

Ayran's Late Equalizer Sees Triad Close Regular Season With 1-1 Draw To Collinsville

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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TROY – The Triad Knights closed their regular season with a 1-1 draw against the visiting Collinsville Kahoks Saturday afternoon.

Triad ends regularly scheduled play with an 11-7-3 record and 9-1 in Mississippi Valley Conference action.

Saturday's non-conference game against Class 3A Collinsville (3-10-5) proved tougher than expected for the Knights. The Kahoks looked like a much better team than their record suggests and came into the game against Triad off of a good 2-0 win over the Alton Redbirds.

Triad had won five-straight heading into Saturday.

Not much went on in the opening half hour, with neither team having a great opportunity on goal.

The tie was broken in the 32nd minute.

After the Triad defense turned the ball over, the Kahoks took control right inside the 18-yard box. A ball was eventually passed in perfectly toward senior midfielder Jordan Gary. She hit a shot first time, picking out the bottom left corner to make it 1-0. It was her sixth goal of the season.

The goal sucked the energy out of Triad for the remainder of the half and the opening 20 minutes or so of the second.

Around the 64th minute, Triad began to turn the page when freshman London Looby's shot was saved by Collinsville freshman goalie Karly VanDyke.

Senior defender Jackie Barkus' shot was saved by VanDyke minutes later.

The Knights had all the momentum at this point and predominantly had the ball in the inside Collinsville's half.



Senior midfielder Laney Harshany performed a few of her patented flip throw-ins that led to some chances, but Collinsville's defense was standing tall.

Junior midfielder Hannah Sparks drilled the crossbar in the 76th minute from about 25 yards out.

Triad finally found the back of the net in the 78th minute when Harshany slipped a ball through the Kahoks' defense to sophomore forward Alina Ayrán. She had to put the ball around the charging VanDyke, but it wasn't a problem for Ayrán to draw her team level with only minutes left.

Ayrán, making her return since dealing with a concussion, left the game Saturday for some time after taking a throw-in to the back of the head. She would return to get the equalizer, her 10th goal of the season, which leads her team.

For Triad head coach Matt Bettlach, he wishes his team didn't wait so long.

"We don't want to put ourselves in that situation," he said.

"I felt like we waited too long at points. Probably our best soccer was in those last 15 minutes."

This game was similar to the Knights' last home game against MVC rival Civic Memorial, a game that went to halftime scoreless before Triad figured it out and put six unanswered in the net.

Obviously, the goal was to get a win and head into the playoffs with six straight, but it wasn't meant to be for the Knights that end a regular season that saw much adversity.

"The way we started this season wasn't something we were used to; and from where we were then and where we are now, we wanted to keep that going. We wanted to end on a high note," Bettlach said.

He added that with the tie, his team is ending it more on a "medium note."

Not the result Bettlach and the girls were looking for, but there are still some good things to come for Triad.

The Knights get to host their own regional, beginning on Tuesday, May 16. Triad, who earned the No. 1 seed in its respected Sub-Sectional, will host the No. 6 seeded Jersey Panthers at 4:30 p.m.

Should the Knights win, they'll await the winner between No. 4 Mascoutah and No. 5 Highland for the Regional Finals on Friday, May 19 at 6 p.m.