

Lauren Walsh goal lifts Marquette Catholic to 2-1 regional title win over Roxana

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
May 14 2016 6:50 AM



ALTON – For **Lauren Walsh**, all it took was being in the right place at the right time.

“(Clair Dalton) came in and whenever she hit it, it came off Braeden (Lackey, the goalkeeper for Roxana) and I was just kind of standing there, I guess, and I just put it in the corner,” Walsh said of a 69th-minute goal that turned out to be the goal that sent

Marquette Catholic into next week's IHSA Class 1A Belleville Althoff Sectional, the Explorers eliminating the Shells 2-1 at Gordon Moore Park.

The Explorers will take on either Althoff or Waterloo Gibault – who play each other in Saturday's Anna-Jonesboro Regional final, the match taking place in Carbondale at 11 a.m. - at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday at McKendree University in Lebanon, with the winner of that match playing at 4 p.m. May 21 for a trip to the Springfield Supersectional at Illinois-Springfield May 24.

“Roxana came in with a game plan and it worked for most of the game,” said Explorer coach Steve Mitchell. “They packed seven or eight of them in the box (the penalty area) and looked for a transition; they happened to get one in the first half, but luckily, we already had one (a goal). That gave them more momentum and the confidence stayed up.

“We had 27 shots on goal and we put two in; one of them was off a deflection, so we need to finish better. Hey, it's the playoffs; it happens. Everybody's record goes to 0-0 and the seeds don't mean much; it's whoever wants it more. We just kept battling and finally put one in.”

While the loss was a difficult one for the Shells, how they performed left Roxana coach Lori Yates beaming. “It was a great loss to me; I'm ecstatic,” Yates said. “To lose 2-1 to Marquette in the regionals was the best we've done in the 11 years I've coached. Being 1-1 at halftime and they didn't score until 31 minutes of the second half, I told the girls, 'it's a win in your book'.

“It's a great ending to their season – awesome game.”

The match started off tight defensively, but the Explorers kept sending in balls and attacks into the Shell goal area trying to find a hole in the Roxana defense. Lackey had some key stops and managed to keep Marquette at bay until the 34th minute when Elisa Senno managed to find Adrianna Schindler with a pass; Schindler then managed to beat Lackey to put the Explorers on top at 1-0.

It took just five minutes for the Shells to counter – on their first shot of the match. The Shells moved into the Explorer half of the field and Brittany Alexander came in to find Emma Lucas had beaten her defender; Alexander got Lucas the ball and all Lucas had to do was score, which she did in the 39th minute to suddenly draw Roxana level with Marquette.

Things stayed tight from that point on, the Explorers owning the vast majority of the possession time in the second half but unable to find a way to get a goal, and the match was seemingly heading to extra time (which would have been two 10-minute, non-sudden death halves) before Walsh came up big in the 69th minute.

“When they had their one goal, their first shot was their goal,” Walsh said. “We had (several) shots already and we had one goal, so our (shots) to their one, so one mistake and it's tied up.”

Walsh is excited to see what the Explorers can accomplish as the postseason continues. “I”m excited to see what we can accomplish,” Walsh said. “We didn't play too bad in the first half; I think we could have been better than we were, but we picked it up in the second half and got our heads in the game and finished it off.”

The Explorers advance to the sectional with a record of 11-9-3; the Shells were eliminated at 11-6-2.