

Sabers run past Patriots for fifth Region win

Legacy sits atop West Region into holiday break

JOSH DUNGAN - Bismarck Tribune

The Legacy boys soccer team has been working in perfect concert through its first six games.

Having allowed just two goals and scoring 23 while running up a 6-0-0 overall record and a 5-0-0 record in the West Region, the Sabers have not been slowed down by much.

Thursday's home game against Century at Sanford Sports Complex was all gas for the Sabers, as Legacy downed the Patriots 4-0.

"We played better in the first half, we got out of our game a bit at the beginning of the second half, we let the emotions of the game get to us," Legacy head coach Tom Marcis said. "They pulled it back together, and we're good enough that we just needed to get back into a rhythm."

Scoring for the Sabers were Kamden Kooiman and Ben McDonald in the first half and Uriel Rivera twice in the second half.

Kooiman and Rivera each had a set play score, with Kooiman sending a nifty header past Century goalkeeper James Lee (eight saves) in the 26th minute and Rivera beating Lee on a penalty kick for a three-nil lead for the Sabers in the 61st minute.

"It was a physical game, but the boys respect each other, so it wasn't a mean, physical game, it was just a physical back-and-forth game," Marcis said. "We got a penalty kick, and when you play hard like both teams did tonight, penalties will happen, and fortunately for us ours was in the box."

Rivera's second goal was a beauty. Taking advantage of a through ball by Isaac Schumacher, he somehow stayed onside, got to the ball just before Lee, then nailed the ball into the back of the net with some juice for a 4-0 lead.

"From where we were at, it was close, but the line official was where he was supposed to be," Marcis said. "As long as they are where they're supposed to be, it's their call. He's got a nose for the goal. You can teach technical stuff, you can get kids in shape, but goal-scorers have a nose for the goal, and he has that 'it' factor."

McDonald's tally came just four minutes after Kooiman's, and he slipped a fast ground shot past the arms of a diving Lee for a 2-0 lead after Legacy had spent much of the first half stymied by Century's defense.

Legacy's long passing, particularly on some of their through balls, was on point for much of their night, but with Century and Legacy's players intimately familiar with each

other after summer and winter games together, Legacy's short passing game struggled at times.

"Century did a good job of pressing on our short passing game," Marcis said. "Century worked hard on all of those balls. They didn't make things easy."

Thursday's battle was the first of two between the Sabers and Patriots in the regular season, and the rematch on Sept. 21 promises to be spicy.

On the positive side, each team had players go down with minor injuries throughout the night, and opponent players were there to assist, with Legacy goalie Nathaniel Olheiser helping a Century player off the field and a Century player helping a Legacy player that went down with a cramp late in the game.

"One of the things about in-town rivals is that these kids play together a lot, they know each other and there's a respect factor," Marcis said. "They'll play hard against each other on the field, but they are friends off the field."

The positive sportsmanship shown in those instances wasn't always present. Early in the second half, Legacy's James-Matthew Guenther and Chase Bandle were each shown yellow cards in the same sequence due to some words exchanged between them and some Century players after a play deep in Legacy's defensive end. "Sometimes with the emotion of the game, kids can get excited, and our boys know better than that," Marcis said of the yellow cards. "When the referee tells them something, you have to go with it, because the referee is in charge on the field. They let their emotions get the better of them."

"The more you win, the more other teams will try and get you out of your game, so you have to be aware of that and stay on top of it."

Century also came inches away from being the second West Region team to break through against the Sabers. An initial chance by the Patriots in open space clanged hard off the crossbar of Legacy's goal, with the follow-up being knocked over the top of the net on a great save by Olheiser. "We were trying to front them, and the ball went a little high and then came back," Marcis said. "One thing that sets Nate apart from a lot of goalies is that when he goes down, he gets right up. A lot of keepers, they go down for a ball, then on the deflection or second shot, they're not able to get up."

After completing the Labor Day break, Legacy continues the first of two stretches that will define where they end up in the West Region standings.

On Tuesday the Sabers have their first match against Minot, who was picked to lead the West Region in the preseason poll, and then take on Jamestown, who currently trail the Sabers by two points in the standings, on the road on Thursday.

“They’re both strong teams, and the guys on those teams are also ones our guys play with in the offseason,” Marcis said. “We knew coming into the season that Minot and Jamestown would be two of the better teams, and it’s playing out that way. You want to play against the toughest teams, you don’t want the big scores you can see in youth soccer. “You want to play a hard-fought, well-defensed and technical game where you can score, and we hope to bring our A-game in both those games and come out on top.”

LEGACY 4, CENTURY 0

Century	0	0	—	0
Legacy	2	2	—	4

First half: 1. Legacy, Kamden Kooiman (James-Matthew Guenther), 26th minute. 2. Legacy, ben McDonald (Reece Snow), 30th minute.

Second half: 3. Legacy, Uriel Rivera (penalty kick), 61st minute. 4. Legacy, Rivera (Isaac Schumacher), 72nd minute.

Goalkeeper saves: Century — James Lee 6-2—8. Legacy — Nathaniel Olheiser 3-5—8.

Penalties: yellow cards: Legacy — Guenther, Chase Bandle.

Records: Century 3-2-0 West Region, 3-3-0 overall for nine points; Legacy 5-0-0, 6-0-0 for 15 points