

SHARE  

## PERFECTION

### WISCONSIN GIRLS RUGBY STATE FINAL: Catholic Memorial 21, DSHA 17

By Michael Grennell

mgrennell@conleynet.com 262-513-2667

FRANKLIN — On a cold and wet pitch on Sunday night, the top two girls rugby teams in the state faced off once again. The stakes were high, as the winner would walk away with the Wisconsin Girls Rugby state title.

Mere seconds away from being shut out in the first half of the match, Catholic Memorial senior Laci Crow found a gap in the Dashers' defense to score the Crusaders' first try of the evening, and after junior Alex Mazurczak succeeded on the kick conversion, the Crusaders entered halftime trailing 10-7.

That last second score would prove to be the spark that Catholic Memorial was searching for, as the Crusaders rallied in the second half for a come-from-behind 21-17 win over Divine Savior Holy Angels to claim the state title and put an exclamation point on their undefeated season.

"I'm really excited. We've worked really, really hard and these girls deserve it. It's just been a crazy season, and I'm feeling good and really grateful," Crusaders head coach Alex Glorioso said. "There were a lot of doubts going into the season just with all the changes and everything, but these girls are resilient. It just feels good to know that all of our hard work has really kind of paid off for us."

DSHA had jumped out to an early lead on the night, quickly scoring two tries, but failing to complete both kick conversion attempts. Those missed kicks would prove costly, as Mazurczak's perfect 3-for-3 performance on kick conversions would end up proving the difference in the match.

Coming out of halftime, the Crusaders appeared to find their rhythm on the pitch, as midway through the second half, Crow would score her second try of the night, and Mazurczak's kick would give CMH its first lead of the night, 14-10.

That lead would end up shortlived however, as DSHA quickly raced down the field to get the try and record its first successful kick conversion of the night to retake the lead 17-14.

As the clock continued to wind down and the minutes slipped by, both teams struggled to move beyond midfield in either direction. Catholic Memorial suddenly gained ground, and then the ball landed in the hands of junior Audrey Fryda. With the game on the line and her team's chances at a state title beginning to fade, Fryda could not be stopped, as she weaved through the Dashers' defense, dodging defenders and slipping through a wave of arms reaching out towards her before finally diving across the try line for the go-ahead score.

"I was getting (the ball) from my teammate Marie Dowling, and I knew right away that there was going to be a hole," Fryda said. "I just trusted her, and the second she gave it to me, I just got angry and I just went for it, and I kind of just scored. I don't even know what happened it was all a blur."

Mazurczak would make her third kick conversion of the night to extend the lead to four points.

"I yelled. I was screaming. We needed that, and she's tenacious," Glorioso said. "Audrey Fryda just ran through. She told me at halftime she wasn't going to let anyone tackle her and that's exactly what she did. And that was huge for us, and then our defense came up big to end the game for us, so it was exciting and fun."

The Crusaders and the Dashers met once more at midfield, but neither team was able to gain much ground before the final whistle blew, signaling Catholic Memorial as the new state champions as CMH fans stormed the pitch to join in on the celebration.

"We came into it, our gameplan was come up as strong as we can, and I think at first we were a little startled, because it was really tough," Fryda said. "We both wanted it. Both teams wanted it so bad, but the difference is we just came together like we always do, and we battled through just like we have all season."

That perseverance in the face of adversity is what caught Glorioso's attention the most.

"Not giving up (was key). I know that sounds a little bit cliché, but I told them after the first five, 10 minutes we were a little too excited, and once your emotions kind of subside, and fits the game. We've got to keep thinking and not give up," Glorioso said. "Like, this whole season we've played down before and teams have scored on us. We've felt beat up and stuff and they always find a way to come back."

The Dashers' three tries in the loss came from Mary Foy, LaJess Jordan and Ima Willoughby. For DSHA head coach John Klein, the result was not what his team had hoped for, but he was proud of the effort that they showed on the pitch.

"It always is (a tough matchup) with Memorial," Klein said. "It was a heck of a game. Back and forth, every single player out on the field gave everything that they had. But that's what it's been like for a long time between these two teams."

"They just come out here and there's total respect in battle. We didn't get it done today, but we'll get more opportunities in the future. We're going to learn from it and we're going to get better for it."

There will be little rest for the champions though, as soon they will begin their preparations for a title defense run next season.

"We're just going to work hard over the winter. We get the rest of the week off and then we're going to start our winter lifting," Glorioso said. "So we're excited and we're going to keep building and keep that momentum and our team culture alive and see what happens."



The Catholic Memorial girls rugby team poses after winning the Wisconsin Girls Rugby state championship on Sunday night.

Michael Grennell/Freeman Staff



Click here to see this page in the edition:



(Login Required)

SHARE  



Catholic Memorial junior Audrey Fryda evades tackles as she sprints through the Dashers defense and scores the match-winning try for the Crusaders in Sunday's Wisconsin Girls Rugby state final.

Michael Grennell/Freeman Staff



CMH junior Alex Mazurczak succeeds on the kick conversion at the end of the first half in Sunday's Wisconsin Girls Rugby state final against DSHA.

Michael Grennell/Freeman Staff



Powered by **TECNIAVIA**

Copyright © 2021 Conley Group. All rights reserved 11/02/2021