

# Explorers Top Lancers - Win Fifth Straight To Cap Off Regular Season And Senior Night

by Bradley Piros, Reporter  
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ALTON – The Marquette Catholic High School boys soccer team improved to 16-5 as they capped off their regular season with a thrilling 2-1 win over a very good Belleville East team. The Explorers did so in front of a packed house at Gordon Moore Park as they celebrated Senior Night.



The game seemed to be all Lancers in the early going as they had most of the possession and scoring opportunities in the opening 15 minutes.

Marquette got into the groove though and started having some chances of their own and they were the ones to break the tie.

In the 30<sup>th</sup> minute, sophomore midfielder Quinn Copeland took a pass from senior forward Myles Paniagua and slotted it perfectly past the keeper into the bottom-side netting. His sixth goal of the season made it 1-0 Explorers. They held that lead into halftime.

Belleville East was resilient and scored a scrappy goal in the 53<sup>rd</sup> minute to tie things back up.

They may have gotten a little cocky and caught up in their celebrations because right after the Explorers' kick-off, they flew downfield and regained the lead.

This time it was Paniagua who ran onto a through ball. He collided awkwardly with the goalie but got enough of the ball to end up in the back of the net. It was his 31<sup>st</sup> goal of the season.

From that point on it was mainly Marquette. They had some more good looks to close out the game but never tacked another one on the board.

It was just East's fifth loss of the season as they currently sit second in the Southwestern Conference.

Marquette finished the season 2-3 against SWC opponents with losses against O'Fallon (10-7-2), Edwardsville (13-5-2), and Alton (7-12). Their two wins came over Granite City back on September 12<sup>th</sup> and now Belleville East.

Now with the regular season behind them, the Explorers look to get ready for playoffs.

"This is not only postseason talent, but it was a postseason atmosphere," Marquette head coach Brian Hoener said postgame. "You're up by a goal late in the game, how do you manage it," he said. "We did a good job. We can do a few things better and we'll work on those in practice the next couple of days."

"Heading into the postseason, this is the kind of challenge you want and I'm happy with the way we responded," Hoener finished with.



The Explorers will get their playoffs started on Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> when they take on the Jerseyville Panthers (8-13) in the Class 2A Regional Semifinals. That game will kick off at 7 p.m. and will be played at Triad.

The two teams have not played one another this season.