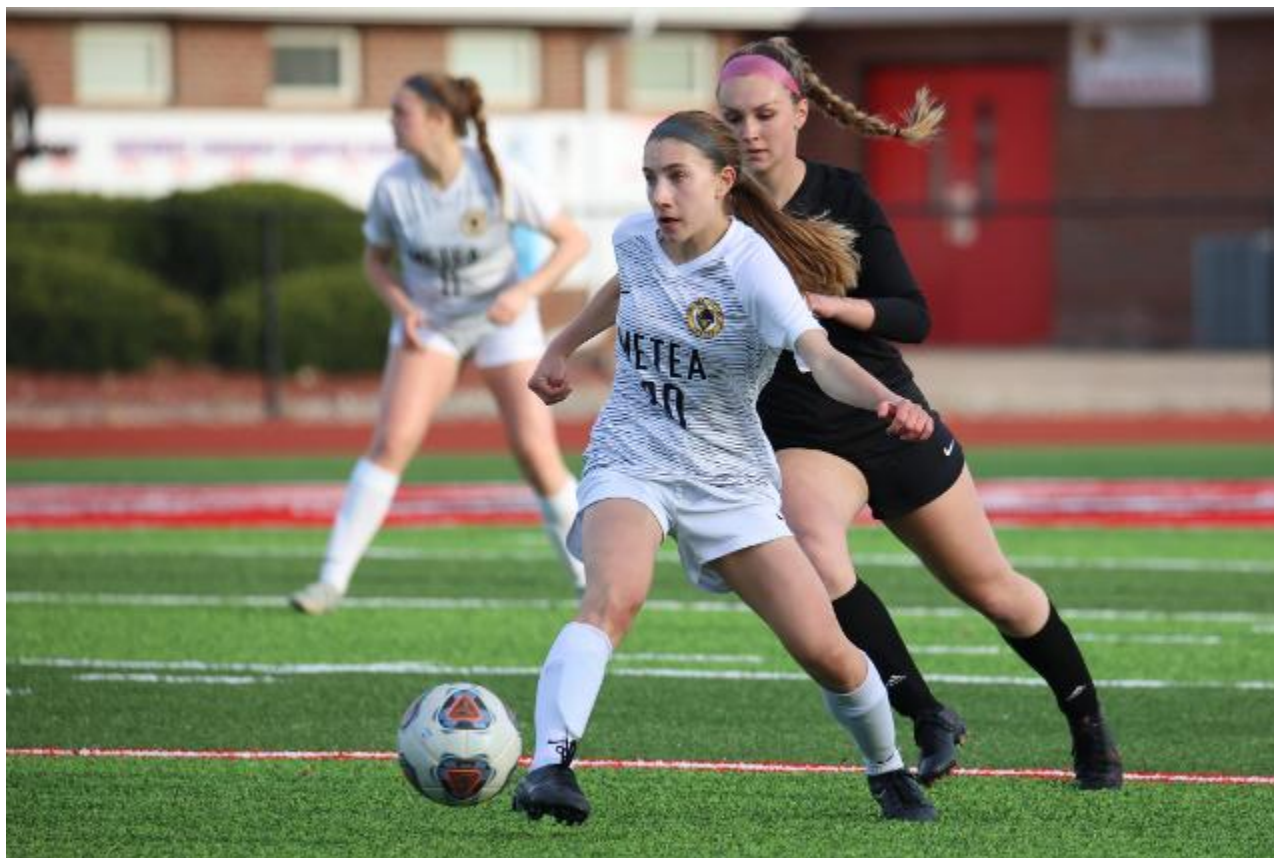


Warriors Suffer First Loss Against Defending State Champs Metea Valley

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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GRANITE CITY - The Granite City High School girl's soccer team's perfect start to the season was put to the test Friday night when Metea Valley came to town.

The Mustangs came down to the greater St. Louis region for a trifecta of games. The defending IHSA Class 3A state champions out of Aurora played out to a scoreless draw against Nerinx Hall of Webster Groves, Missouri Thursday night.

Metea Valley improved to 5-0-2 on the season after a close 2-1 win over the Warriors in a game between two state-ranked teams. According to the latest Max Preps rankings from April 6, Granite City was ranked No. 8 while Metea Valley was No. 14.

It was the Warriors' first loss of the season as they now sit at 6-1.



The teams traded quality chances in the first 15 minutes. First, Metea Valley's Tyra King squared a ball up for teammate Lucy Burk, but she ran onto the ball a little awkwardly and put it wide.

Granite had a chance when Savanhna Khammanyvong put a dangerous cross into the six-yard box, but nothing came of the chance in the end.

Then, Granite did something they haven't yet this season, trailed a soccer game.

Jordan Lange made it 1-0 Mustangs in the 16th minute after flying by a couple of defenders, cutting in toward the middle of the field, and letting her shot go from right around the 18-yard box. She slotted the ball into the bottom left corner to give her team the lead.

The Warriors had only allowed two goals through six games heading into this one. Coming from behind is not something they have had to do, but they sure tried.

Just a few minutes later Khammanyvong made a similar move up the field, but she put the ball into the upper right corner leaving Mustangs goalkeeper Alyssa Gluting with not much to do about it. Her fifth goal of the season tied the game back up at 1-1 and that's how things stood heading into halftime.



Granite City head coach Ken Prazma was pleased with his team's response following Metea Valley's opening goal.

“I’m extremely happy. I knew we were going to get some chances. It’s hard to hold the girls back as good as they are offensively,” he said.

“I told the girls beforehand, when we’re playing a team like this, you have to think about being down at some point. As long as you keep your heads high and play your game, you’ll be fine, and they did.”

Metea Valley’s Lily Senese thought she scored in the 26th minute, but it was ruled offside.

The Warriors played at their best during the first 20 minutes of the second half and were knocking on the door for a go-ahead goal that never came.

Instead, the Mustangs fought back and earned the lead.

They were awarded a free kick in a tempting position, right outside the 18-yard box. Daniela Tammasini took the direct kick, putting a shot on goal that needed saving.

Granite’s goalkeeper Alivia Upshaw made a quality save to push the ball over the crossbar and out of bounds. Unfortunately, Metea Valley would score on the ensuing corner kick.

The ball was whipped into the box and bounced around with the Warriors unable to get a clearance. Instead, Burk found the ball and knocked it in to take the lead at 2-1 with 15 minutes left to play.

After that goal Granite still didn’t fold, but they also wouldn’t have another good offensive spell, rather just some kick and chase that didn’t amount to much.

With the outcome, coach Prazma was still generally pleased with his side’s performance.



“I told the girls I thought we played well,” he said.

“It’s a little tough to score goals when you can’t get ahold of it; our offense just didn’t click tonight.”

A Granite City team that scores on average 3.5 goals per game, was held to just one by a stout Metea Valley back line.

“All around I thought it was a good game. A 2-1 loss to Metea Valley isn’t too shabby,” Prazma added.

The Warriors will get a rather long break before playing again on the road at Columbia (7-1-2) on Thursday, April 13. They will then take part in a tournament across the river where they’ll take on Cor Jesu, Incarnate Word, and St. Joseph’s all out of St. Louis.