

Roxana captures East Alton-Wood River Tourney championship

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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It took a couple of days, but for Roxana's girls soccer side, it was worth it.

The Shells defeated Mascoutah 2-0 Saturday morning in what turned out to be the championship match of the East Alton-Wood River Oiler Classic tournament, a match that had started Thursday evening but was abandoned at halftime with the Shells holding a 1-0 lead and severe storms nearing the Wood River Soccer Park. The match was resumed under clear skies and cool but comfortable temperatures Saturday.

For Shell coach Lori Yates, it was a relief finally clinching the title after having to wait to finish the match.

“We went out and got it done,” Yates said. “We had some momentum at halftime when the referees stopped the match, and I was nervous all day yesterday waiting to get started again.

“We talked with the team before the game and today and emphasized a couple of things, and we were much better in this half than we were in the first half. Our communication and our defense were on; it was things I knew had in ourselves and we showed it here.”

The Shells had led on a first-half goal by Niah Bevelo before the match was stopped, but they seemingly picked up right where they left off when play resumed. The Shells had the better of the play early on and it didn't take long for them to score again, with Brynn Huddleston picked up the ball near the edge of the penalty area and lofted a high shot that got past the Indian goalkeeper and into the back of the net for a 2-0 lead.

In fact, Roxana's defensive effort was excellent throughout the tournament; the Shells only conceded one goal in the three matches they played, and Yates credited the play of senior sweeper Miranda Cunningham for their success.

“Miranda's a rock back on the defensive end for us,” Yates said. “Our goaltender, Sam Hurst, is also solid back there; you have to earn your goals against her because she's not going to give them up easily.”

The Shells continually bottled up Mascoutah chances throughout the half and Yates was pleased with the effort.

“I'm very proud of the girls,” Yates said.

Roxana returns to action with a 4:30 p.m. home match against Beardstown Tuesday.



