

Granite City Stays Perfect After Big Win Over Visiting Triad Knights

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
March 27 2023 10:03 PM



GRANITE CITY – The last time the Granite City High School girl's soccer team started the season 4-0 was back in 2017. They're doing it again now.

The Warriors kept their perfect season alive with a well-earned 4-1 win over the Triad Knights Monday night.

Granite City got off to a quick start and went ahead 2-0 within 20 minutes thanks to goals from senior captains Peyton Hatfield and Ella Hickam.

“The girls really wanted it,” Granite City head coach Ken Prazma said.

“We had a good talk with them before the game. They seemed like they were excited. We knew Triad the last few years has had our number. We knew coach Bettlach is always going to put out a quality team and we knew we had to come out and play strong, and they did.”

Senior forward Emmi Hogan tripled the lead when she ran onto a well-placed through ball in the 26th minute and slotted the goal home comfortably.

The Warriors took a 3-0 lead into halftime. The last time Triad trailed by three goals at halftime was in May of 2015 en route to a 5-0 loss to Collinsville.

Triad nailed one back though in the 50th minute from a corner kick, but still never got much momentum in the second half.

“You can see the frustration in their eyes and on their faces and, you know, they’re working hard, they’re just not getting on the other end of anything right now,” Triad head coach Matt Bettlach said following his team’s fourth loss of the season.

“Credit to Granite City though, the way they played, fast, physical, not allowing us to set anything up possession wise and I don’t think we handled that well. We didn’t respond well,” Bettlach added.

“We had moments where we looked good and had some pressure, just not enough tonight,” he finished.

The Warriors put the final nail in the coffin thanks to junior forward Madison Vasiloff’s wicked goal in the dying minutes. The ball came toward her bouncing awkwardly, but she hit it on the half-volley and curled a shot up and over the Triad goalkeeper into the upper left corner to make it 4-1.

She didn’t know what to think of the goal after the game.

“I was just hoping it would go in,” Vasiloff said with a chuckle.

She’s now got six goals in four games after a hattrick last Saturday in a 3-1 win over Althoff Catholic.

This unprecedented start does not come to the surprise of coach Stanza and his players.

“No, not really,” Prazma said with confidence. “I knew in the back of my mind the girls are dangerous. It was just whether or not our defense was going to come out and play and be strong.”

The Granite City defense has only allowed two goals in four games.

“Absolutely not,” Vasiloff said when asked about being surprised at all. “The girls from the very beginning have been super excited to start the season. We have a big senior class, so everyone’s excited about that, the environment is just great.”

The style that the Warriors play is intense, organized, and direct. Everyone has a role to play, and everyone does their job.

The team’s three captains, Vasiloff, Hatfield, and Hickam, as well as others surrounding them like Hogan, Claire Thurmond, and Savanhna Khammanyvong are all great examples of two-way players, meaning that they are just as good defensively as they are offensively.

Granite gave Triad fits all night by tracking back and catching the Knights unexpectedly.

“We have strong midfielders, exciting wing-mids and forwards. When everybody’s working and playing their game, without getting their heads down, no matter the mistakes they make, they play hard and when we keep possession of the ball, we’re as dangerous as any team,” Prazma said.

“It’s a pleasure watching them play,” he added.

The Warriors will look to make it five in a row on Thursday, March 30, when they host Breese Central at 5 p.m.

AS for the Knights, they continue Mississippi Valley Conference play against Mascoutah on Thursday with a 5:45 p.m. kick-off.

