

Top-ranked team ends Ryan's year

Science Hill proves too strong for Irish

By **JIM WYATT**

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CHATTANOOGA — Father Ryan had to play a team many consider to be the nation's best last night in the Class AAA soccer semifinal at Red Bank Stadium.

Science Hill, ranked No. 1 in the nation by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and UMBRO, ended Ryan's outstanding season with a 3-1 win.

Jeff Nikocaj scored twice for Science Hill, which has 14 seniors.

"They're the best team we've seen this season — besides us," said dejected Ryan senior Matt Photivihok. "We just didn't get it done. I guess it was a great accomplishment to get here, but that's hard to think about right now."

Science Hill (19-0-1) will meet Germantown Houston, a 5-2 winner over Chattanooga Baylor winner, tonight at 7 p.m. for the Class AAA title.

"This is the toughest game we've played all season," Science Hill goalie Filipi Coelho said. "We kind of came out dragging in the first half but we got it together when it mattered. It's a good thing because they have a good team."

Memphis University School and Chattanooga Notre Dame will play for the Class A/AA title at 5 p.m.

"It all seems like such a blur now," said Ryan junior Jamey Tidwell, who scored his team's lone goal midway through the first half. "There are just so many emotions going through all of our heads right now so it's hard to look back and see what we could've done differently or what we should've done.

"What this does is put the taste in our mouths. We know what it's like to get here and we want to get back."

Not since the school won back-to-back titles in 1972 and '73 has an Irish soccer bunch shown such grit.

Last night's loss marked the last game for Irish seniors Joey Pasquinnelli, Rex Bowman, Jim Blackstock and Photivihok.

"The seniors are the ones who got us through all the tough games leading to this and I feel bad for them," Coach Robin Dieterich said. "What the other guys need to do is remember how they got here. The worst thing that can happen now is for them to forget what it took." ■