

Franklin moves into final round of state soccer

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BRENTWOOD, Tenn. — Franklin's boys soccer team handed White Station its first loss this season, 2-0 in last night's state semifinals, and now tries to give the school a sweep of the inaugural TSSAA championships.

The Rebels and first-year coach Gary Shrader, whose girls squad won the state last fall, will play in the finals at neighboring Brentwood High at 2 p.m. today. Interestingly enough, they'll face Knoxville's undefeated Farragut, the same school that was runner-up in girls state.

Farragut, which won an earlier meeting with Franklin 3-2 this spring, defeated Chattanooga McCallie last night 1-0 on a controversial penalty kick late in the game.

A crowd of nearly 1,000 watched the semifinal round in the first boys soccer playoffs sponsored by the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association.

"It's always been in the back of our minds," Franklin senior Brian Carter said about matching the Lady Rebels' feat. "But we're basically doing this for ourselves.

"I just think tonight we wanted it more than the other team. It's the first year we've been this far. We've been to the semifinals three years in a row [in an independent league]"

There were even some doubters in the bunch that they'd get the chance this year, including sophomore forward Dennis Krilich, who scored last night's second goal.

"I personally didn't think we'd get this far," Krilich said. "This team has really come together since the region."

A surprise champion in the tough Region 5 tournament, Franklin had not scored more than one goal in regulation in the last three games before last night.

Another sophomore forward, Joey Chapman, got the Rebs on the board at 6:16 in the first half with an assist by Carter on a long kick. Goalkeeper Troy Norwood came out and juggled the long airball, and Chapman simply tapped it in.

At halftime, Shrader stressed to his team that a 1-0 lead was too shaky. Krilich came through only 4½ minutes into the second half, chipping in a goal just as Norwood dived for the ball at his feet.

"I saw the cross come from center and I just went for the run," Krilich said. "I saw the goalie was coming out to it and I got rid of it real quick."

Senior Bailey Leopard, with 10 saves, was shutout goalie for Franklin as the Spartans from Memphis went home with a 13-1-1 record.

The stats were pretty even, with the Rebels taking 17 shots to White Station's 19, and Norwood even had nine saves.

But White Station missed a prime opportunity to score first when Carter — as part of a wall defense — blocked a direct kick by Robi

Krauker just outside the box. That shot came at 22:25 to go in the first half.

"I think we just fell apart on the first goal," White Station's Norwood said. "We let things get to us, like the referees, and we haven't done that before."

Franklin, meanwhile, got its initial score just after center halfback David Bradley entered the game. Bradley, bothered by two leg injuries, did not play much, however, although his presence may have sparked the Rebs momentarily.

"They had a tough front line," Leopard said. "Our defense just did a great job. The fullbacks really shut them down."

"David is a great player and key to our passing, but we're a team. I think we showed tonight that our team can play together. Matched up individually, the other team probably has better players than we do."

If out today, Bradley will be sorely missed, however, due to the outstanding presence of native Brazilian Robson Oliveira in center field for Farragut, now 17-0.

In last night's second semifinal, neither McCallie goalkeeper Sid Howard nor Coach Steve George were particularly pleased about the penalty kick scored with 14:46 to play. The tripping call itself was already controversial, but the Admirals' Craig Lewis then faked a move before he shot the one-on-one with Howard inside the penalty box.

"When he stutter-stepped on a penalty kick like that, you're going one way and then he kicks the other and there's no way to get it," said Howard, calling the move an illegal one. "It throws your whole timing off. When it's one call to decide the game and it's for the final of the state. . ."

Farragut Coach Don Orr, meanwhile, said his team missed several shots during the game that the Admirals would usually make. Before the 0-0 deadlock was broken, Dave Grim had a shot bounce off the top of the bar.

McCallie's Danny Soters had a similar miss in the first half. After falling behind, the Blue Tornado then had a flurry of scoring opportunities that failed with about three minutes left, and ended the season 16-3-3.

"Franklin is a very well-coached and talented team," Orr said. "We were fortunate to beat them before. They jumped out 2-0 and our kids really worked hard to come back." ■