

LEGACY BLOWS OUT CENTURY

Abramciuc, Rivera combine for five goals



TANNER ECKER, TRIBUNE

Legacy's Eduard Abramciuc (23) races Century's Deakyn Koch (13) to the ball before scoring a goal during Thursday's match at the Bowl.

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Bismarck Tribune

Legacy has proven capable of scoring in many ways during their undefeated run at the top of the West Region boys soccer standings this season.

On Thursday night at the Bowl during the second game of a doubleheader, the Sabers proved themselves plenty capable at scoring on counterattacks.

Led by a hat trick from sophomore midfielder Eduard Abramciuc and two more goals from star senior midfielder Uriel Rivera, Legacy dominated Century in their rematch, 5-0.

"We started a little off, Century pressured nicely at the beginning but we wore them down the stretch and started hitting the diagonal balls we were looking for," Legacy assistant coach Ryan Okerson said. "Good things happened. The counterattack was strong today, especially in the second half, and defenders stayed at home. Just worked out as one of those games."

Legacy's first goal in the game was such a direct counterattack to a Century scoring opportunity that Sabers keeper James Erickson earned the assist.

With Erickson booting the ball downfield after making a save, Abramciuc took control of the ball with a Patriots defender in his back pocket and kept him there for a drive down the field, putting a sharp angle shot on net that Century keeper Nicholas Schlinger had no chance to stop.

"With Ed, especially Logan, the reserve coach, he's been harping on him to play his strengths and tonight he actually started playing his strengths which makes a big difference," Okerson said. "He's tough to move off the ball, he's a strong kid and he has enough pace, when he has the opportunity, he can usually put the ball in the back of the net."

"Last year I was a freshman, now I'm a sophomore and I'm starting to step it up," Abramciuc said. "I kept my hand down so I could score and not foul. (Erickson) kicked it far, I let it touch the ground, I don't always go for it because I feel like my first touch would be off by a lot, then I just kept composure, used my shoulder to keep him on one of my side and used my dominant-side foot to score."

The Sabers navigated more Century scoring opportunities and found insurance seven minutes later.

A Century foul turned into a Rivera free kick opportunity, and the senior again ensured Schlinger had no shot to make a save, lasering a ball into the top of the net from distance.

"Anytime we're around that area on a free kick, we're giving (Rivera) the green light, go ahead and take it," Okerson said. "Usually he puts them on frame, he's had a few the last couple games that have been saved, but we'll always give him the green light there."

Abramciuc and Rivera added their second goals of the game 26 seconds apart in the second half, with Abramciuc cashing in with a header off a perfect cross into the box

from Kellen Okerson and Rivera taking a feed from Okerson unharried up the field and put another long-range shot into the net.

"That's what we've been working on the whole year, the score-lines we've had to this point we've felt like we've underachieved because of the opportunities we've had," Okerson said. "This time we started popping them in the back of the net and got to take some guys off and give them a rest."



TANNER ECKER, TRIBUNE

Legacy's Uriel Rivera (10) passes the ball during Thursday's match against Century at the Bowl.

"The balls they play through, there were some mistakes and we got in front of them," Abramciuc said. "Uriel has always been a good teammate, I wanted to get the one twos with him and score with him."

Another long run into Century's end gave Abramciuc his hat trick, as he took Okerson's third goal-creating feed right in the Century goalmouth and tapped it in for the final score of the night.

"Guys didn't quit, we gave up some big mistakes in the back that caused a lot of pressure on our frame tonight," Okerson said. "When we won it, we were finding feet right away and worked the ball up as fast as we could."

"(Ryan Okerson) always goes with the ball, tries to drive and score, today was something different," Abramciuc said. "His balls were perfect to me and I finally found a way to finish them, last year and this year I haven't been able to finish, so I have to keep it up."

Along with turning a save into a goal in the first half, Erickson was perfectly positioned on every chance Century had to earn his ninth shutout of the season.

The junior keeper made nine stops on the night and needed his best on several, with the Patriots putting some oomph behind multiple shots.

"(Erickson) always seemed to be in the right spot tonight, but as a team we can't allow some of those opportunities to happen," Okerson said. "A lot of them came off mistakes and Century was able to get in and almost capitalize on them."

With the top spot at state from the WDA sealed up, Legacy now has the freedom to test exactly how deep their bench is over the final three games of the season.

It was tested a little during Thursday's game, as the Sabers had a couple players go down on a friendly-fire cleating and a hard liner of a ball to a groin, but Oker-son doesn't expect anybody to be missing time.

"We'll have a little more freedom with the record we have and the position we're locked into to start looking at a few more players, see what we have going forward to state, see how deep our bench actually is," Okerson said. "Judging from tonight, it looked good, because the guys who were put on performed, but we have to make sure that's an every-game thing and not just a one-time deal because pressure was off.

"Christian (Akpobi) took a cleat, some friendly fire, just a misplay on the ball and it's no big deal, he went back on but with the score being what it was, we could get him back off and resting. The other one was an injury nobody likes, but nothing lasting. Couple guys will have a day off and get rest for Tuesday."

Just three games remain on their schedule, one last in-city rivalry game against the Demons of Bismarck High and then games against Dickinson and Williston, with the BHS and Dickinson games being played at the Bowl and the Williston match at Sanford Sports Complex. All games are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. kickoffs.

LEGACY 5, CENTURY 0

Legacy	2	3	5
Century	0	0	0

First half: 1. Leg, Eduard Abramciuc (James Erickson), 14:25. 2. Leg, Uriel Rivera (free kick), 21:20.

Second half: 3. Leg, Abramciuc (Kellen Okerson), 49:14. 4. Leg, Rivera (Okerson), 49:40. 5. Leg, Abramciuc (Okerson), 54:06.

Goalkeeper saves: Legacy - James Erickson 5-4-9. Century - Nicholas Schlinger 2-2-4.

Corner kicks: Legacy 1-1-2. Century 3-1-4.

Cards: None.

Records: Legacy 13-0-0 West Region for 39 points, 13-1-0 overall; Century 4-5-3 West Region for 15 points, 4-5-3 overall.



Sabers blank Patriots in West Region high school boys soccer

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