

Mooney tied in season finale, seeded number one in Class AAA

By Richard A. Kiley

The Section 5 Class AAA boys' soccer tournament began first-round play this week, but don't tell head coach Paul Forte's team that. After enduring grueling contests against Hilton, Greece Athena, and Irondequoit at the end of their regular season, the Cardinals must think the tournament started a week and a half ago.

That's exactly what Forte had in mind when he scheduled three games against the traditionally strong teams at the beginning of this year's campaign. And even though his players might be wondering why they deserve such treatment from their coach, he knows they will thank him once the second season begins.

"Those games gave them a taste of what it's going to be like (in the sectionals). I'm pleased with the way they did," said Forte, whose team played to a tie in two of the games and lost one it should have won. "We gave the Greece-Athena game away. We outshot them 15 to five and had eight corner kicks to their one, but we had a couple of let downs."

The two let downs led to goals in the 2-1 loss to Greece-Athena, who ended the Cardinals' 10-game unbeaten streak. But the scoreless standoff against Hilton, and a 1-1 tie to Irondequoit last week left Forte pleased with the way his team played overall.

"I am pleased with the way they (his players) played these past few games; I noticed my players weren't too happy with the tie (against Irondequoit) but Irondequoit was. That's a compliment to them."

In the tie against Irondequoit, Forte was without the services of senior midfielder John Justice, who pulled a muscle in his back against Edison. The win over the Inventors clinched the City-Catholic championship for Mooney

for the sixth consecutive year.

Mooney jumped out to a 1-0 lead on Mike Karpenko's goal with 17:41 left in the first half. Karpenko reacted to a pass from Peter Mojsej before the Irondequoit defense did, and then beat netminder Jeff Ramsay with his shot to the left side of the net.

The lead lasted until 13:28 was gone in the second half, when Laurel DeFay capitalized on a defensive mixup in front of the Mooney goal. DeFay was left unmarked in front of the Cardinal net, and had half the net to shoot after goalie Scott Cortese got tied up in a maze of players.

Mooney controlled the pace of the game in the game's final minutes, but couldn't get the go-ahead tally. Ramsey robbed Mooney's Rob Brunette a couple of times down the stretch.

"I thought we played pretty well, but I was a little disappointed when we let them back in the game. One breakdown cost us a goal."

At the sectional committee meeting last Saturday, Mooney was named the tournament's No. 1 seed. The Cardinals were put with McQuaid, East and Edison — all City-Catholic teams — in Group 1 of the round-robin format. The team coming out with the most points after playing each other once will advance to the next round of the tourney.

"I don't know what I feel about our bracket," said Forte, whose team will play schools it has already faced two times this year. "I'm kind of disappointed; we wanted to play some new teams. A (mathematician) friend of mine said the chances were something like 1 in 1800 on getting all (City-Catholic) teams together in one group."

Mooney and the Knights of McQuaid opened play Wednesday afternoon, and go to Spencerport for games Saturday night.



Mooney's Adam Schwartz and Mike Briggs pursue the ball during the Cardinals' tie game against Irondequoit.

Susan Kost



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