

2nd-half surge carries Raiders into title game

BY SCOTT DANIEL
STAFF WRITER

If final scores can be deceiving, North Farmington's 4-1 district tournament victory Wednesday over Redford Thurston was.

In soccer, a three-goal win generally means a rout. But Thurston tested the Raiders for 60 minutes until late goals pushed the game out of reach.

"We hung with them quite well," Thurston coach Jeff Neschich said. "I was happy with the way the kids played but disappointed with the results."

North (14-4-2) advances to the Division II district final Saturday against cross-town rival Farmington. Game time is 2 p.m. at Redford Union's Kraft Field.

North coach Ron Meteyer blamed sloppy first-half play by his team on anticipating a finals showdown with the Falcons.

"We played a good second half," he added. "We were much more aggressive to the ball."

Thurston played the part of the aggressor in the first half. A tight defense, which focused on stopping North standouts Craig Hearn and Justin Street, worked well.

"Everything we put in for this game seemed to work," Neschich said of Thurston's game plan.

The Eagles (12-4) had the best scoring opportunity early. Shawn Presnell had a clear breakaway but kicked the ball high over the net when North goalie Tony Munaco came out to challenge.

Thurston finally got one past

SOCCER

Munaco with 21 minutes to go before halftime. Junior Tim Moxie drilled a perfect shot from about 30 yards out on the left wing to make it 1-0.

The goal seemed to wake up the Raiders, who responded with two good scoring chances at the 23-minute mark.

Street smashed a shot from about 20 yards directly in front of Thurston's net. Goalie Rob Pepper was equal to the task, however, and punched it away. Moments later, Hearn had a hard shot of his own deflected away by the keeper.

"Those were huge saves," Neschich said.

The Raiders' Gjon Djokaj wouldn't be denied, however. He laced a shot in the upper-right corner after a corner kick. The goal came 3:37 before halftime.

After a Meteyer halftime scolding, the Raiders came back strong in the final 40 minutes.

Hearn was awarded a penalty kick after being pulled down in the penalty area. He made no mistake and put the Raiders ahead 2-1 with just 37 seconds gone in the second half.

"I thought it was a weak call," Neschich said.

Thurston tried to fight back but simply couldn't muster any serious offensive chances.

Brian Horr made it 3-1 with 15:06 remaining, and Hearn closed the scoring with his 42nd goal of the year at 30:50.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRESLER

Raiders on the move: North's Chris Erickson advances the ball Monday while Aaron Carignan gives chase.

North eliminates RU with 8-1 win in district opener

BY SCOTT DANIEL
STAFF WRITER

Craig Hearn scored three goals and Justin Street added a pair as North Farmington cruised to an 8-1 district tournament win over host Redford Union in boys soccer Monday.

The Raiders jumped to a 4-0 halftime lead and never looked back.

"They're a very impressive team," RU coach Bob Danneels said. "We knew, to be competitive with them, we had to play a perfect game."

Unfortunately for the Panthers, they didn't. North Farmington used superior speed and ball skills to continually pressure the RU net.

The Panthers simply couldn't stand the barrage. Despite the loss, Danneels is pleased with his team's progress.

"We only had one win last year," he said. "We finished 7-9-1 this season. I'm very happy with the year we had."

North went on to defeat Redford Thurston in the district semifinals Wednesday, 4-1.

Street got the first of his goals less than three minutes into the game. He took a lend pass from Jarret Kruse, outraced the defenders and drilled a shot into the right corner to make it 1-0.

Hearn made it 2-0 in the 10th minute off an indirect kick. Viktor Juncaj added a header, and Hearn tallied his second goal before the halftime horn.

"He's been a (goal-scoring) factory for us this season," Meteyer said of the senior forward.

Chris Erickson gave North a 5-0 lead in the opening minutes of the second half.

Mark Moretto finally got RU on the scoreboard at 5:48.

RU played North even for about 10 more minutes. Unlike the first half, when the ball rarely went into the North end, RU was able to attack. But there were no more goals for RU. North added three more by Glen Hearn, Craig Hearn and Street.

CHURCHILL 3, CATHOLIC CENTRAL 2: George Kithas scored off a scramble in front of the net 13 minutes into the second overtime Monday as host Livonia Churchill staved off upset-minded Redford Catholic Central, 3-2.

Tom Kaminiski assisted on the game winner for the Chargers (6-5-3). The goal after it was believed the ball had gone out of bounds.

"That typified the way our luck went all year," Shamrocks coach Dana Orsucci said. "It was a hard pill to swallow."

Orsucci, who scored a hat trick in a 4-2 win over CC earlier in the year, was marked tightly.

George did a nice job of dropping back and distributing the ball," Churchill coach Chad Campau said.

Mark Sicilia notched his second goal of the night from Scott Smith with 14 minutes left in regulation time to send the game into OT.

It was 1-1 at intermission. Mark Sulowski gave CC (8-9-1) the lead, but Sicilia tied it on an assist by Rob Sharp.

