

Kotch, Adamsky connect on Pennington girls soccer's winning goal against Albertus Magnus



Pennington's Morgan Kotch (32) runs with the ball against Lawrenceville during a MAPL girls soccer game on Wednesday night at Tom Liwosz Field in Pennington. (Kyle Franko/ Trentonian Photo)



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PENNINGTON — After steamrolling its first 12 opponents by a staggering goal margin of 72-4, the undefeated Pennington Prep girls soccer side faced its biggest challenge of the season on Wednesday when Albertus Magnus arrived in town for a night game.

The result was by far the most competitive game Pennington has had this season, but it was also its most rewarding as the Red Hawks posted a 2-1 victory over the New York State squad in a game between two sides that were nationally ranked last week.

Albertus Magnus (10-2-2) is going to drop out of those ratings after suffering its second loss in its past three games, but it's full steam team ahead for a Pennington team that is now 13-0.

"We had a game plan and we executed it," said Pennington co-head coach Bill Hawkey. " We were also physical. I was happy to see that because this was the most physical game we've had. Our girls really responded against definitely the best team we've played this year."

Although the final score was close, Pennington did have by far the better of the play and ended up with an 11-4 advantage in shots on goal.

Pennington grabbed the initial lead with a little over 5:00 remaining in the first half when sophomore Sara Chernelich took a pretty through pass from Morgan Kotch and converted a left-footed shot that bounced off the far post before crossing the goal line.

“We knew it would be a great test for us and we knew we would have to play together,” said Chernelich. “I’m really proud of our team. We play together no matter what’s the competition.”

Against the run of play, Albertus Magnus drew even 8:53 into the second half when a long run down the left flank and cross led to a scramble in the box. After a save by Pennington keeper Katie Dwyer, the visitors scored when Teigan Cunnane scored on a tap in.

The tie didn’t last long as Pennington produced the game winner less than three minutes later. This came when a Hailey Adamsky pass set up Kotch in the right side of the box. Kotch did the rest with a high bullet to the opposite corner for her 23rd goal of the season.

Obviously, this is exactly the type of team you want to play with the Mercer County and Prep State tournaments on the immediate horizon.

“This is the first time we played them,” said Hawkey. “We talked during the off season about how we’d like to get new teams on the schedule. (Co-head coach Patrick) Murphy worked his magic and made some phone calls. Now

we'd like to reciprocate and play them again next year. Games like this are good for your program."

They are even better when you win them.

Albertus Magnus (10-2-2) 0 1 – 1

Pennington (13-0) 1 1 – 2

Goals: AM-Cunnane. P-Chrnelich, Morgan Kotch: Assists: P-Morgan Kotch, Adamsky. Shots: P-11, AM-4. Saves: AM-Haesche 6. P-Dwyer 3.