

Lewis and Clark Community College soccer teams advance to regional finals

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Lewis and Clark Community College men's and women's soccer teams are playing this weekend in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division 1 Region Finals.

On Wednesday, the L&C men's soccer team defeated SWIC 5-0. Sophomore goalkeeper, Nick Johnson of St. Charles, Missouri kept the four shots made against the Trailblazers at bay, giving him the shut-out.

Freshman, Blake Cearn's of Australia led the team offensively with four goals in the first half of the game. Fellow Australian, Lochlan Reus had two assists and the final goal of the game. Michael Longo, of Quincy, Illinois, and Brendan Mann, of O'Fallon, Missouri, each had an assist helping the Trailblazers secure the win.

"I think the five to nothing win for the men over SWIC is so impressive mainly because the games in the past they have been so close. There are a lot of dominant players on the team this year. It looks good for them to win the region," said Doug Stotler, L&C Athletic Director. "Rooney has them rested and primed to win the region."

The next game for the men's team will be against the #2 seed in the Region 24 tournament, Illinois Central College on Saturday, Oct. 31, at noon in the L&C soccer stadium. This game will advance the winner to the NJCAA Division 1 National Championship Tournament in Axton, Virginia, Nov. 16-21.

"We have been playing really solid and improving with every game," said Tim Rooney, L&C men and women's head soccer coach. "They are playing well on both sides of the ball, but we are going to have to be at our best to beat ICC."

The men's soccer team has been strong all year with a 15-3-1 record. Reus is leading the NJCAA Division 1 in goal assists.

The L&C women's soccer team won their semifinals game against SWIC 2-1 on Thursday, Oct. 29, advancing them into the finals. The #1 seeded Trailblazers will play the #2 seed Parkland College for the Region 24 Finals on Sunday, Nov. 1, at noon in the L&C soccer stadium.

The winner of that game will advance to the district finals. The winner of the district finals will advance to the National Championship Tournament in Melbourne, Florida that is held Nov. 16-21.

"I think we have a good chance against Parkland. Both teams are pretty good and it is going to be who plays the best that day," Rooney said.

The Trailblazers took an early lead against SWIC with a goal scored by Kayley Hill of Florissant, Missouri but the SWIC offence fired back with goal, tying the game. The game was physical, but Nicole Howard, of Rolla, Missouri, was able to make the game-winning goal in the second half for the Trailblazers despite being heavily defended.

“I think we played okay in the first half, but they stepped it up in the second half with better ball energy and movement,” Rooney said.

The women’s team has had a strong season with a 13-2-2 record and racking up 95 goals over 17 games. Nicole Howard is leading the NJCAA Division 1 in points and goals. Freshman Trailblazer, Cassidy Foley of Quincy, Illinois, is leading the nation in assists.

“The women have been tested and won a lot of close games this season, and I think that is going to be valuable for them having those experiences going into the final,” Stotler said. “Being in a tight game again yesterday proves that they can play in challenging situations.”

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