The Shamrocks then pulled ahead 2-1 on Kevin Graft's goal. Graft just missed on a shot off the crossbar in the first half.

"That was one of the best high school soccer games I've ever been associated with," Orsucci said. "It was back and forth. It was very emotional. I was drained at the end."

Tournament from page C1

crossed it perfectly and put it right on Patrick's forehead," Rais said.

"It was an excellent effort by everyone on our team. Nobody gave up. It took a while to get the win, but we got it."

The halftime score was the opposite of what most people probably expected, and it didn't look good for the Falcons, who trailed 2-0.

Brian Stefanski stunned Farmington with a first minute, and Bill Tsikaris scored the second with under two minutes remaining in the half.

"We haven't had a game in 10 days, and we came out flat to start the game," Juncaj said. "We did work hard in practice, but it's not the same as playing a tournament game."

The situation got worse before it got better when Jamie Hamzeh, taking an indirect free kick from 16 yards in front of the goal, fired a shot through the Farmington defensive wall.

"We were down two at halftime, and we said 'We can score three and win it,' but they got the third goal and it was (deflating)," Rais said. "But we just turned it around."

The Falcons began their comeback with 34:14 to play in the second half when Rais converted a penalty kick.

On a restart from the sideline, Farmington's John Wayne sent a long ball in front of the Crestwood goal, and Falon redirected it into the net at 29:30.

Wayne assisted on the third score, too. His throw-in resulted in a loose ball in front, and Rais knocked the tying goal with 1:30 remaining.

Juncaj has said all season his team never quits, and Wednesday's game was the best example yet of that.

"Crestwood had a good team, but the boys knew they could beat this team and they never stopped thinking that," Juncaj said.

"We have been a comeback team, but this was the first time we were down 3-0. This kind of come-from-behind win doesn't happen very often in soccer."

Farmington, which had a strong wind at its back in the second half and second overtime, continued to dominate and take the game to Crestwood for the duration of the contest.

The Falcons had numerous scoring opportunities, compared

■ 'North has a good team, and we expect it to be a competitive game.'

Luke Juncaj
—Farmington soccer coach

to just a couple for the Chargers, but were unable to complete their comeback until Rais and Falon connected for the winning goal.

"We put ourselves in a hole to start the game and had to fight to come back, and we were able to do that," Juncaj said.

"We knew if we got the first goal, there would be more. Luckily, we got the first goal early in the second half, because the longer it goes the harder it gets."

Farmington will play North Farmington at 2 p.m. Saturday for the district championship. The teams tied 4-4 on Oct. 7.

The district final will be played at tournament host Redford Union's field, which is located on Puritan Street (5th Mile) between Inkster and Beech Daly.

"It should be a good game," Juncaj said. "North has a good team, and we expect it to be a competitive game."

Sponsored by The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers and The Detroit Lions

Hey Kids!—Join the DETROIT LIONS CLUB!

Here's your chance to become a member of the Detroit Lions Club! All you do is send us your question and if it's asked on WXYT radio, you'll receive all sorts of neat Lion stuff:

• T-shirt • Lions Hat • Lions Duffle Bag
and all sorts of other great Lions stuff

WXYT
AM 1270
ULTIMATE TALK STATION

Tune in WXYT 1270 AM every Monday at 7 p.m. to hear whether your question was chosen.

You must be 12 years old (or younger) to be a Lions Club member.

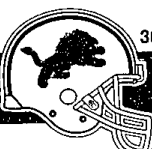
Just fill in the entry blank below, and mail it to:

Detroit Lions Club

c/o Observer & Eccentric

36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150

Official Big Boy-Detroit Lions Kids Club
Entry Blank



My question is:

My favorite Lion is:

NAME:

AGE:

DATE OF BIRTH:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

ZIP:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

E-Mail (if any):

PARENT'S NAME:

FREE EXTERIOR DESIGN BOOKS

Do It Yourself and Save

VINYL SIDING

SALE \$29.95 per sq. ft.

Aluminum Seamless Gutters

Run to any length while you wait

75¢ per sq. ft.

Aluminum Siding

8.5 mil. DELUXE QUALITY

SALE \$59.95 per sq. ft.

Aluminum Soffit

SVP-10 White

SALE \$59.95 sq. ft.

SOLID VINYL WINDOWS

From \$79.95 ea.

VINYL SOFFIT

White

SALE \$39.95 sq. ft.

CLIO

11500 Midland Rd. (810) 587-4730

SAQUINAW (817) 784-3440

DETROIT 3440 (313) 981-2902

WATERFORD 3440 (313) 981-2902

MT. CLEMENS 3440 (313) 981-2902

LIVONIA 3440 (313) 981-2902

INKSTER 3440 (313) 981-2902

WYANDOTTE 3440 (313) 981-2902

TOLEDO 3440 (419) 832-1100

Quantity Limited - One Sq. = 100 Sq. Ft.