

Gwynedd Mercy matches Nazareth Academy's intensity in 2-2 draw

LOWER GWYNEDD >> Gwynedd Mercy Academy girls soccer coach Derik Stover was eager to see how his players responded Monday.

The Monarchs, playing for the second time this season on their new turf pitch, were going up against a physical and fast Nazareth Academy side that had impressed Stover so far this season. With a relatively young core in place for his side, Stover hoped his players would be able to match Nazareth.

GMA was certainly up to the task, playing Nazareth to a double overtime 2-2 draw in the rain Monday afternoon and both teams certainly had their moments in what was a good all-around match.

"We learned we can play with these physical teams and we can play that one and two-touch and be on that next level with them," GMA junior midfielder Mollie Hanson said. "Last season was tough, but our tempo of play has really improved especially through these first few games. In the scrimmages, it wasn't really there but we're starting to come through."



Gwynedd Mercy Academy's Samantha Berish dribbles up field during the Monarchs' game against Nazareth Academy on Monday, Sept. 10, 2018. (Gene Walsh/Digital First Media)

Hanson continued her strong start to the season with a goal and assist in the first half, while Gwynedd Mercy keeper Grace Galbreath made 10 saves in net in a solid showing and a number of other players put in a good shift for the Monarchs. Nazareth was just as game, and challenged the Monarchs to every 50/50 ball and with their pressure that endured even into the second overtime.

Gwynedd has seven seniors this year, but the bulk of the team is in its 11 juniors and seven sophomores. Two of the team's four captains – Hanson and defender Sarah White – are juniors and the attack is mainly made up of juniors.

With Nazareth posing a good picture of what the rest of the

AACA would hold this fall, the Monarchs coaches weren't asking anything more of their players than just effort.

"Our message was let's see where we stand as a young team, what's our direction and what's our identity," Stover said. "I am so proud of this group and the way they fought all the way through. We didn't dominate, but we won a lot of the battles all the way through. I wanted to stay competitive throughout the entire game, no matter the result and for them to give it their all, which they did."

Sam Berish with a well-timed chip puts GMA up 2-1 with 8:27 left first half. Mollie Hanson assist
pic.twitter.com/JSqEmV09FA

– Andrew Robinson (@ADRobinson3) [September 10, 2018](#)

The hosts scored less than 10 minutes in when senior captain Cailin Panacek lofted a perfect corner kick into the middle of the box, where Hanson rose up and powered a textbook header into the back of the net. That goal held for about 20 minutes until Nazareth's Steph Marino hit a rocket from outside the box that glanced off a GMA defender and into the net to tie things up.

Gwynedd Mercy came right back with a well-built and well-taken goal that saw Hanson flick the ball on to sophomore Sam Berish, who then smartly chipped the oncoming keeper for the 2-1 lead. Unfortunately for the Monarchs, a miscue at the back led to an own goal when an errant back pass made its way into the net.

Still, facing a fork in the road moment, GMA was able to get over the error and compose itself.

"I relied on my captains to pick them up," Stover said. "We told our goalie, Gracie Galbreath, we have your back no matter what and we'll do everything in our power to get back in the

game, which is exactly what they did.”



Gwynedd Mercy Academy’s Grace Hirschmann works to control the ball near Nazareth Academy’s Katie Harmon during their game on Monday, Sept. 10, 2018. (Gene Walsh/Digital First Media)

The frantic finish to the first half would be the only scoring the rest of the way as both team’s keepers took over in the second half and extra time. Nazareth keeper Katie McGinn was terrific, playing off her line well to cut off a handful of GMA balls in and she made a couple of tremendous saves late, including one near the end of regulation against Hanson, to

hold up the scoreline.

Galbreath was tested quite a bit in the second half and first overtime and the sophomore made every stop she needed to while her back line, with White and Panacek at the center, matched up well with Nazareth's physical forwards.

Both Stover and Hanson stressed they want the Monarchs' attack to be varied and they're working to get some players a little more assertive in taking shots.

"We do well getting the through balls in and taking some shots from the outside," Hanson said. "The energy was there in the beginning, we were ready to goal. Even when it was tied up, we didn't let it get to us and we kept pushing. We fought the whole way."

Mollie Hanson with a textbook header off Cailin Panacek's corner. 1-0 GMA pic.twitter.com/jxm1Dv00fX

– Andrew Robinson (@ADRobinson3) [September 10, 2018](#)

Hanson, a center midfielder, won most of her aerial challenges on Monday and said she was happiest with how well her teammates did on 50/50 balls. AACA teams don't give up easy tackles and Hanson hoped some of the newer players to the varsity side saw how to play against that.

"You just have to give it back to them," Hanson said. "If we can play with a team like this, then we can also be physical with a non-physical team and that's also important."

The Monarchs will need to apply their lessons from Monday quickly, as they travel to last year's PIAA 3A runner-up in Villa Joseph Marie on Thursday, then host PIAA AA runner-up St. Basil on Saturday morning, both league fixtures.

"This should be a morale boost for our girls, even if we're

coming out with just one point, I'm happy for them and we're looking forward to our next opponents," Stover said. "I want to be passionate about the game I love and for the girls to play off of me. There's a lot of fight in them, which I love to see."

Promoted to varsity, DiPasquale scores pair of goals

Freshman Aly DiPasquale, called up from the junior ranks for her first varsity game, responded with two goals and an assist to lead the Garnet Valley girls soccer team to a 5-0 Central League victory over Ridley Saturday.

Emily Mathewson, Jackie Sever and Kristen Garrity also scored for the Jaguars. Lisa Gale had eight saves in net for Ridley.

In the Tri-State Christian Conference:

Christian Academy 4, Baptist Christian School 0: Lindsay Haseltine pumped in two goals as the Crusaders (5-1-2, 4-1-1 Tri-State Christian Conference) scored all of their goals in the opening half. Grace Cryan chipped in with a goal and two helpers.

Madison Dutton (seven saves) stopped everything that came her way and sweeper Amber Phillips excelled in the midfield for TCA.

In nonleague action:

Marple Newtown 4, Nazareth Academy 1: Juniors Megan and Julia

Lynch sure made a great tag team in this one.

The twin sisters had three of the Tigers' four goals, while Danielle Collins accounted for the other. Amanda Goodyear had a good day in net with five saves.

Springfield 3, Bonner-Prendergast 2: Taylor Cutcliff delivered the goal five minutes into overtime to lift the Cougars to an exciting victory over the Pandas.

Erin Cutcliff and Shynelle Fry also scored for the Cougars. Madison D'ambrosio turned aside five saves in goal.

Kelsey Czibik and Meghan Campbell were Bonner-Prendie's goal scorers.

Strath Haven 3, Hatboro-Horsham 0: After a closely contested opening half, the visiting Panthers broke things open with three goals after intermission by Lizzie King, Maddy Tannert-Schmidt and Maddie Forbes. Tannert-Schmidt and Forbes each added an assist.

Katie Fisher stopped all seven shots she faced between the pipes.

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