

Marquette Catholic's soccer team battles to close loss to Columbia

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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COLUMBIA - For 70 minutes against the Columbia Eagles, the Marquette Catholic Explorers were the better team.

They attempted more shots, created an ample amount of opportunities and most importantly had a 2-1 lead. Alas, in the final ten minutes the Explorers were second best to the Eagles.

They tied and retook the lead within two minutes in the 73rd minute of the game to stun Marquette in Columbia during their senior night on Tuesday.

The Explorers lose their second and final game of the regular season. They fall to 15-2-4.

“I thought we moved the ball really well and not with just two guys. Sometimes six guys,” Marquette head coach Joe Burchett said. “We could move the ball around one and two-touch quickly and find these little avenues. We didn’t finish, but sometimes you watch and say that’s beautiful. The vision was there.”

The Eagles, who previously lost 1-0 to Marquette in the CYC Tournament over a week ago, avenge their loss and improve to 18-3-3.

“very dangerous right up the middle,” Columbia head coach Jason Mathenia said. “We wanted to make sure we got out wide and try to attack more outside as opposed to in the middle and go from there. All three goals were created from an out wide area.”

“did a good job,” Burchett said. “They played us before. This is not new to them. They were much more stingy than the first time we played them even though it was a 1-0 game.”

Alex Barton proved to a huge difference maker for the Eagles.

In the 16th minute, he fouled in the 18-yard box and earned a penalty kick, which he took and slotted the ball past Nick Hemann to put Columbia on top 1-0. In the final ten minutes of the game, he assisted the tying and game-winning goals to Brad Meyer and Brandon Hall.

“He was very dangerous all over the field,” Mathenia said. “He’s typically not our guy to take a pk, but he earned it, and I had confidence in him. He creates both of the two goals. He had one hell of a night tonight.”

Despite having the majority of possession and chances before the goal, Marquette then faced a couple of waves of Columbia attacks but would find a way back.

With just over ten minutes to go in the first half, defender Kwame Ngwa burst down the left side and whipped in a cross towards the center of the box. A Columbia defender and goalkeeper Alec Venhaus had a misunderstanding in not covering or clearing the ball, which allowed Trent Dietiker to swoop in and poke the ball away from the two and walk it into an empty net to tie the game at 1-1.

In the 60th minute, the Explorers took the lead.

Aaron Boulch collected a pass in midfield and sprinted down the right wing. He then crossed a perfect pass into the box where Brett Terry was there to the knee the ball into the goal.

Marquette and Columbia are both placed in the IHSA Class 2A Bethalto Regional. Marquette owns the one seed and Columbia the two seed. If the Explorers can make it to the regional finals, Burchett hopes they'll be able to meet the Eagles there as well.

“It would be good if we can meet again,” Burchett said. “Jason’s a good coach. is a good program year after year. To move along anywhere, you’re going to have to play Columbia some time.”







