

Griffins Lose First Conference Test Against Althoff

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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GLEN CARBON – Ask Father McGivney boys soccer head coach Matt McVicar and he'll tell you he's glad that Althoff Catholic joined the Gateway Metro Conference.

“We want tougher competition,” he said.

“We don't want games where it's 11-0, it doesn't benefit anybody. You're only going to get better by playing better competition.”

While meaning no disrespect to the GMC, it's a matter of fact that the Griffins beat Metro-East Lutheran by scores of 11-0 and 9-2 last season. To his credit, that doesn't help either school.

Welcome the Crusaders to the conversation, the Class 1A state runners-up a season ago, a team that boasted a 27-2 record to cap off the year.

There's your competition.

While the Crusaders graduated 11 seniors, they returned a lot and showed that they are still going to be a force to be reckoned with on Monday afternoon on the turf at McGivney High.

After a scoreless first half, it was actually the Griffins who struck first in the 45th minute. After doing most of the heavy lifting, Lucas Roedl managed to fend off a defender with a nice turn before putting a cross into the box. The ball bobbed out to the edge of the 18-yard box but was put back in toward Tyler Ahring who got a touch on it into the back of the net to make it 1-0.

Unfortunately for the Griffins, they were unable to hang on to the lead for very long. In the 52nd minute, Luke Smith scored and in the 73rd minute Aiden Welch netted the game-winner as the Crusaders came all the way back for the 2-1 win.

"Nobody wants to lose, but I'm very proud of how the boys fought," McVicar said. "We scored first and just have to have better composure after that. We have to realize that we belong here, and we have to keep control of the ball."

Monday's game began to get a little edgy, with both teams talking a little trash and putting in plenty of hard tackles.

"I think it's always been that way," McVicar said about the two Catholic schools locking up. "That's another reason it's a good addition to the conference, it's just a good rivalry."

McGivney's team finished 15-8-6 last year and graduated five seniors including their starting goalie, two of their three leading scorers, and their star central midfielder.

But, by no means does that make this season a rebuilding one.

For the Griffins, it's just the next-man-up mentality according to their coach.

McGivney's tough stretch of opposition continues immediately when they head to Troy to take on the Triad Knights on Tuesday evening at 6 p.m.

Triad, who are 2-0 on the year already, had impressive wins over Southwestern Conference giants Collinsville by a score of 4-1 and O'Fallon by a 7-1 scoreline.

"It's another true test for us," McVicar said. "It's not going to get any easier, but it's going to make us better."