

Crusaders back where they belong

WIAA DIVISION 3 GIRLS SOCCER STATE CHAMPIONSHIP: Catholic Memorial 4, Edgewood 2

By Beckett Callan

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MILWAUKEE — After Catholic Memorial girls soccer lost 2-1 to Plymouth in last year's WIAA Division 3 State Girls Soccer Tournament final, CMH coach Andi Davi had five words: "I want that gold ball."

Three hundred and fifty-nine days later, Davi's manifestation became reality.

On Saturday, Catholic Memorial girls soccer won its record 12th WIAA state title, using three goals in the first five minutes of the second half to beat Edgewood Sacred Heart 4-2 at Uihlein Park in Milwaukee.

"Obviously, it is amazing," Davi said. "I really believe, with no disrespect to anyone else, we deserve it this year."

It's hard to argue with Davi's assessment. Despite being a D3 school, CMH finished the season 20-2-1, with its two losses coming against Regis, a program from Colorado, and Muskego, the Division 1 state champion.

Although the scoreline may have suggested a closer game, CMH dominated Saturday's final. Memorial bossed possession and created chance after chance.

"The girls play good soccer, we don't do a kick and run," Davi said. "They're trying to follow a system, and it's not easy."

Sophomore Claire Weber was the star of the show for CMH on Saturday. The midfielder had a hand in every goal CMH scored, assisting on three and putting away one herself.

"I just tried to not think about the heat, and knowing that everyone's in the same

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Catholic Memorial senior Addie Fura controls the ball on her knee to keep it away from Edgewood's Maddie Iglar during the first half of the WIAA Division 3 State Girls Soccer Tournament final on Saturday at Uihlein Park in Milwaukee.

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situation, knowing that my teammates had my back," Weber said.

Despite dominating the ball and eventually the scoreline, it was Edgewood that took the lead in the 26th minute.

Sacred Heart had the wind at its back in the first half and used it to its advantage to open the scoring. A giveaway by CMH near the top of the box gave the ball to Edgewood, and after a couple of crisp passes, sophomore Laureyn Matanaer bent a beautiful shot into the top right corner, giving CMH senior goalkeeper Jenna Welsch no chance.

Memorial pressed for an equalizer, and five minutes before halftime, it found it.

Weber's shot from the edge of the box bounced back off the crossbar, and junior Margaret Sisk was first to react, following in and tapping home from close range.

"My first shot, I thought it was going in," Weber said. "But it didn't, but Margaret was right there to finish it."

The goal was no more than CMH deserved as the first half finished at one apiece. On the balance of play, Edgewood would have been happy to go into the break tied, but not CMH.

Just 26 seconds into the second half, CMH started to assert its dominance. Weber again let fly from the edge of the box, and her shot was too hot to handle for sophomore goalkeeper Madeline Cavanaugh, finding its way into the back of the net and giving Memorial its first lead of the game.

As soon as Weber scored, the floodgates opened. Just over a minute and a half later, CMH earned a corner, and Weber pinged a cross along the 6-yard box. It was an enticing cross, one that was too good for senior Julia Rothermel to pass up. Rothermel rose highest to head home, giving CMH a quick two-goal lead.

Edgewood responded, however, as just over two minutes later Matanaer tapped home from close range to cut into the CMH lead.

But just 47 seconds after Matanaer's goal, CMH restored its two-goal cushion. In what was almost a carbon copy of Rothermel's first goal, Weber crossed in another corner kick, and Rothermel, who scored four goals all season, headed home again to make it 4-2.

"I was like, 'Nothing's going to stop me from getting this ball right now,'" Rothermel said. "I wanted it so bad, and I just put my mind to it."

Rothermel's second goal of the match, and the fourth goal in six minutes, would be the final tally of the match. Edgewood had one final chance in the 77th minute through top scorer Sonoma Bever, but

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weiscn, who just started playing goaie tnis year, made an exceient save to her left to preserve the twogoal lead.

"She puts work in, besides our practices," Davi said. "She contacts our goalkeeper coach and says, 'What can I do?' But that save was obviously big. She was there at the right time."

Welsch's save helped to secure the win and give CMH its 12th WIAA state title in program history, and the first under Davi's tutelage.

"CMH has that history," Davi said. "But from there to here, you can see that progress. Then you can be proud of the work you put in and all the work that the girls put in. You can see it, there is no luck in this title."



Catholic Memorial freshman Lauren Schmidt tries to get past Edgewood's Makayla Foley during the second half of the WIAA Division 3 State Girls Soccer Tournament final on Saturday at Uihlein Park in Milwaukee.

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