

Howell North Hands Vikings First Loss of Season in Thrilling Overtime Victory



Photographer Riley Kampf

Senior Maddy Wood takes possession of the ball against Troy Buchanan.

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Entering Tuesday's critical rivalry match with the Francis Howell Vikings, the varsity girls soccer team was on a three game losing streak with all three losses coming against fellow GAC South teams. Now the Lady Knights were tasked with taking on a Vikings team that was undefeated at 6-0 and had conceded just one goal on the season.

Howell North knew that they needed a strong performance from the back and goalkeeper Katy Arnold if they wanted to take down their division-leading rivals. Not only did both Arnold and the defense do this for the Knights, but they completely shut down the high-powered Vikings offense.

"Katy's done a great job in goal for us this year, and she did a great job again last night," assistant coach Larry Scheller said. "She cut out a lot of through balls and made a couple of really good saves. The backs did a good job of eliminating the number of times Howell got behind them and got opportunities on goal."

Through the first 40 minutes of play, both the Knights and Vikings cancelled each other out with strong play on the defensive ends and neither team truly stood out. In the second half, however, Howell North was able to build strong possessions and take control of the game on both sides of the field.

Arnold and the backline continued their strong outing, while Brynna Rutherford and

the rest of the Knights attack started to create more opportunities on net. Despite the surge on offense, the score remained scoreless at the end of regulation. Both the players and coaches were content with the display Howell North put together in the first 80 minutes of the game.

“I thought we had the better of the play,” Scheller said. “They opened up the game better, but towards the second half we had more and the better of the chances. Going into the overtime period, we needed to continue with that momentum that we built in the second half.”

The Lady Knights used this added energy to get off to a flying start in overtime. They continued their strong play across the back and in the midfield, and were finally able to find the breakthrough in the later stages of the overtime period. After a move inside by junior Bria Hamilton, freshman forward Brynna Rutherford was able to find the back of the net and score the winning goal that sent both teams home.

“The fact that she [Rutherford] ended up on top of the ball was fantastic for her, for her confidence, and hopefully she can build off of that going forward,” Scheller said.

The thrilling and monumental win improved the Lady Knights to a record of 3-3-1 and gave them their first divisional win, while also handing their rival Vikings their first loss of the season. Howell North didn’t just snap their losing streak against a divisional rival, but did it on the home soil of one of the top teams in the area in Francis Howell. The win brought the Lady Knights to .500, and carried a lot of meaning for both the team and coaches.

“It’s a stepping stone,” Scheller said. “You win against a pretty good team, it can build confidence and understand that we’re right there with some of the better teams, but we have to play and get after it. It shows we can be beat, but at the same time when we’re on our game, we can play with anyone.”



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