

Legacy rolls past Mandan in conference opener

JOSH DUNGAN – Bismarck Tribune

Last year's Legacy's boys soccer team followed a season-opening 3-0 win over Fargo North with a 1-0 loss to Jamestown in their conference opener where they outshot the Blue Jays but couldn't find the back of the net.

This year's Sabers had no such struggles in its conference opener, running roughshod over visiting Mandan in a 6-0 win at the Bowl Tuesday after beating the Spartans by an identical 3-0 margin on Saturday.

"We were trying to see how we could combine offensively, and the boys did that," Legacy head coach Tom Marcis said. "I know we had a 3-0 win against North, but there were things we needed to work on defensively, and we did a little of that. It's still early in the season, so we have things to work on, but I thought the boys showed themselves ready for conference play.

"We said we didn't want to start our conference play the same way we did last year. We need to play the way we can and put the ball in the net, and the boys did that."

Legacy got off to a fast start in both halves, something that Marcis says the team wants to emphasize this season to separate themselves as one of the top teams in the state.

"One of the things that we've talked to the boys about is that if they think they're one of the better teams in the conference, they need to

make a statement and show that right away,” Marcis said. “Starting strong and finishing strong in halves are the two parts to that.

“There are always flows to the game, but if you can start the half strong and then finish it strong so you’re not letting anything in, that’s what we want out of the guys.”

Legacy followed through on that goal and then some.

Jayden Ridl and Ben McDonald each scored in the first 10 minutes of the first half, while Kamden Kooiman challenged for a school record with a goal 10 seconds into the second half.

“We’re a possession/build-up team, we can counter I guess, but we don’t want to rely on speed, we want to build up,” Marcis said. “We work hard on passing in tight spaces, so that guys can control and move the ball and frustrate defenses.”

Ridl’s goal was the first of two scored by Legacy off set plays in the first half, with the second coming on an own goal by Mandan’s Dominick Heck in the 35th minute.

Scoring twice off free kicks shows how hard the team has been working on their craft during the offseason, says Marcis.

“These kids like to, at the end of practice, to stick around and work on direct plays,” he said. “We don’t have to encourage them to do it, it’s something they’re working on, and we have a lot of guys that can put it in good scoring positions and guys that can put the ball in the net.”

With a 3-0 lead into halftime, Kooiman ensured Legacy’s lead would be insurmountable by securing a fumbled ball right off the kickoff by a

Mandan defenseman and firing it past Mandan netminder Joseph Hutzenbiler, who had seven saves.

“(Guys like Kooiman and Rivera) helped put us on the board last year, and those guys are back again and have played together a lot,” Marcis said. “We’re starting to combine up pretty well.”

After getting into the scoring column, Kooiman added a pair of assists on Uriel Rivera’s pair of goals two minutes apart at the 50th and 52nd minute, sending the game into running time and earning himself a three-point night.

“We’re still trying to figure out rotations for our offense,” Marcis said. “But we’re fortunate about having a lot of guys who can put the ball in the back of the net.”

Legacy keeper Nathaniel Olheiser was quiet in the first half and made all of his stops in the second half, finishing with four saves.

Earning a shutout this time after sharing time in net with Liam Horner in the Fargo North game, Olheiser got the benefit of a bad miss wide to the near side from Mandan late in the action to keep the shutout alive.

“Our defense starts with our keeper, and with how experienced and technical he is, he makes everybody else look better,” Marcis said. “He’s got solid guys in front of him like Gavyn Nygren, who is an experienced senior. Having a three-year senior starter at keeper, that makes a difference.”

With their first conference win in the books, Legacy turns its attention to one of its five road trips this season.

“Whenever you’re in town, it’s good to win, but it’s more about us starting the conference on the right foot,” Marcis said. “We came up just a little short with the conference regular season and tournament titles last year, and the boys want to fix that this year.”

On Thursday the Sabers head out to Williston to tangle with the Coyotes, who lost to Century at the Bowl earlier in the evening.

“Every team will be giving us their best effort, so we’d like to give them our best effort as well,” Marcis said. “When you go to Williston, that’s always interesting because it’s a long ride and you have to get off the bus and wonder if the kids are ready to go. We’re hoping to come out with a win against Williston and then put on a good effort against Bismarck on Saturday.”

Legacy 6, Mandan 0

Mandan 0 0 — 0

Legacy 3 3 — 6

First half: 1. Legacy, Jayden Ridl (James-Matthew Guenther), 5th minute. 2. Legacy, Ben McDonald (Reece Snow), 7th minute. 3. Legacy, Mandan own goal by Dominick Heck, 35th minute.

Second half: 4. Legacy, Kamden Kooiman (Snow), 40th minute. 5. Legacy, Uriel Rivera (Kooiman), 50th minute. 6. Legacy, Rivera (Kooiman), 52nd minute.

Goalkeeper saves: Mandan — Joseph Hutzenbiler 3-4—7. Legacy — Nathaniel Olheiser 0-4—4.

Penalties: None.

Records: Mandan 0-1-0 overall, 0-1-0 West Region for zero points;
Legacy 2-0-0 overall, 1-0-0 West Region for three points.