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Glenelg falls in double OT

Howard Co. rival Mount Hebron wins on O'Rourke's goal in Tuesday's showdown

by Todd McElwee | Staff Writer

Finishing has become an issue for the Glenelg High girls soccer team.

The Gladiators have had trouble putting the ball in the net recently, and on Tuesday could not close out a game they controlled, falling to Mount Hebron 1-0 on a golden goal in double overtime.

Collecting a loose ball 25 yards from the goal, Vikings' senior midfielder Kara O'Rourke took two steps and deposited a shot into the upper right corner of the net with 3:15 remaining in the second extra session. Mount Hebron stormed onto the field while the Gladiators walked off shell shocked.

"We had our chances tonight, we just couldn't finish," said senior forward-midfielder Rachel McCarriher. "I think we outplayed them. We just couldn't finish."

Glenelg had controlled the ball around the offensive zone throughout the match and really turned up the intensity during the closing minutes of regulation and approximately 17 minutes of extra time. Redirecting a Gretchen Gurganus pass mere inches from Mount Hebron goalkeeper Tahila Tavai, McCarriher was flagged for a yellow card for goalie interference after it appeared Tavai had already grabbed the ball with eight minutes to go.

Less than two minutes later following a Catherine Cottrell throw in, Emily Budman booted a shot off the right side of the Vikings' net. Later another Budman shot went wide right again. The Gladiators took 14 shots.

"We had a ton of shots on goal and we didn't get one in," she said. "That's what we have to work on; finishing."

Mount Hebron was the second game in a row Glenelg has been shut out this season. On Sept. 16, the Gladiators played to a 0-0 draw with fellow Howard County League foe Reservoir.

"Hopefully once one goes in, the rest will follow," Cottrell said.

Defensively, the Gladiators are nearly impregnable. They are led by Ebeling and junior goaltender Brooke Carey, who helped lead the school to the 2008 Class 1A state title.

"We're pretty good," head coach Dean Sheridan said of his defense. "I think we're really good. We win the ball in the back."

Sheridan has built one of the most decorated programs in the state. Glenelg has won six state titles (1997, 1999, 2000, 2006, 2007, 2008) and won the 2A South region crown last season. But this is a rebuilding year. The Gladiators lost 10 seniors and eight starters from last year's team; and 40 goals along with them.

Year after year, Glenelg plays a grueling early season schedule. Sheridan believes it toughens his team up for the postseason.

This season has been no different, as the Gladiators have faced off against Montgomery County's Churchill, the 4A West's top-seed last season, Reservoir, a 3A finalist in 2009 and private schools John Carroll and Good Counsel.

"I always tell the girls you only have to win the last five games of the season [to win a state championship]," Sheridan said.

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