

Legacy earns first trip to state soccer tournament

DAVE SELVIG – Bismarck Tribune



Legacy's Derek Schlittenhardt controls the ball during Saturday's state-qualifying game against Jamestown at the Bowl.

Legacy's first trip to state was a long time coming.

For Tom Marcis, coach of the Sabers from the start, Saturday's 3-1 win over Jamestown in a state-qualifier at the Bowl, ended with plenty of emotion.

"I'm really, really happy for the boys," Marcis said, his voice cracking. "It's taken seven years to get here. The boys have worked hard for it, they deserve it. I'm sure happy for them."

TJ Seidel, one of 11 seniors on the roster, provided yet another marquee performance. Already with 20 goals on the season, Seidel added two more

to his total -- one in each half -- as the Sabers won their 11th match of the season

After finishing fourth in the regular season last fall, but being knocked off in a state-qualifier, a lot was riding on Saturday's match.

"We worked really hard to get here. I didn't know if we'd ever do it," joked a relieved Seidel. "After what happened last year, this means a lot. It feels really good."

Seidel made it 1-0 Sabers in the 16th minute. Luis Rivera was credited with an assist.

It stayed 1-0 until Seidel struck again. Derek Schlittenhardt and Gabe Saah earned assists on the goal, which came in the 47th minute.

"Even though it was only 1-0 at half, we just needed to stay calm under pressure and keep playing our game," Seidel said.

Jamestown made it interesting four minutes later on a goal by Levi Korum.

Saah, the Sabers' standout midfielder, provided much-needed breathing room in the 61st minute with his 10th goal of the season, all but clinching Legacy's first trip to state.

"Two years ago we didn't win a conference game. Last year we won six and this year 10 with a WDA (tournament) win," Marcis said. "We have a great senior class. They've been great leaders, setting an example for the program going forward. We're really fortunate to have had those kids."

Seidel, Saah, goalkeeper Lucas Weigel and midfielders Dylan Ellingson and Ethan Emineth -- all seniors -- were named to the all-West Region team

“This was our goal, to get to state, but we’re not satisfied,” said Seidel, who also is the kicker for the Legacy High football team. “We’re going to state to win, we’re not just happy to be there.”

With first-round state tournaments being played at the home field of the higher-seeded team, the Sabers will travel to West Fargo to face the Packers on Tuesday at 6 p.m.

“We need to act like we’ve been there before, even though we haven’t,” Seidel said. “Don’t panic under pressure and just play our game. If we do that, I like our chances.”

Marcis agreed.

“We're going in confident, no question about it,” Marcis said. “If we play our game, we can play with anybody in the state, East or West