

Bismarck Legacy completes season sweep of Minot North Sentinels

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Mike Kraft/MDN Senior forward Moses Conteh looks to push the ball upfield as Legacy's Kellen Okerson defends during a game at Sentinel Stadium on Tuesday, Sept. 16.

The Minot North boys soccer team had a chance to loosen Bismarck Legacy's grip on the top spot in West Region if it managed to do what no other team this side of the state has managed to do this season.

Instead, a perfectly placed strike from Legacy's Uriel Rivera off a direct kick and three other Saber goals has upgraded their grip to a stranglehold.

In a battle of the top two teams in the region sporting the two longest active winning streaks, Legacy extended its points lead in the standings to 11 points with six matches remaining, topping Minot North, 4-1, at Sentinel Stadium on Tuesday, Sept. 16. The Sabers completed the Magic City sweep, winning all four combined matches against Minot North and Minot High.

"We try to play a good solid defense and control the ball and look for our opportunities on the offense," Legacy coach Tom Marcis said. "We really concentrate on our defensive set and we think we can control the game defensively, which opens up the offense. They played well, but we tried to play even better on defense."

Rivera gave the Sabers the early lead, netting his team-leading sixth goal of the season off a set piece in the 7th minute. Following a stoppage for a foul, Rivera curled a shot over a wall of Minot North defenders and into the near-side corner of the net past Sentinel goalkeeper Griffin Wald.

"It's been fun having him for four years on the varsity, but this is a great group together," Marcis said. "This is a team game. The guys all work together. Uriel helps lift them up and they all lift Uriel up, so it's a great job."

The Sabers (10-1-0 overall, 10-0-0 West Region) nearly doubled their advantage in the 16th minute, but Wald got the better of Rivera the second time around. Rivera snuck behind the Minot North defense and had an unobstructed route to the net, but Wald got his hands on the point-blank shot to keep the match in reach for the Sentinels.

“Griffin’s been so solid this season,” Minot North coach Ellen Jebens said. “He’s doing well. He comes up with some big saves for us every game.”

Legacy wouldn’t be denied its second goal coming out of the intermission. Less than five minutes into the second half, Riley Ketterling netted the insurance goal with a shot from in close.

The Sabers had one final late burst of offense with James-Matthew Guenther scoring in the 77th minute and Rivera adding his second a minute later.

“Their front three players are very good players and they are hard to contain,” Jebens said. “They have a tough front three and then they have James in the center midfield that feeds them the ball perfectly. They are a tough team to handle.”

The Sentinels (6-5-1, 6-3-1) did manage to deny Legacy goalkeeper James Erickson his sixth shutout of the season with a goal in the final minute off the foot of Gavin Wald, with Emerson Ries earning the assist.

The Sabers finished with a 11-6 edge in shots.

Wald finished with seven saves, while Erickson stopped five shots.

Despite the loss, the Sentinels are still in the driver’s seat for one of the four available spots at the state tournament. They sit tied for second with Minot High with 19 points and are six points clear of Bismarck Century, who is currently on the outside looking in, occupying the fifth spot in the standings.

“This is just one game and we’ll move on,” Jebens said. “We’re not content though, We’re not happy. We want to win out the rest of the season. Our ultimate goal is to get ourselves into the state tournament.”

The Sentinels play at Williston on Thursday, Sept. 18, at 7:30 p.m.