

August 30, 2011

LCA 1 - West Jessamine HS 0 (PKs)

Season Record: 3-3-0

District Record: 1-0-0

As some in Lexington, Kentucky would say, "growth is good." This is particularly true when you are asked to combine a handful of rambunctious freshman, an assortment of upperclassmen, and three starters from last year's state runner up into a new team. But today, the young Lady Eagles took a huge step forward as a unit and showed off their newly found wings by winning their first district game of the season against the always talented West Jessamine Colts. To underscore the magnitude of this win, one need only note that this was just the second win over the Colts in the last five years, including a split last year. Although it took 80 minutes of shutout soccer, a new rule for district games, two scoreless overtimes, and four worthy PKs, the Lady Eagles prevailed and leveled their season record at .500 with a win over the 11th ranked team in the state.

To summarize the game, Bundy performed very well in goal showing waterbug-like quickness en route to her second shutout, and the back four, who played all 90 minutes, showed how an odd mixture of size, speed, determination and aptitude can overcome a whole lot of talent and athleticism. Add a spry midfield and group of forwards willing to run their hearts out for 90 minutes and that's the ball game.

West Jessamine took the field with their usual swagger and used their speed to dominate play early. West Seniors Lockridge and Henderson seemed able to run through the back four at will early but couldn't quite find enough space to get quality shots on goal. After the first 10 minutes, the game settled into a remarkable display of high school soccer with both teams showing an ability to possess the ball, string multiple passes together, execute give and gos, defend at very high levels, and counterattack at the drop of a hat.

On one counterattack, Caroline Hargis must have thought she was dribbling out of Egypt as the midfield opened like the Red Sea allowing her to carry the ball unchallenged from LCA's 18 to West's 18 before laying it off to Rachel Bertrand for a quality chance. Later in the second, West took a beautiful corner kick that was headed near LCA's 18 over Bundy and onto goal near the back post where Brianna Arnold was properly positioned to head a sure goal out of harm's way. Another chance by West resulted in a mad scramble in front of the LCA goal when the shot hopped over a charging Bundy and was surely headed into the net when Hargis cleared out the onrushing forward allowing Maddie Mitchell to chest the ball down and quickly out of the back. It was a night when the one mistake that would cost you the game was either non-existent or overcome with strong team play.

As the game ended in a 0-0 draw, there appeared two tired teams ready to head home and quickly wrap up homework and head off to bed. KHSAA and its new rule for district games in 2011, however, saw to it that the large crowd at Turner Field got to enjoy 10 more minutes of well played and hard fought soccer through two five minute golden goal periods. Despite a tremendously high level of energy throughout the overtime periods by both squads, and especially LCA's Bertrand, Sjogren, Boone and Hall who played nearly the entire game, neither could muster a goal and the game would be determined on penalties. Some love 'em, some hate 'em, but when you come out on top, you gotta love 'em.

The Colts sent four seniors to the spot with Lockridge and Hale both finding the net. Bundy just missed West's first PK when Lockridge placed a near perfect shot into the left side net, but was able to stop two others. The Lady Eagles, on the other hand, netted four of their five kicks with the always steady Elise McKinney and Hannah Treadway starting things off by netting the first two. Freshman Kennedy Caneer then confidently stepped up and buried her PK with a ~~sweeping left footed drive into the right side net~~ right footed drive left of the diving keeper. Caneer's confidence to take a PK with her off foot in the biggest game of her young high school career was very courageous and well done, and set the stage for Caroline Hargis to end the evening on a good note. Perhaps buoyed by her familiarity with West's keeper who is a club teammate and good friend, Hargis converted her PK by striking the ball low and hard and giving mom, dad and coach Fugmann a big smile and coach Erickson 50 "girl" pushups.

All kidding aside, everyone in attendance was blessed to witness a tremendous soccer game on an absolutely beautiful evening at Larry W. Turner Memorial Stadium.