU's record dipped to 3-2-1 for the season.

## Xavier stops Lady Ocelot win streak

The first test of the season is over for Schoolcraft College's women's soccer team. The grade: Give the Lady Ocelots an A.

That's what they deserve. SC didn't just survive its first six games, a stretch in which it had to play without two missing starters (Doreen Dudek, who had to sit out by NJCAA decree, and Lisa Griffin, who was traveling outside the country). The short-handed Lady Ocelots won their first five.

Their streak ended, ironically enough, just as the absentees returned to service. Xavier University stopped SC 3-1 Sunday, scoring twice in the second half.

"We missed a couple of good chances in the second half," said SC coach Ed Dudek. "We had three good opportunities that we didn't capitalize on."

SC'S ONLY goal was scored by Denise Piwko just before halftime. It tied the score at 1-1, but the Lady Ocelots could not sustain whatever momentum it provided in the second half.

Their defense was tough," said Dudek of Xavier. "We were kind of down after that, once you lose and end a winning streak."

SC had kept their win streak alive Saturday with a 4-1 victory at Miami of Ohio. Piwko got the game's first goal, with Elaine Alababoff assisting, but Miami tied it on a penalty kick.

The Lady Ocelots assumed control in the second half, scoring three unanswered goals. Jane Moylan, a midfielder from Livonia Ladywood, got the first two, with Piwko assisting on the second. Sheri Wolfe (Livonia Bentley) put the game out of

reach with a penalty kick goal.

**PIWKO'S TWO** goals in the two games raised her team-leading total to 10 for the season. Dudek also praised the defensive efforts of center fullback Kelly Churchill (Livonia Churchill) in both games.

The Lady Ocelots are now near full strength and off to a good start. Another, more difficult test awaits them when they travel east Oct. 4-5 to battle two of the toughest NJCAA teams. SC plays Monroe CC Oct. 4 in Rochester, N.Y., then meets Nassau CC Oct. 5 in Nassau, N.J. Both teams finished among the top six in the NJCAA in 1985.

SC will have a brief period to prepare for those games. The Lady Ocelots play at the University of Windsor at 11 a.m. Saturday, then

host University of Michigan at 4 p.m. Wednesday.

### CELOTS TOPPLE LEAGUE FOE

SC's men's soccer team took its defensive act on the road Friday and returned with a 4-1 victory over Eastern Conference rival Lakeland CC.

The win was the Ocelots' second straight in their quest to repeat as conference champions.

Rick Hamers spurred the triumph with three goals, including two in the first half as SC built a 3-1 lead. Joe Mase got the Ocelots' other goal. Jeff Vokratsis performed ably in goal for the winners.

On Saturday, SC lost to Vincennes CC's club team 4-3. The Ocelots had a 5-0 lead before VCC battled back to tie it.

## Westlander wins Ocelot

Leading from start to finish, Westland's George Hudock bested a field of 183 to win the second Schoolcraft College Ocelot 10K Run.

Never seriously challenged, the former Schoolcraft College runner

set a new course record with a time of 31:11 in the 6.2-mile road race held Sunday, sponsored by Racquets Unlimited of Livonia.

Sandra Johnson was the women's 10K winner in 42:37.

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