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NEB defeats Troy in thriller

By RYAN LEMAY Staff Writer
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Troy's Wyatt Hodlofski looks to slow down Northeast Bradford's Gavin Merritt during the Northern Tier League soccer game on Tuesday.

Review Photo/Ryan Lemay

TROY — The Northeast Bradford boys soccer team came back from a 2-0 first half deficit to defeat Troy in a thrilling back-and-forth contest 4-3 on Tuesday afternoon in Troy.

Troy's Wyatt Hodlofski played his heart out scoring a hat trick but it was not enough to stop the relentless attack of NEB. The Panthers finished the game with 29 total shots.

“Wyatt is very passionate this year and we have a lot to work on,” Troy head coach Jason Hodlofski said. “This is a young team but we do have a solid core but we just have to do a little better blending our inexperience and our experience but we will get there and it will be a good season.”

Troy freshman goalkeeper Eli Randall had his hands full dealing with the high powered NEB attack in his first ever high school soccer game, but his head coach was pleased with how he handles the pressure.

Hodlofski emphasized that his team's inexperience led to the team getting tired and giving up the lead to a much more experienced team. NEB took full advantage of its chance to mount a comeback led by senior captain Brandon Kuhn.

The comeback started in the second half with NEB's Cesar Alvarez sending a perfectly placed over the top through ball to Josh Stanton and he took hold of his chance blasting the ball into the top left-hand corner.

Kuhn took over scoring the next two goals and assisted the game winner. NEB head coach Scott Merritt sung the praises of his star player.

"Brandon put the team on his back and put the team on his back when others were not talking enough and he made finishes when we were struggling to finish," Merritt said. "He is a fantastic player and I can't talk enough about how much he has been a fantastic teammate and he is now one of the best teammates on the team to the point where he became the team captain this year."

Kuhn scored a penalty kick tying the game 2-2 at the 12:27 mark of the second half. Then Kuhn scored a tremendous 35-yard free kick perfectly placed into the left-hand corner of the net completing the comeback giving NEB a 3-2 lead at the 10:08 mark in the second half.

Ten seconds later, Hodlofski went on a miraculous solo run right from the kick-off, intricately weaving his way through the heart of the NEB defense and finished the run firing a rocket shot over the goalkeepers outstretched arms into the top right-corner.

Just as it looked like Troy had the momentum, NEB regained the lead about 30 seconds later when Kuhn broke free on the touchline and squared the ball back to NEB forward Gavin Merritt who coolly tapped home the game winning goal.

"I love the result," Merritt said. "I don't care how close it was but they did play us very well and we were not holding good shape for the first half and we did not start the game with any energy. By ten minutes into the second half I could tell the energy was there."

Northeast Bradford is back in action Thursday Sep. 9 traveling to play Williamson at 4 p.m. Troy also plays on Thursday hosting Galetton at 5:30 p.m.

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