



# Marquette Catholic Captures City Championship Boys Soccer Match 3-1 Over Alton High

by Nathan Tucker  
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ALTON - Marquette boys soccer continued their winning ways Monday night, with a 3-1 city championship victory over their cross-town rivals, the Alton Redbirds. A lively atmosphere with fans from both sides flocking the touchlines at Field 4 at Gordon Moore Park, and the emotions spilled onto the turf.

“This was a highly emotional game,” Marquette head coach Jerry Disalvo said following the victory for his side. “Not many games we’ve played have been as affected by emotion as this one. We went from playing a very structured soccer game into almost a one-on-one battle, where they were just going out there and playing. It was a very friendly game, but highly, highly emotional.”

Marquette opened the scoring off a corner kick 15 minutes into the first half, as the rebound fell to Myles Paniagua after an initial save by the Alton goalkeeper. For much of the first half, and the game as a whole, Marquette dictated possession of the ball, not giving Alton much room to create an attack.

Alton equalized with ten minutes left in the first half as a costly mistake by the Explorer defensive line, an errant backpass pounced on by Alton striker Connor Wieckhorst, left the Marquette goalkeeper Preston Stork stranded. Marquette answered minutes later with Dre Davis slotting home a penalty and took a 2-1 lead into the halftime break.

“(The fans) changed what our players did, it didn’t change what I wanted them to do.” Disalvo chuckled a bit, probably wanting a bit more of a structured contest. “A lot of these players grew up together, they know us, and the fans grew up together. We got into what was kind of a basketball match that just went from end-to-end.”

The fans continued exchanging chants through the contest, a true rivalry feel in the air at Gordon Moore Park for this first Alton City Championship matchup in the regular season and in Alton for five years. The teams last met three years ago at a tournament at St. Louis Soccer Park, now named WorldWide Technology Soccer Park, where Marquette took a 5-0 victory.

The lone goal of the second half came from an absolute thunderbolt from Explorer winger Jude Keller, who cut inside across the Alton defense and fired from outside the box, beating Aiden Belchik and lasering into the top corner of the goal. Marquette dictated possession following the third goal, but despite their pressing was kept at bay by the Alton defense.

“We played into their hands,” Disalvo noted. “Playing a one-on-one game, they’re just as athletic as we are. If we were able to play in our style, and our system, I think the game would have been a little bit different. In the second half, versus the first half, instead of going up the middle so much, we adjusted and started going out wide. We had a lot more opportunities, didn’t capitalize on them, but we were playing a better style. That’s what we’ve been doing these last four or five games, is playing that style. Tonight we kind of let that go.”

Both the Alton Redbirds and Marquette Explorers soccer teams are hosting non-conference action on Tuesday. The Redbirds face St. Louis' Collegiate School of Medicine and Bioscience at Public School Stadium, and the Explorers host the Highland Bulldogs at Gordon Moore Park.

Marquette improves to 9-6-1, while Alton is now 0-13-0.



