

Defense does the job for Defenders

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By Shawn Wood

LOYALSOCK—If defense winds championships, then Warrior Run stands a good chance in Thursday's District 4 Class AA Boys soccer championship after a hard-fought 1-0 win over Central Columbia in the first of two semi-finals on Tuesday at Kenneth M. Robbins Memorial Stadium in Loyalsock.

It was the first time this year that Warrior Run (15-5) had beat Central (17-1-2) after the Blue Jays swept the Defenders this year: 2-0, 2-1.

The Blue Jays had allowed just five goals all year entering the game.

The Defenders took the 1-0 lead after a shot by Elias George went off of a Blue Jays defender and onto the foot of Zack Miller who used the defense as a screen and kicked the ball just inside the far post with 5:21 left in the first half.

The goal was also the first shot on goal for the Defenders in the first half.

"The shot went off the defenders foot around the 18 and I was just hoping for the best," Miller said of the goal. "It feels great to win after the game that we had with Mid-West and now Central. They are two different teams."

Central had multiple scoring chances in both halves, with more chances in the second half.

"We dodged a few bullets in the second half," Miller added. "They had a lot of open looks, but we were able to take that away in the final five minutes."

Defenders' coach Doug Bastian gave a lot of credit to his back four and goalie for the defensive effort throughout the game.

"The kids played tremendous defense," Bastian said. "I told the boys that they were vulnerable and that even a good team can't beat a team three times in a row."

Central came close to tying the game at one all in the first half when Nicholas Gaydos' shot just sailed over the cross bar from a shot inside the box on a odd-man rush for the Blue Jays.

Central kept the pressure up in the second half and had another chance to tie the game with 6:41 left when Dylan Lacroix took a two-on-one pass and nearly scored only to have Warrior Run goalie Jason McWilliams come up with another big save.

Central Columbia coach Pat Holman declined comment as he walked off the field consulting one of this players.

"We could fee the pressure coming. We knew it would and we kept our composure," Bastian said.

Warrior Run will look to claim its first District 4 title since 2004 when it faces Danville on Thursday at a time and site to be determined.

