



Cardinal Mooney's Rob Brunette breaks down in disappointment in front of the goal as Gates-Chili team members rejoice after their Nov. 5 win.

Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

'Jinx' strikes as Gates-Chili defeats Mooney in soccer final

By Kevin Myers

Much to the dismay of Cardinal Mooney players and fans, the infamous top-seed jinx still haunts local soccer fields. Thanks perhaps to that jinx, Gates-Chili defeated Mooney Tuesday, Nov. 5, at Fauver Stadium, claiming the Section 5 Class AAA soccer championship.

Both teams have talked about the jinx — a tendency of teams entering championship matches as top-seeds to lose the championship that year and win the following year with lower ranking.

But this year, the top-seeded Cardinals were trying to forget the jinx. The Spartans, however, who lost as the top seed last year, understandably remember.

As early as last August, the Spartans were talking about the jinx, while the Cardinals were trying to disregard it as coincidence. "I don't believe in that jinx," Mooney coach Paul Forte said just before the championship match. "I think it's just a coincidence."

But Mooney's attempt to sever the trend was rained out in the soggy championship game, when the seventh-seeded Spartans shut them out 2-0.

The Spartans came out steaming, scoring at 5:30 and 7:30 in the first quarter. Midfielder Dragan Mitrevski looped a perfect corner kick over the defenders' heads, and forward Joe Dioguardi headed the ball into the net for the first score. Just two minutes later, a powerful outside shot by Dioguardi was deflected by Mooney goalie Rick Oddo, and the rebound was chipped into the far corner of the net by forward Mark Grace.

Mooney goalie Rick Oddo's 10-game streak of shutouts had been ended, and soon the Cardinals' 12-game string of wins was cut.

Mooney came out strong in the second quarter, but midway through the period it was primarily a midfield battle. Near the end of the quarter, the Cardinals were encroaching on the Spartans' territory, but a couple of good saves by Gates-Chili goalie Kevin Bates sent the struggling Mooney team scoreless into the locker room at halftime.

Despite several Cardinal breakaways throughout the remaining two quarters, Mooney was still unable to score. Overall, the Cardinals were outplayed. The Spartans controlled the ball throughout much of the game, inside and outside of their own



Mooney's Tom Sansone, one of the season's top scorers, attempts to get control of the ball during the last few minutes of the third quarter.



Cardinal Mooney's Tony Ciccarelli, voted MVP for the tournament, gives the ball a good kick.

territory, and Mooney's relentless hustle went unrewarded.

An aggressive fourth quarter turned into a series of sliding tackles and an emotional flare-up, but in the end, the disappointed Mooney players were congratulated and consoled by the victorious Spartans.

This was Mooney's third trip to the finals in the past four years. Playing a key role in the development of the jinx theory, Mooney lost in 1982 as the top-seeded team, and then won the following year against top-seeded Greece Arcadia. The Cardinals went on in 1983 to win the state championship.

Despite the disappointing loss, the Cardinals tallied an 18-2-1 season record, and scored 55 goals.

The Spartans boosted their season record to 15-7 with the championship victory, and scored 48 goals during the season.

Statistically, the Cardinals were heavily favored to win the championship game, but Forte said he wasn't surprised at the Spartans tough performance. "I don't really think it was that much of an upset," he said. "They're a very good team, and they've really peaked near the end of the season."

"I think we played a good game ... but the

nature of this game is that you can play a good game and still lose. They (Gates-Chili) had a couple good opportunities at the beginning of the game, and they capitalized on them. We had a lot of good opportunities too, but we didn't put the ball in the net."

Although Forte does not believe in the jinx anymore than he believes in witches or warlocks, the Cardinals will be the champions in 1986 if the trend of the past four years continues.

Losing nine starters this year does not concern Mooney's coach. Forte feels he will still have enough talent to win next year. "I'm never really concerned with how many starters we lose," Forte said. "We've got a lot of good players who didn't start this year."

Fisher Offers Lecture

Sergio Silva Do Amaral, financial counselor at the Brazilian Embassy in Washington, will speak on world perspectives on Latin America at St. John Fisher College, Thursday, Nov. 14, at 7 p.m. Sponsored by the Fisher International

Although the Cardinals lost the championship, Mooney's Tony Ciccarelli won the most valuable player award for the sectional tournament. Top season scorers for the teams were center halfbacks Tom Sansone for Mooney, with 12 goals and 10 assists, and Joe Dioguardi for Gates-Chili, with 19 goals and 8 assists.

With the win, Gates-chili earned a quarterfinal berth in the state Class A tournament against Williamsville North of section 6 in the Buffalo area. The Spartans, representing Section 5, emerged victorious in the pairing, after Joe Dioguardi scored in the second overtime with four minutes remaining. Gates-Chili will proceed to the state Class A semifinal championship, day, date place time.

Studies Department, the lecture will be followed by a discussion of social and economic issues in Brazil and Latin America. The program will be held in the Lavery Library, Room 100.