

O'Leary's sudden extra-time goal puts Kahoks past Tigers in SWC opener

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Things can happen pretty quickly in a soccer game.

Goals can almost come out of nowhere.

Just ask Collinsville's Alynna O'Leary, who flicked a ball that suddenly found itself in the back of the net in the 93rd minute at Tiger Stadium Thursday night to give the Kahoks a 1-0, extra-time Southwestern Conference win over Edwardsville. Emily Holten got the assist on the match-winner.

The loss put the Tigers at 2-2-0 on the season overall, 0-1 in the SWC; the Kahoks went to 1-2-0 overall, 1-0 in the league.

Collinsville lost a 6-5 decision to Rockwood Summit Tuesday on what Kahok coach Clay Smith called “a same type of play – I feel great for my girls because, consciously, we needed this win (after dropping a pair of decisions to start the season). Both programs are very good, I think both teams played very well at times; tonight, I didn't think we played well at times – we still have a lot of learning and growth (to do).

“We'll skate out of here with this win – physically, we don't deserve it on the field, but mentally, the way these girls work to prepare for this, I think they deserve it, and that's a fit team over there – they did well tonight. That was a battle.”

“We had quite a few good shots – a few good shots outside the (penalty area),” said Tiger coach Abby Comerford. “We didn't have too many inside the box, which is fine; we've been telling the girls to take the shots outside wide (of the penalty area). I can't fault the girls whatsoever; they played their hearts out.”

Of O'Leary's sudden goal that won the match for the Kahoks, Comerford said “that's soccer. It was a great goal – this is a big rivalry game, it happens. We just have to bounce back from this; we've got a busy week next week, we have four games and we just have to bounce back off of it and see how it goes against Cor Jesu on Monday.”

Both sides had good opportunities throughout the match; O'Leary had been turned back on a great save from Regan Windau in the 75th minute that could have won the match for Collinsville, the save eventually forcing extra time; in SWC matches, teams play two 10-minute halves of extra time under a golden-goal format, similar to sudden-death overtime.

The first half of extra time went scoreless when O'Leary's sudden flick beat Windau in the 93rd minute of the match. “She's a dynamic player,” Smith said of O'Leary. “She was beating herself up on the shot in the second half that Windau made the save on; that happens, that's soccer.

“Defensively, I thought we were very good tonight compared to what we've been; the last two games, I thought we made some major mistakes defensively, so tonight was a step in the right direction there.”

Morgan Lerch recorded the clean sheet for the Kahoks. The curtain-raising junior varsity match ended in a 1-1 draw.

Edwardsville hosts Cor Jesu at 5:30 p.m. Monday at Tiger Stadium, then travels to Belleville West for a league match at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday before EHS heads to Parkway South for a pair of matches next weekend, meeting up with Naperville Neuqua Valley of Chicagoland at 5:45 p.m. March 31 and Fort Smith (Ark.) Southside at 11:30 a.m. April 1.

