

Alton High, Marquette Catholic soccer girls end with 1-1 draw

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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ALTON – Anytime **Alton High** and **Marquette Catholic** get together in an athletic competition, it's bound to be pretty special.

The two schools met each other on the soccer field at Gordon Moore Park Wednesday night in the latest edition of the Riverbend Derby (derby being a soccer term for any crosstown rivalry match), and the two schools had to settle for a 1-1 draw, thanks to a first-half goal from the Redbirds' Bri Hatfield and a second-half goal from the **Explorers' Annabelle Copeland**.

Alton entered the match undefeated in their first five contests, while Marquette had dropped their first three decisions; the Redbirds now stand at 5-0-1 on the year, while the Explorers went to 0-3-1.

“You always want to leave with a win,” said **Redbird coach Jeff Hayes**, coaching in his first crosstown rivalry match for AHS, “but sometimes, when you do get a draw and you're playing well and creating chances, you can't be too upset with the girls. They gave 100 percent tonight, so I'm happy with that.

“We were still able to create some chances and even giving up a goal, we didn't get down; there was no big gap in the game of about 10-15 minutes where we didn't have the ball, so I like our attitude, I like our fight. The girls are starting to see how that's becoming our personality on the field, and they like it.”

“That first half was not good” for the Explorers, said **Marquette coach Steve Mitchell**. “We were not good at all; we've just got to go back to the drawing board. We had a little heart-to-heart at halftime and they came out a little stronger.

“I've got a lot of talent over there; they're (Alton) a good team, they're well-coached. They come at you, that's for sure.”

The Redbirds broke on top in the 20th minute when **Hatfield** accepted a feed from Lindsey Grossheim and fired a shot that eluded Explorer goalkeeper Lauren Fischer to give AHS a 1-0 lead. The Redbirds had several good chances in the half that didn't work out; the Explorers had a few chances that didn't work out as well, but the Hatfield goal stood up when the break came.

Not long into the second half, Marquette broke through when Copeland fired a shot that beat Redbird goalkeeper Julia-May Campbell in the 45th minute, with Elisa Senno getting the assist to draw the Explorers even.

A stiff breeze did help both sides during the match; both teams had good scoring opportunities in the second half, but the goalkeepers and defenders on both sides managed to bottle them up. Marquette had the better of the play down the stretch, having several chances just fail to click in the dying minutes of the match, but the ball couldn't get to the back of the net and the match ended in a drawn result.

The Explorers are at Breese Mater Dei for a 4:30 p.m. Thursday match, while the Redbirds play their first match at Alton High's new Piasa Motor Fuels Field against Springfield at 12:30 p.m. Saturday.

