

Sabers hand Jamestown first loss of season

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Legacy senior Nate Olheiser has done everything his team has asked of him during his career with the Sabers.

When they needed him in net because of injuries to the starting goalkeeper, he put on the goalie uniform. When they needed him to play the field, he helped anchor the defense.

On Friday, Legacy coach Tom Marcis needed Olheiser to take a pair of high-pressure penalty kicks. Olheiser calmly delivered, converting both strikes to lead the Sabers to a 2-0 win over Legacy in the regular-season finale for both teams at Sanford Sports Complex. Legacy's victory gave the Sabers a share of the WDA regular-season crown with Jamestown -- the first conference title in program history for both programs -- and the No. 1 seed in the WDA tournament on the third tiebreaker.

"He's a three-year starter on varsity and he sat the bench the first year we went to state," Marcis said. "He's been around the program as we've gotten better and better. He knows the game and he's a leader when he's in the goal. He's a leader when he's on the field."

It's the first time the WDA has seen co-champions in the regular season since Century and St. Mary's shared the title in 2007.

The Sabers (12-1-2 overall, 11-1-2 West Region) turned up the pressure early in the second half following a scoreless first 40 minutes. Needing a pair of second-half goals to flip the tiebreaker in its favor, Legacy forced a hand ball in the box in the 47 minute, awarding the Sabers a penalty shot. Senior Nate Olheiser converted from the penalty spot, firing a shot past Jamestown goalkeeper Grant Lunde on the right side. Lunde guessed his dive correctly, but couldn't get a hand on Olheiser's shot.

"PKs, it's the shooters advantage," Olheiser said. "I just made sure I got a little bit of pace and a good shot and it's in."

Olheiser's first penalty-kick goal proved to be the one that delivered them the co-championship, but it was his second goal in the 77th minute that gave the Sabers the top seed. Following a hard foul in the box, Olheiser was again called on by his coach and the captain didn't disappoint. Olheiser went to his left this time around, and snuck it past a diving Lunde, who guessed correctly once again but couldn't get a hand on the perfectly placed shot.

"The second I was walking up to the ball I just knew where I was shooting and made sure I put it there," Olheiser said. "I got a little too excited on the celebrations but this is only the beginning. We have the WDA championship and state to go."

Olheiser was shown a yellow card for his celebration following the second penalty-kick goal for removing his jersey.

Legacy's two goals were the most Jamestown (11-1-2, 11-1-2) has allowed in its last 11 contests dating back to Aug. 24. The Blue Jays entered the match having allowed just eight goals in 13 games this season. Despite not winning the conference outright, Jamestown still takes pride in its first co-crown and first state tournament berth since 2016.

"It just shows how much these boys have worked," Jamestown coach Brandi Harty said. "From the end of last season to now they've put a lot of time in, so obviously the season shows it. I'm so proud of them. It's great the program has gotten to this point."

Legacy goalkeeper Liam Horner stopped all 11 shots he faced to keep the Blue Jays off the scoreboard for just the second time this season. Horner made a key save on Jamestown's Iddi Ramadhani in the in the 72nd minute to preserve the shutout.

"Anytime you have a chance to be co-champs or take down an undefeated team obviously that's what you want to do," Marcis said. "We were focusing on our game, our play more than what Jamestown was doing. In fairness to them, we have things that we wanted to clean up. It's been an odd season for us. A lot of moving around our pieces for different reasons. Coming off the Minot game I was wondering if the boys would be as up for it as they could have been and obviously they showed they came to play today."

Even though a second-place finish in the West Region would have netted them an automatic berth at state, the Sabers still wanted a shot at sharing the conference title.

"We definitely did," Olheiser said. "Expectations were high. The first games against Minot and Jamestown we got a little bit humbled and we wanted to win everything we could. WDA regular-season championship was a huge win for us."

For the Blue Jays, it's their first true taste of adversity after being handed their first loss of the season. But they have the chance to avenge that loss in their next outing, when the two teams meet again for the WDA tournament championship at Sanford Sports Complex on Saturday, Oct. 7.

"In games we've come from behind so this is just one of those things where we'll watch film, adjust what we need to adjust," Harty said. "Obviously they exposed areas that we need to work on and we'll just prepare."

LEGACY 2, JAMESTOWN 0

Jamestown 0/0-0

Legacy 0/2-2

First half: No scoring.

Second half: Leg, Nate Olheiser (penalty kick), 47th minute. Leg, Olheiser (penalty kick), 77th minute.

Goalkeeper saves: Jam, Grant Lunde 5-5--10. Leg, Liam Horner 5-6--11

Yellow cards: Legacy Nate Olheiser

Records: Jamestown 11-1-2 overall, 11-1-2 West Region for 35 points; Legacy 12-1-2 overall, 11-1-2 West Region for 35 points.