



Legacy senior Asher Worrel (7) and West Fargo's Baskal Makuag (10) maneuver for the ball during the championship game of the boys state soccer tournament on Saturday at Cushman Field in Grand Forks.

LEGACY CLAIMS 1ST STATE SOCCER TITLE

Wait ends at 11 as Rivera comes through for Sabers

ABBY SHARPE
Grand Forks Herald

GRAND FORKS — Bismarck Legacy junior midfielder Uriel Rivera knew after the Sabers' North Dakota Boys' Soccer state semifinal win over Jamestown that Legacy had a chance to finally capture a championship.

He did more than talk, though. Rivera scored his third goal of the state tournament early in the second half to set the Sabers up for their 1-0 state title win over West Fargo on Saturday at Cushman Field.

The state title is the first for Legacy (12-3-4) in its 11 years as a varsity program.

"After the goal, and him playing awesome all tournament, I just knew he was going to finish one," Legacy senior goalkeeper Liam Horner said. "It means everything. We left it all on the field. We wanted this, and we just put everything out there."

It was the second consecutive year Legacy played in the state championship game. The Sabers lost 2-1 to Fargo Shanley last season.

Legacy finished second last year and third the season prior.

"It's been a real progression for us," Legacy coach Tom Marcis said. "The boys have been really working hard to get there. In our up-and-down season, you had to wonder whether it was going to happen or not. But the boys, really, the last week or two, had really started taking hold of things."

Rivera, along with Horner, senior midfielder Kamden Kooiman and junior defender Landon Herr, was named to the all-tournament team.

Selections from West Fargo (12-3-3) were goalie Bonfas Loria and forwards Horatio Willie and Andrew Knudsvig.



Legacy goalkeeper Liam Horner, left, and West Fargo's Amir Alizadeh converge on the ball near the net during the first half of the boys soccer state tournament championship game on Saturday in Grand Forks.

Horner stopped all nine shots he faced and Loria made four saves.

Horner's saves included one off a West Fargo free kick with less than a minute remaining in the championship. It was a big moment for the senior, who had earned his way into the starting spot in net late last season as Legacy altered its lineup to move Nathaniel Olheiser onto the field.

Legacy had been playing down one man after Rivera was dealt a red card. "I just knew that if it comes to me, I have to grab this ball," Horner said. "He kicked it in, and I saw it coming to me, like, 'I'm going to get to this.' I jumped up and grabbed it and drew the foul. That could have been it. One of the best (saves), for sure."



Legacy's Kamden Kooiman, left, and West Fargo's Amir Alizadeh try to take control of the ball during the state tournament championship game on Saturday in Grand Forks.

Willie generated numerous chances for the Packers, who have won five state titles in the last 15 years.

He is one of the 11 seniors who "deserved so much better," West Fargo coach Matt Crawford said.

"I'm so proud of everything they've done," he said. "We had our game plan going. We played strong to the end and it just couldn't bounce our way. They took advantage of their chance, and they finished. That's the bad part about soccer.

"I'm so proud. I'm thankful for everything they've done. They've grown this program so much farther than I thought it could have been. They've given all the underclassmen something to aspire to and look up to, and I couldn't be any prouder of what they accomplished."

Desire Masiri, a West Fargo senior, was named the North Dakota Coaches' Association Senior Athlete of the Year after the game. Jamestown coach Brandi Harty was named coach of the year.

But the win for Legacy was "exhilarating," Horner said. "It's our third state championship in sports," he said. "It means the world, especially after second place last year. We were so close, and now we finally finished the job."

ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

Legacy: Liam Homer, Sr., Keeper; Landon Herr, Jr., Defender; Uriel Rivera, Jr., Midfielder; Kamden Kooiman, Sr., Midfielder.

Fargo Davies: Charles Metzger, Sr., Midfielder; Thomas Lawrence, Jr., Midfielder.

Grand Forks Red River: Rylan Holt, Sr., Keeper; Brody Andrade, Sr., Midfielder.

Jamestown: Brady Harty, Sr., Midfielder; Iddi Ramadhani, Forward.

Minot: Nolan Schmidt, Soph., Midfielder; Grayden Wald, Sr., Keeper.

West Fargo: Bonfas Loria, Sr., Keeper; Horatio Willie, Sr., Forward; Andrew Knudsvig, Sr., Forward.

State Tournament

Quarterfinals

West Fargo 3, Williston 0

Minot 2, Grand Forks Red River 0 Jamestown 4, West Fargo Sheyenne 3, OT Bismarck

Legacy 3, Fargo Davies 0

Consolation semifinals

Fargo Davies 1, West Fargo Sheyenne 0 Grand Forks Red River 3, Williston 2, SO

Semifinals

West Fargo 1, Minot 0

Bismarck Legacy 2, Jamestown 1, OT

Fifth-place match

Grand Forks Red River 2, Fargo Davies 0

Third-place match

Jamestown 3, Minot 1

Championship match

Bismarck Legacy 1, West Fargo 0