

Hendersonville in soccer finals

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Sports Writer

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. — Hendersonville kept its chances for a TSSAA state soccer championship alive last night defeating Chattanooga Baylor 4-1 in the state semifinals at Brentwood High School.

The victory, which came before a vocal crowd of more than 600, sends the Commandos into today's 2 p.m. final against Germantown, a 3-1 winner over Kingsport Dobyne-Bennett last night.

When the TSSAA sanctioned soccer in 1987, many followers expected Hendersonville to bid for the state title on a consistent basis because the Commandos had won two state championships in an independent high school league, one in 1983 and another in 1986.

Last night the Commandos proved worthy of such high expectations.

"We still have a great tradition at Hendersonville and we're trying to uphold it," said Todd Tompkins, who scored the Commandos first and third goal.

"Tonight we proved we're still as tough a team as there is in the state."

Tompkins scored the match's first goal less than 10 minutes into the first half with a shot 16-yards from the center of the net.

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Hendersonville moved in front 2-0 with 11:23 left in the half when Michael McConnell headed the ball into the goal off a corner kick from Kyle Harvey which ended the first half scoring.

"Baylor is an explosive team, too, and they could have very easily gotten up on us by two (goals) early like we did them," said Hendersonville Coach Russ Plummer, whose team improved to 13-1-3. "We talked all week about how important it was to get a big lead if possible."

The loss ended Baylor's season with a record of 15-6. It was the Red Raiders' first-ever trip to the semifinals.

Baylor fought back early in the second half closing the gap to 2-1 when Kyle Fanning scored on a 15-yarder from the center of the goal.

But Tompkins retaliated for the Commandos with 31:11 left in the match scoring on a lobbed direct kick after a tripping call against Baylor.

"I really think we wanted this game more than they did and you could tell that from the start," Tompkins said.

Tommy Stevens added the last goal for

the winners with 3:08 remaining, scoring off a breakaway.

Hendersonville took 23 shots at goal while Baylor could manage only 14.

"Hendersonville controlled the tempo from the start," said Baylor Coach Mike Wiersema. "We got the tempo back early in the second half but by that time they had everybody on defense and there was little we could do."

Hendersonville goalie Rick Perry recorded an impressive 13 saves.

"I can't say enough about that kid (Perry)," said Plummer. "He has been outstanding all season long. As long as our offense puts forth an effort, Rick takes care of his job."

The comfortable win was also impressive considering the Commandos were without the services of standout defensive sweeper Chadd Volland.

In Germantown's win over Dobyne-Bennett, Rick Morris helped Germantown to an early 1-0 lead with a goal in the first 10 minutes of action but Dobyne-Bennett's Chris Carmack tied it up with a goal.

Brady Whitworth scored his 24th goal of the season and the go-ahead shot for the winners early in the second half. The loss was Dobyne-Bennett's first of the season. ■