

Sports

Girls soccer team settles score, wins North title

By Stephen Tobey

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ACTON, MASS. -

The Acton-Boxborough girls soccer team has been waiting for the opportunity it had in Monday's MIAA Division 1 North title game since last November.

The Colonials won the sectional title on Monday with a 2-0 victory over Winchester, the team that eliminated A-B on penalty kicks in last year's North semifinals.

"Yeah, we wanted revenge," said A-B senior midfielder Courtney Findlen, who set up the first of Hayley Brock's two goals. "We wanted to play soccer and prove we were the better team."

Said senior captain Monica Jensen, "It was really motivating after last year, but mostly we just wanted to represent the school and play as well as we could."

A-B (20-0-1) will visit South champion Weymouth on Wednesday for the state semifinal (5 p.m.).

A year ago, the Sachems held A-B to a scoreless tie through 80 minutes of regulation and 20 minutes of sudden-death overtime before winning on penalty kicks. In both of Winchester's postseason games this year, the team won by penalty kicks after no goals were scored in regulation or overtime against Woburn and Lincoln-Sudbury.

On Monday, Winchester (15-5-2) played a defensively oriented game, placing just two shots on net, both in the second half.

The score was tied at 0-0 at halftime, with Sachem goalie Michelle Troisi stopping four shots. Winchester's best scoring chance came with less than two minutes remaining in the half, when Stephanie McCaffrey got past the Colonials' defenders but her shot sailed over the crossbar.

"It was a matter of fighting through it," said A-B coach Ruairi Sweeney. "We had to break through the wall. We felt 10 minutes into the game that we could score."

At times, the Colonials had to almost literally fight through the Winchester defense, with a fair amount of grabbing and pushing taking place. With 15:59 left in the first half, Brock received a yellow card after pushing a Sachem defender from behind.

"I was really frustrated and I got really mad," Brock said. "[Sweeney] told me to calm down and play my game."

Said Sweeney, "It was a frustration foul. She just had to calm down a little. Scoring a goal is the best way to get back at them."

With 28:34 left in the second half, Brock got even in her own way, taking a pass from Findlen on the left sideline and putting the ball into the middle of the net.

Ten minutes later, Brock struck again, putting the ball just inside the right post with an assist from Jen Brogie.

The first goal drew the Sachems out of their defensive mode, but they were only able to get two shots on net and one corner kick in the final 10 minutes. With 11 remaining, Tricia Giglio stopped one Winchester scoring opportunity when she stole the ball from McCaffrey.

“This is for them,” Sweeney said. “I want them to enjoy it. We’ve always had a chance to avenge a loss.”

Said senior Lindsey Raymond, “It did [feel like last year] but we capitalized on our opportunities. We just had to figure out a way to beat them.”

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