

Defenders blank Wildcats in semi

by Barb Krohn, *Standard Journal*
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HEPBURNVILLE—At the end of the regular season Warrior Run girls soccer coach Jen Allen was happy with the way her team was developing with one big exception—the Defenders were having a hard time putting the ball in the back of the net.

Monday night at the District 4 Class AA semifinal Allen's charges showed that they had worked on that a bit. Rachel Grow put Warrior Run on the board in the first 11 minutes of the game and sent a pretty cross to Olivia George a little more than two minutes later en route to a 4-0 wind over Athens.

Warrior Run, now 14-5-1, will play Montoursville, the 4-2 winners over Shikellamy, for the district championship at a date and time to be determined. Athens, the tournament's No. 1 seed, ends its season 17-2.

"They've been working hard," said Allen. "I said to them that there's no such thing as luck—hard work is the luck."

"The subs have been putting pressure (on the starters) at practice."

The toughening up paid off as two of the goals were on second chances.

Grow's was a prime example. Laura Bastian had a direct kick that Chloe Eisenhuth's head directed to the goal, but it hit the cross bar. Grow who came running on headed the rebound in.

"I wanted it," said the sophomore. "It was only my second goal of the season and my first head ball."

One of the first players to congratulate Grow was her sister, Tillie, a four-year starter for the Defenders.

"I was so proud of her," said the senior co-captain. "She had a great game."

The insurance goal started its setup with a ball from Maddie Beyer to the left corner.

"I had a great ball from her," said Grow. "And I saw the opportunity."

The Athens keeper came out to challenge and Grow was able to cross the ball past her to a George who was waiting on the near post.

"That was the best cross (that's ever come to me)," said the sophomore striker.

George's second goal came in the aftermath of a corner kick with just under eight minutes left in the half. Bastian put in the final tally less



than two minutes into the second half when Athens was called for a foul in box and the senior co-captain coolly send the PK low and to the right.

For Tillie Grow there was never a doubt that the Defenders would come out of Monday's semifinal on top.

"I was fully confident that if we played our game we'd come and with a win," she said.

For seniors in the postseason, any game can be their last.

"(That) inspires us to play even harder" said Eisenhuth, also a senior co-captain. "We want it."

"The whole team, they're nice kids," said Allen. "You work hard and you have fun. That's the most important thing. If you win it's icing on the cake."

And George said the Defenders want some more frosting.

"Right now the energy for the team is how much we love soccer. We love our team and we don't want to split up any time soon."