

# Marquette Catholic girls soccer team continues to show positives despite loss

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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**EDWARDSVILLE – Marquette Catholic's girls soccer team** continues to show positives despite the three losses the Explorers have had this week.

The Explorers bowed on Friday night 2-1 to O'Fallon in the seventh-place playoff game of the Metro Girls Cup tournament's Adidas Bracket at Tiger Stadium.

**Marquette coach Steve Mitchell** is looking at the bright side even though his team is 0-3 to begin the year.

“Today was another loss, but we don't look at it as that,” Mitchell said. “We changed five players around from our first game, which we lost (to Triad in extra time). We had five kids who started that game in five different spots (against the Panthers); we're moving things around, trying to find out where our strengths are and where our weaknesses are and we're going to go from there.

“It started to come together tonight; we've got to start playing better in the first 10-15 minutes.”

Slow starts did hurt the Explorers in all three Cup matches, though opportunities were there in all three (against Triad, Springfield and O'Fallon). “Three games, we gave up a goal (early); in the first game (against Triad), we gave up a goal in the first five minutes,

then the first two minutes (against Springfield) and this game, the first 12 minutes; we keep giving up the early goals and we wind up losing by a goal. If we can weather that first 15-20 (minutes), we'll be all right.”

But Mitchell is looking at the big picture instead of focusing on these first three opening games. “That's what we do this for (playing in the tournament), we do this for a reason,” Mitchell said. “I'm not worried about the record; the kids are battling and that's all that matters.”

Mitchell cited conceding the first goal early as a problem the Explorers need to fix, and it did take place as the Panthers' Sam Stutsman scored off a corner kick in the 19<sup>th</sup> minute to give OTHS a 1-0 lead. Both sides did have good chances to score as the half went on in chilly, rainy conditions (though the rain was mostly sprinkles throughout the match), but it remained 1-0 in O'Fallon's favor at the halftime whistle.

The Panthers got a second goal in the 48<sup>th</sup> minute when Gabby Goerke scored off a scramble in front to extend the lead to 2-0; Marquette got a goal back in the 49<sup>th</sup> minute when **Bailey Hartrich** found the back of the net to pull the Explorers back to 2-1.

Both teams worked hard to find another goal, but several chances just missed or were broken up at the defense, and the score remained where it was the rest of the way.

The Explorers' next match comes up at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at Gordon Moore Park – when **Marquette and Alton** take each other on in the crosstown rivalry match.

