

Two sudden late goals send Kahoks past Tigers 3-1

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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O'FALLON – Soccer can take some funny turns at times.

Take, for instance, Tuesday evening's IHSA Class 3A Rock Island Sectional semifinal match between Southwestern Conference rivals Collinsville and Edwardsville.

The match as about as tight as could be, the two teams level at 1-1 in the second half when Kahok goalkeeper Austin Gavlick charged out on the Tigers' Bayne Noll, who was charging in himself trying to get the Tigers back in front and the two collided at the top of the penalty area.

Gavlick was shown a red card and sent off, forcing the Kahoks to play a man down; Tate Wyatt took Gavlick's place in the net and found a way to hold off a couple of Edwardsville scoring chances.

The next thing anyone knew, the Kahoks had suddenly scored twice in about a minute and went on to eliminate the Tigers 3-1 at O'Fallon's stadium to advance to Friday's sectional final in Rock Island, where the Kahoks will meet Normal Community, 5-0 winners over Joliet West in Tuesday's other semifinal; the match will be at 5:30 p.m. Friday in Rock Island, with the winner meeting the Burbank Reavis Sectional winner, either Bradley-Bourbonnais or Chicago Mount Carmel, in the Normal Community Super-Sectional at 6 p.m. Halloween night.

The Tigers were eliminated at 16-2-3, while the Kahoks advanced to the Round of 16 at 17-7.

Tiger coach Mark Heiderscheid talked about some missed chances the Tigers had before the two sudden Kahok goals.

“I think Josh Reed had a sitter right in front of the goal and didn't happen to get there,” Heiderscheid said. “He had another couple; I thought had he made it past the goalkeeper, he's kind of in at that point and hopefully, he finishes it – that would had been it right there. But that's the sport of soccer sometimes where, we're chipping away, but all game long, Collinsville was able to go ahead and knock balls to their strikers or run-out players.

“In this case, we had it – it looked like everything was our way and then we just accidentally lost the ball in the back half; it was just one of those casual things where they pounced on a ball and strike it in – soccer is, at times, a matter of finishing and taking care of opportunities.”

“We had chances,” said Kahok coach Rob Lugge. “We just weren't as creative in the back line going forward; we just had a little luck on our hands at the end of it. They're a good team; just being able to get shots off (on the Tigers) is difficult – to be able to put three on them a man down – they just never stopped.

“The boys came with it in the second half; we kind of challenged them to prove where they belonged and what it takes to be a Kahok.”

Even after the Kahoks had gotten to their 3-1 lead, Lugge wasn't taking anything for granted. “They're such a talented team,” Lugge said, “and the last time we played them, they scored three goals on us in three minutes, so anything's possible. At that point, we're just holding on for dear life and trying to hold that lead.”

Edwardsville had grabbed the lead in the 35th minute when Ethan Miracle hammered a direct free kick from about 35 yards out past Gavlick to put EHS ahead 1-0; Collinsville countered in the 48th minute when Donovan Scott-Gass found the range against Tiger goalkeeper Michael Hoelting to draw Collinsville even at 1-1.

The two teams battled on, with Edwardsville seeming to get the better of the play leading to the moment when Gavlick was sent off. The ensuing free kick was blocked at the defense and cleared away. Things seemed to going well for the Tigers when a loose ball in the Edwardsville half of the field was suddenly pounced on by Logan Whitehead, who got past Hoelting, who came off his line to try to get to the ball, went to his right and tucked the ball into the back of the net in the 70th minute to put Collinsville ahead 2-

1. Less than a minute later, Trey Przybysz got ahold of the ball and knocked it in past Hoelting to break the Tigers' backs. Edwardsville kept coming, but couldn't put the ball past Wyatt in the final minutes.



