



# **Goalkeeper Hemann using state basketball experience to help soccer Explorers**

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer  
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EAST PEORIA – Marquette Catholic goalkeeper Nick Hemann is used to pressure situations and state tournament runs.

Hemann was part of an Explorer boys basketball team last season that won a school-record 30 games and made an unprecedented run to the IHSA Class 2A Carbondale Super-Sectional before bowing out to Mount Carmel.

Hemann is now using that experience from the basketball season to help guide the Explorers in their run to Saturday evening's IHSA Class 1A state soccer championship match against Monmouth-Roseville.

“It was just an electric game for us,” Hemann said of the Explorers' 5-0 win over Chicago Acero/Garcia at East Peoria's EastSide Centre Friday evening. “We came into the half at 0-0 and we knew what we needed to do; we came out and got that first goal and then they just came in bunches.

“Whenever we got that first goal, the momentum completely changed and everything went in our favor; it just went our way completely.”

Garcia, who the Explorers were meeting for the first time, were a good side, Hemann thought. “They played us really well and strong,” Hemann said, “but we were able to possess the ball really well and overcome their pressure. We came together as a team and we ended up getting a lot of goals that took us to the state championship game.

“This was our main goal (getting to the final); we set our schedule so it was tough so we could come this far so we could get here and win; that's what we've been doing. That's why we do what we do in the regular season, play all those big (Class) 3A schools – the Collinsvilles, the Edwardsvilles – just to prepare for this tournament.”

Being on the basketball team that got to last season's Super-sectional has been a big help. “It's really helped, especially with my teammate Chris Hartrich; we've been in this together; we've been together for a number of years now. Having that experience and feeling in that super-sectional game – you never want to have it again; that's what's pushed us towards this state tournament.

“The experience from basketball has really helped us here – the experience, the traveling, the long days and everything like that has really helped us push forward and get closer to the final for this tournament. We're just happy to be where we are now. We'll just give it our best game and hopefully we'll win.”