

Marquette Soccer Still Has Things To Figure Out But Roll To 4-0 Win Over Shells

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ROXANA - The Marquette Catholic boys soccer team felt as if they were a little bit behind schedule.

After a grueling heat wave followed by plenty of showers canceled most of the season-opening Metro Cup Showcase, the Explorers found themselves kicking their season off a week later than anticipated.

For a team that graduated 10 seniors, seven or eight of them starters, head coach Brian Hoener would've liked to have that time back.

"We're still trying to figure out roles," Hoener said. "We're still trying to figure out what people can do, what people can't do and that's part of the other challenge of not playing last week."

"We're still a week behind as far as trying to figure things out," he continued. "There's only a handful of kids that have really seen varsity minutes on the roster. There's a lot of guys getting into the game for the first time."

That could be seen Wednesday afternoon when Marquette defeated the Roxana Shells by a score of 4-0 at Norman Lewis Field.

Nearly 30 minutes went by before the Explorers found the back of the net, mainly due to the fact that Roxana's goalkeeper, senior Aiden Stassi, was unstoppable in the first half.

Three goals in the final 12 minutes of the half would seal Roxana's fate.

Senior midfielder Ryan Glasner scored twice with the other two goals coming from sophomore midfielder Maicol Gonzalez and senior defender Max Silver.

Assists came from Chris Hankins, Caleb Harties, and Justin Fears while Marquette keeper Will Fahnestock earned his second straight shutout.

Glasner broke the tie in the 28th minute with a nice half-volley shot from right around the edge of the 18-yard box. The game's highlight goal came in the 33rd minute from Gonzalez. After running onto a perfect through ball he used his speed to get around a defender before cutting in on his right foot toward goal and bending a shot in the back post side netting. A few minutes later, Silver scored on a long effort that went just over Stasis's head, from at least 30 yards out to go ahead 3-0.

Klasner's second goal came with 1:28 left in the game to get to the eventual final scoreline.

This was a game that Marquette won 10-0 a season ago, so they were heading into this one with a bit higher expectations.

"I felt we were sluggish," Honer said. "I don't think we were very sharp."

"I know we played last night (a 2-0 win over Gibault), but that's no excuse. Give Roxana credit, they were really organized defensively, and their goalkeeper was fantastic throughout the entire 80 minutes, but I thought we could have been sharper in the offensive third. We have some things to work on in regards to creating opportunities and finishing, but we'll take the result."

Things are changing for Marquette. Losing 10 seniors aside, the Explorers were bumped back down to Class 1A and also have a new addition to the Gateway Metro Conference in which they play. Althoff Catholic, a team that finished 27-2 and Class 1A state runners-up now resides in the GMC.

But the Explorers are only worried about what they can control.

"We're going to have to beat some teams. Columbia, Father McGivney are still in there, but right now we're more worried about ourselves and trying to get better," Hoener said.

Last season Althoff beat Columbia by a score of 3-0 in the sectional championship.

For Roxana, they open up the season to an 0-3 record but don't mind the competition.

"That's why we have them (Marquette)," Roxana head coach James Futrell said. "We keep them (on the schedule) every year to keep us honest and see the best teams. We do everything we can to get prepared for the postseason, that's what matters."

When asked about what went wrong Wednesday afternoon, Futrell noted his team's experience.

"I think overall experience. We're lacking that in a few positions, but our goalkeeper shined today. He kept us in it," Futrell said.

Overall, he was happy with the way his team played for the majority of the match.

"We played 30 minutes of scoreless soccer in the first half and 38 minutes of scoreless soccer in the second. And against this group of guys, with Brian as their coach, they've got a great group of competitive players."