

Quick score sends Saints to substate final

Written by Guy Martino

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Blustering winds and sloppy field conditions at Heco Field last night did not deter the Cedar Rapids Xavier boys soccer team from putting the ball in the net.

Quick scoring paired with a stiff defensive effort propelled the Saints past DeWitt Central 5-0 in a Class 2A substate semifinal last night at Xavier.

Xavier hosts Marion in the substate final Saturday at 12 p.m. Marion beat Mount Vernon, 3-0, Wednesday. The winner of that game advances to the state tournament, June 2-4 at Des Moines. Xavier is the defending state champion.

The Saints got the goals coming early when Logan Buschette connected only 2 minutes into the game. Xavier never looked back, getting goals from Luke Neuhaus, Chris Kapfer, and two from top scorer Chad Gilmer.

When they weren't scoring, the Saints were busy stopping Dewitt Central's offense. Allowing only three shots on goal in the first half, Xavier dominated the ball throughout the game.

Xavier Coach Amir Hadzic said there is room for improvement, but was generally pleased with his team's effort.

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"I am not crediting our defense as much as them playing defensively, but this defense has played together all season long," he said. "We have had shutouts against MVC teams and I am confident we can go to the substate final and continue to have success."

Important substate games and the state tournament are familiar to many players on Xavier's team, and Hadzic wasn't surprised that they came ready play. "The experience really helps. Many of our players have played on a big stage and it is no surprise they rise to the occasion."

While happy to come out with the win, Hadzic mentioned that there are certain areas his team should clean up before the substate final.

"Sometimes we were trying to do too much," he said. "We just need to be more dangerous offensively and improve our passing. But we have two days to work so hopefully we will be ready for Saturday."

Xavier 5, DeWitt Central 0

Goals -- CRX: Logan Buschette, Luke Neuhaus, Chris Kapfer, Chad Gilmer 2.