

Kuhn's 80th-minute goal gives Tigers dramatic 4-4 draw at Collinsville

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COLLINSVILLE – In a hard-fought rivalry match between two of the best teams in the Southwestern Conference, a dramatic, edge-of-your-seat finish was the most appropriate conclusion, indeed.

Raleigh Kuhns' goal right before the end of regulation time capped a spree of three goals in the final two minutes as Edwardsville gained an incredible 4-4 draw with Collinsville

Thursday night in the conference opener at Kahok Stadium. The Kahoks had taken the lead a minute earlier on a goal by Jalyn Richardson on a curling 25-yard shot before Kuhns' equalizer gave the Tigers the draw.

“It was a hard-fought game,” said Tiger coach Abby Federmann. “It's always a battle with Collinsville. It's a rivalry, and it's a mentally hard game every year we come out, but we knew we had to be successful in order to contend for conference champs, and we did just enough to do that. Back and forth, what a great game.”

Federmann was particularly proud of Kuhns' goal at the end.

“Rleigh came up; I called her clutch at the end,' Federmann said. “She was struggling during the game to get in the back of the net. She kept grinding and grinding, finally found the back of the net when we most needed it. Very proud of her.”

Kahok coach Clay Smith agreed that this was a battle between two of the best teams in the Metro-East.

“Yeah, an early battle of two very good Southwestern Conference teams,” Smith said. “I just told my girls that it's scary to think that we're only, you know, in week two of the season, how much better these two teams are going to get throughout the season. So, by postseason, I wouldn't want to play either one of us.”

Smith agreed that the Tigers' equalizer right before full time was a good goal, indeed.

“To me, I'll have to watch the film, but according to my girls, and from what I could see, (Kuhns) was marked, or even double marked,” Smith said, “and it sounds like she just got a great shot off, and just found the upper part of the net, so that's a great shot.”

The Tigers took an early advantage in the second minute, as Ezri Beckmann made a good run down the left flank and made a good cross to the far post, where Megan Woll was there to tap home to give Edwardsville a 1-0 lead. The Kahoks drew level five minutes later off a corner, where Faith Liljegren fanned on a first attempt, but got the ball back and drove a shot that hit the underside of the bar and bounced straight down and was apparently cleared, but the referee ruled that the ball had crossed the line for a goal that tied the game at 1-1.

Collinsville hit the front for the first time in the 12th minute off a free kick near the box. Edwardsville goalkeeper Regan Windau made the initial save, but in a scramble, the ball was headed home by Courtney Marten to give the Kahoks a 2-1 edge. Both sides had some good chances, with Edwardsville having a slight edge in the play. Two minutes from halftime, on a free kick for a hand ball in the center circle, Zoe Ahlers put a

perfectly placed kick that Emma Sitton headed home just past an outstretched Claire Rendleman's hand to give to draw Edwardsville level at 2-2 at the break.

The second half started out evenly, as both teams had opportunities that failed to click. In the 61st minute, off a Collinsville corner, Riley Harris' cross found found Marten, who headed home in the left corner to put the Kahoks back in front 3-2. The pace of the play picked up, and in the 76th minute, on a free kick in front of the Collinsville goal, Rendleman stopped a first shot, but in the scramble, Jocelyn Wagner put home a crossing pass to bring Edwardsville back level at 3-3.

But things were just getting very interesting. In the 79th minute, Richardson hit a curling shot that just got over Windau and underneath the bar to give Collinsville a 4-3 lead. Undaunted, the Tigers gained a corner in the final seconds, and off a scramble, Kuhns hit a shot that hit off the underside of the bar and bounced in to tie the match and send it into extra time.

Both the Tigers and Kahoks had great chances to score the game-ending golden goal, but the keepers were up to the challenges before the final whistle blew, ending the match at 4-4.

For the Tigers, it was a important bounce back result after having lost to St. Louis power Incarnate Word 1-0 the night before.

“Yeah, Incarnate's a very different game than we just played today,' Federmann said. “Incarnate plays a different strategy than Collinsville does, so I'm really glad that our girls are adaptable and can play all different kinds of soccer.”

Smith was happy with the draw, but also felt like his team could have played a bit better.

“I have to do a better job as a coach, and get these girls a little better prepared,” Smith said. “We're just not playing very good soccer right now; it was a little ugly on our part at times. Edwardsville definitely possessed the ball better, and knocked it around on us. We defended a majority of the game, and we're not going to win many games this season if we have to play like that. So that's on me, and I'll do a better job of training with the girls and prepare them, get them better.

“But yeah, we'll take a tie,” Smith continued. “Obviously, we want to win, so does Abby and so does Edwardsville, and both teams had chances to win. But it is what it is, a tie is what happened tonight.”

The Tigers go on the road on Monday to play another St. Louis team, Cor Jesu, in a 4 p. m. kickoff, then hosts Belleville West Tuesday in another conference match. Federmann knows what lies ahead with the Maroons.

“Belleville West is always a hard game,” Federmann said. “We played them in the Metro Cup, but you know, everyone's getting bigger, faster, stronger, so it's going to be a competition again.”

The Kahoks, meanwhile, take on Lee's Summit West of suburban Kansas City Friday afternoon and Naperville Neuqua Valley on Saturday at Lou Fusz Soccer Park. And looking ahead, Smith knows that anything can happen.

“Absolutely,” Smith said. “Like I said, week two, and I told them in 2014 we came here and we beat (Edwardsville) 1-0, and then we met them in the sectional, and they beat us 4-0. So that goes to show you that a lot can change between here and there.”

And as for Federmann, she's very happy with the way her team kept battling throughout the match.

“I'm just really proud of my girls for coming in here and playing not only 80 minutes, but 100 minutes really tough,” Federmann said. “I'm proud of my bench coming off and giving minutes and doing what they needed to to support their team.”







[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)