

Emma Tell's Brace, Including Match Winner In 69th Minute, Gives Althoff 3-2 Win Over Marquette In IHSA Class 1A Supersectional

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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COLUMBIA - Emma Tell had a brace (two goals) for Belleville Althoff Catholic, including the match-winner in the 69th minute, as the Crusaders defeated Marquette Catholic 3-2 in the IHSA Class 1A girls soccer super-sectional match played Tuesday night at Columbia High School.

Althoff advances to the state finals with the win, and will play Friday morning in the semifinals at Hoffman Estates High School in northwest suburban Chicago.

The Explorers held a 2-1 lead after a goal in the second half, but the Crusaders struck back quickly to level the scores before Tell's winner.

"Well, I'll tell you, I don't know how good I felt," said Marquette head coach Brian Hoener. "I knew we were up by a goal, but I knew how good Althoff was, and how dangerous they were. So you never really get an opportunity to exhale. I kept on telling our girls there's a lot of soccer, keep playing, gotta keep playing, gotta keep playing. And Althoff's a great team; and that's what great teams do, they respond. They found themselves behind, had a little adversity and they responded really well. We kept on trying, and we kept on trying, we just couldn't breakthrough. Althoff's really dangerous when they go forward, they've got multiple girls that can be goal scorers, and I think that showed tonight. So it's disappointing, it's frustrating. I tip my cap to Althoff, I wish

them the best of luck later this weekend. They're a fantastic team, well-coached and they play extremely hard.

"But I couldn't be more proud of my girls," Hoener continued. "It was a difficult circumstance tonight, and I thought they battled. Somebody has to lose in these games, but it wasn't because of a lack of effort for us. We just couldn't find the play, or that it slipped away."

The Explorers were able to keep one of Althoff's top scorers, Regan Moody, off the scoresheet, but other Crusader players came to the rescue.

"Yeah, Moody didn't score, but they've still got (Kylie) Petroski, they've still got (Tori) Calvert, they've still got (Julia) O'Neill. So, yeah, it's great keeping her off the scoreboard, but that's what makes them so dangerous. They have other players that can come in and make plays, and you saw that tonight. So when you get one person in a critical situation, you still have to compete against the other ones, and they're good enough to make plays, which you saw tonight."

Hoener gave Tell credit for being in the right place at the right time to score the goals that helped Althoff advance.

"Soccer, baseball, hockey, any other sport," Hoener said. "Sometimes you catch a break, but then, you make your own breaks, too. And you've got to be in the right spot and anticipate things, you've got to work hard to get into the right spot. And that's what really good teams do, and like I said, we couldn't find the right spot sometimes, we had a couple more kicks where the ball was bouncing around, which is where you'd love to find the ball where it was, and they did. And that's sports sometimes. That's why only one team can advance, and that's Althoff tonight."

Marquette was able to equalize in the first half after giving up the opening goal, and was able to seize the momentum going into the interval.

"Late in the first half, after we scored, I thought that last 15 minutes, we played the way we wanted to play," Hoener said. "The girls fed off that energy, and I really liked the way we closed out the first half. We had a tough time keeping up with them in the second half."

The Crusaders were able to regroup during halftime, and took back control in the second half, although the Explorers were able to take the lead.

"We were tired, but I just felt we had them on their heels at that particular point," Hoener said, "but again, they went in, they regrouped and they came back. I thought

they took it to us a little bit in the second half, and we were unable to sustain that last 15 minutes we had in the first half, and we never really got a hold of that in the second half. Even when we went up by a goal, I still felt like we were trying to get in our game a little bit."

The Crusaders took the lead after 26 minutes on Tell's first goal of the game, but the Explorers equalized after 31 minutes from Aela Scruggs and went into the interval level at 1-1. Marquette then went ahead in the 53rd minute when Claire Antrainer scored on a rocket from just outside the box to give the Explorers the lead at 2-1. The Crusaders then equalized at 2-2 on a goal from Petroski in the 56th minute, then got Tell's winner in the 69th minute to go up 3-2. The Explorers could never get another equalizer, and Althoff took the win to advance to state.

Althoff is now 20-2-0 and will play in the Class 1A semifinals against West Chicago Wheaton Academy, who defeated Princeton 5-0 in the Mendota super-sectional on Monday, in the first semifinal Friday morning at 11 a.m. The winner will play the winner of the second semifinal between Quincy Notre Dame Catholic and Elmhurst Timothy Christian for the championship Saturday afternoon at 2 p.m., while the semifinal losers play at Palatine Fremd High in the third and fourth place playoff at 10 a.m. Saturday morning.

The Explorers end their season at 13-7-1, but Hoener is very proud of his team and their efforts all season long.

"We felt like, and I think we proved it, that I feel like when we play our game, we can play with anybody," Hoener said. "So we felt like we had a good chance tonight, and our girls are as disappointed as anybody. But they're also proud. I think they're proud of the season they had, the sectional championship for the first time in five years, and it's something we can hang our hats on. We're not going to state, and that's disappointing, but we're happy with the effort and the quality of soccer we tried to play. As you saw in the last 15 minutes of the first half, when we move the ball, I think we play pretty good soccer."





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