GIRLS' SOCCER

With tornado sirens blaring, Panthers master

Jeremy Hogan

With tornado sirens blaring, Panthers master Cougars in Sectional By Jeremy Price 812-331-4342 | jprice@heraldt.com | 1 comment

Twice the tornado sirens sounded out a warning, forcing both the Bloomington North and Bloomington South girls' soccer teams to take cover midway through Tuesday night's sectional semifinal.

Once play resumed, the host Panthers got another warning when the Cougars took a 1-0 lead.

South finally heeded that warning, scoring four goals in a span of eight minutes and 18 seconds to post a 4-1 victory and advance to Thursday night's 7 o'clock sectional championship game against Bedford North Lawrence, a 6-0 winner over Edgewood in the Tuesday's second game.

The first half between North and South produced little drama and little danger as the Panthers held a minimal 3-1 edge in shots, only one of which was on goal.
But as the teams prepared to take the pitch after halftime, the sirens sounded for a tornado warning that forced a 15-minute delay. Play resumed for just over three minutes before the sirens sounded again, forcing another 25-minute delay.

"We were worried we wouldn't be able to get up again (after the delays)," South senior Julia Herrmann said. "But we warmed up well the couple minutes we had in between. We wanted to get a goal in in case the game was canceled."

The Panthers certainly provided most of the pressure, but it was North that got the goal thanks to a free kick in the 51st minute. The South defense failed to clear in the box, and the ball popped out the left side to the Cougars' Kylee Henderson, who had her legs taken out, making for an easy penalty kick call by the ref.

Henderson did the honors herself, blasting a shot into the top right for a 1-0 lead.

"All of a sudden we get that PK, and that luck we've been talking about generating, we've done it," North coach Tony Starks said.

The Cougars made that advantage stand up for the next 17 minutes, while the Panthers were left with a decision to make about their response.

"Maybe (the PK) was the thing that woke us up," South coach Ian Rickerby said. "It seemed like once we were down, and they realized what that meant, a couple players decided they were going to step up, and it worked out."

One of those players was senior forward Victoria Fosha.

"(Coach) took Miya (Nourie) and I off, so it was a big thing for us, a reality check almost, to realize this could be our last game," Fosha said.

So she made sure it wasn't her last game, following up as North goalkeeper Olivia Robinson came out to field a long ball at the top of the box. There was just a momentary bobble, and Fosha poked the ball free and ripped a shot from a tight angle on the left side into the empty net for the equalizer.

"It was really frustrating (when they scored)," Herrmann said. "It felt like really, really bad luck. But we were able to recover from that pretty well. The goal, it sparked us to get our flow back."

Then it was Herrmann's turn just over a minute later, as Caroline Tann got a flick on a corner kick, and Herrman hit a one-timer with her left foot that looped into the top right corner for a 2-1 lead and what turned out to be her second game-winning goal of the season against North.

"That's a nice pattern to have," Herrmann said with a smile.

Starks on the other hand, wasn't smiling anymore.

"Once they put one in, you just saw the emotional stability sink out of our team," he said. "We've seen it too many times where somebody scored on us, then it doesn't bounce our way again. We talked to them about not getting too high, not getting too low before the game, and I felt like we got too low."

"Then they put in another one, and you just saw everybody's heads drop. Still had over 10 minutes, but it was really over at that point in a lot of ways."
If it wasn't over then, it was when Sabrina Morrison drove a free kick from 20 yards off the back of a Cougar defender and into the upper right corner for a 3-0 lead with 8:56 remaining.

"We've had that before, where we once we score one, they just keep coming," Fosha said. "That's a good quality. I just wish we that we could get it going a little sooner. It was a little too close for comfort."

Nouriie added the final goal with 4:10 left to complete the onslaught, and Rickerby could breathe easy.

"That's why have to play all 80, even with the (tornado warning) breaks," he said. "Such an emotional contest. That's what it was. Credit to North, they came out and played really, really well and put us under a lot of pressure."

But it was the Cougars who found the pressure to be too much.

"The levees gave," Starks said. "We were holding it together with duct tape for a little bit, then once it broke, it was gone for sure."

Edgewood did much the same in the nightcap, trailing BNL just 1-0 at the half behind the goalkeeping of Emily Jones, who made 10 saves in the opening frame en route to 26 on the night.

"My keeper, wow," Mustangs coach Mike Hawkins said. "She did what she was supposed to do."

Unfortunately, the rest of the team couldn't follow suit.

"They were the better team tonight," Hawkins said. "That's really what it came down to. We stopped communicating and we stopped doing our jobs, and we gave it away."

Edgewood's lone shot in the first half came on a breakaway by Amber Vercrumba, whose shot curled high. She played just 10 minutes off the bench due to illness.

"Amber, yesterday, was really sick," Hawkins said. "For her to be out here today, I thought I'd put her in for a little bit, and I knew she wouldn't last long because she was sick, and she didn't. But what she did do, is she tried. Had I had her (the whole game), it probably would've been a little different."

The Stars made sure the second half was different, going up 2-0 eight minutes in, then scoring twice just a minute apart eight minutes later to break the game open.

The Mustangs' lone second-half shot came off the foot of Isla Weber but was handled cleanly by BNL keeper Jackie Dufresne.

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BLOOMINGTON SOUTH 4, BLOOMINGTON NORTH 1

Bloomington North (5-13) 0 1—1

Bloomington South (8-6-2) 0 4—4