

# Triad Beats Waterloo Dramatically After Penalties - Knights Lift Fourth Sectional Title In Five Years

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MASCOUTAH – As the sun set at Mascoutah High School Friday evening, the clock struck zero after regulation with the Triad Knights and Waterloo Bulldogs tied up at 1-1.

The game went into two 10-minute overtime periods and the clock once again struck zero, still tied.

After 100 hard-fought minutes, a penalty kick shootout decided the IHSA Class 2A Marion Sectional Final.

It was the Knights who scored every time they stepped up to the spot, going on to win the shootout 4-1. Senior goalkeeper Tavey Duncan recorded two saves for the Knights during PKs and got a hand on the other, nearly saving it as well.

“I was pretty confident going into them,” Duncan said of the shootout. “It was a little nerve-wracking, but I was trying to keep myself calm the whole time.”

“Tavey was nervous; I could tell,” Triad head coach Matt Bettlach said. “The girls were over there calming her down.”

Being Triad’s first PK shootout in two seasons, they didn’t show any nerves.

Seniors Laney Harshany Caty Burton, Jackie Barkus, and Abigail Schaft each scored their penalties, in that order.

Coach Bettlach mentioned that those four girls didn’t come off the field much if at all that game and surely had some tired legs.

“For them to bury those was pretty impressive,” he said.

Burton said that every day after practice each player takes two PKs while Bettlach keeps a running tally. Whoever scores the most in practice gets to take them during the game. She went second and did not hesitate.

A game regularly scheduled to be played in Marion was moved to a much closer neutral site and saw a great turnout from both sides. Those fans got to watch a good one.

The first half saw 40 minutes of intense, end-to-end soccer, but no real great looks on goal. Triad’s first opportunity came late in the half when a shot from distance skimmed off the top of the crossbar and out of play. The game’s first shot on goal didn’t come until the 38<sup>th</sup> minute from Triad with the game heading into halftime tied.

Coming back, Triad had a great chance when senior forward Gabbie Wood’s shot just barely went wide.

Waterloo soon had its first shot on goal in the 48<sup>th</sup> minute.

The back-and-forth nature continued with Triad looking to connect on a through pass, stretching out Waterloo's back line and trying to get in behind them.

The constant pressure finally succeeded, and the game was busted open.

It was Burton who broke the deadlock in the 64<sup>th</sup> minute. She took a tumble after getting pushed off the ball, but bounced right back up and won it back. When she regained possession, she took a look toward goal and let one go from about 25 yards out into the upper right corner.

It was her fourth goal in as many postseason games. She is one of the team's leading goal scorers with 13 now on the season.

The game continued to go end to end with the Bulldogs throwing everything they had at Triad. It eventually worked.

In the 76<sup>th</sup> minute, Waterloo tied the game thanks to senior defender Norah Gum's goal. After senior goalie Lexi Stephens booted a freekick upfield, the ball bounced around Triad's six-yard box before finally being put in by Gum.

"The way that game was going it could've gone either way," Bettlach said.

"One of the things we talked about was if we leave in the game for long enough, they are going to find a way, and they found a way."

They ultimately came up just short in the shootout, ending the Bulldogs' season at 17-5-2.

During the regular season, the two teams split their meetings. Waterloo won 1-0 back on April 4 and Triad returned the favor with a 2-1 win on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

This was the third straight season meeting in the Sectional Final. In the last two years, the Knights won 1-0 each time en route to winning back-to-back state titles.

During last year's 25-1 campaign from the Knights, Waterloo was the only team to beat them, by a score of 2-0 back on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

The schools have brewed quite a rivalry, one that the Knights look forward to.

"It's memorable," Burton said.

“No matter how good we play, no matter how good they play, it’s always a battle. We could have the worst game of our life; they could have the best game of their life and I swear it will always be tied. No team ever walks out with a big victory, that’s just how it is,” Burton added.

With this one behind them now, the Knights have improved to 15-7-3 on the season and are into the Super Sectionals on Tuesday, May 30 at 5 p.m.

The Knights will be taking on Chatham Glenwood (19-4-1), who beat Rochester by a score of 1-0 in their Sectional Final.

“They’re good,” Bettlach said of his team’s upcoming opposition.

“Chatham is a very skilled team, and they are very fast and physical, and to go up there and play against them is even tougher. This will be a tough one for sure. They’re the real deal.”

