

Five-goal outburst sends Explorers to Class 1A final

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EAST PEORIA – A five-goal explosion in an 11-minute span of the second half.

That's all it took to send Marquette Catholic into the IHSA Class 1A state soccer championship match.

The Explorers' got those goals from Trenton Dietiker, two from Chris Hartrich, Aaron Boulch and Noah Fahrenstock to advance them to Saturday evening's state championship match Monmouth-Roseville in a 5-0 win over Chicago Acero/Garcia at EastSide Centre in East Peoria Friday evening. Monmouth defeated Elgin St. Edward 2-0 in the other semifinal match Friday to set up the championship match, set for 5 p.m. Saturday.

The last time the Explorers got to a final, they defeated Urbana University 4-1 in the 2012 Class 1A final at Normal's Corn Crib.

“I thought in the first half, we had some real good opportunities to score,” said Explorer coach Joe Burchett, “and we couldn't seem to find the net; the scoring touch just didn't seem to be there. I felt like we had the better of the opportunities in the first half; going in 0-0, the boys weren't disappointed other than we didn't notch a goal.

“To finally break free in the second, I thought sometimes that wakes up your boys; to get that goal, I think, sparked us, then the second one came – sometimes you get down

two goals pretty close in time, it's a painful thing. How do you recover from it, or can you recover from it? They never seemed to recover and then another goal came and then that Fahrenstock heel-flick to Aaron.”

Fahrenstock came back to the Explorers after suffering a broken collarbone against Collinsville in mid-September, and it was just in time for MCHS. “We've got Noah back after the broken collarbone,” Burchett said. “Him and Chris play on the same club team, so they're very familiar with each other – you get Noah, Chris and Aaron all on the pitch at the same time, and if everyone does their job, we're going to be a hard team to beat.”

After the teams battled to a scoreless tie at the halftime break, it didn't take long for Dietiker to get Marquette on top; he took a pass from Boulch and fired a shot that got past Patriot goalkeeper Diego Vazquez in the 45th minute to put the Explorers ahead 1-0; five minutes later, Hartrich got a shot past Vazquez to up the lead to 2-0 to put the Patriots on the ropes. Hartrich then delivered the knockout blow in the 52nd minute with a big shot into the back of the net before Fahrenstock and Boulch teamed up to cap off the explosion, Boulch scoring early in the 56th minute from Fahrenstock and then Fahrenstock getting a pass from Boulch for a goal late in the 56th minute to put the match out of reach.

That the Explorers have a chance to bring home a state championship is making Burchett a happy coach.

“It's a wonderful thing,” Burchett said. “We had a wonderful sendoff today (from the campus) with Father Bill (Kessler, the MCHS chaplain); the (Alton) police and firemen all escorting us out of town; it was quite nice – it was a wonderful experience today to have the support of the school and the fans and all those things that come along with it that you don't get any other time, and then all of a sudden, you feel the love from a lot of people. It was a really good thing.”