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Woodmore, Ross end soccer match in tie

Wildcats dominate first half, Little Giants take over after halftime

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ELMORE -- It was a tale of two halves for the Fremont Ross and Woodmore soccer teams Thursday.

Both teams took turns dictating play in one of the game's two halves, but neither could better the other -- finishing in a 1-1 tie in their non-league contest.

It would be the Wildcats controlling the game's tempo and style of play for the first 45 minutes, using their speed and quickness to their advantage, while in the second half, it was Ross seizing control, spreading the field and keeping the ball to the outside.

Ross senior Anton Alm's goal just 40 seconds into the second half would be the equalizer, as his goal got Ross back in the game, it was the turning point in the game's momentum.

"I told the kids at halftime we have to stay sharp," said Woodmore coach Carlo Pocino. "The first 10 minutes of the second half are always crucial and some get back in the game quick and others don't and we gave up a quick goal because Ross got back in the game quicker."

Alm, racing toward the middle of the field, won the ball away from a Wildcat midfielder. He then proceeded to run down the left side of the field, before firing a shot past Woodmore goalie Collin Aspacher from just outside the left side of the goal box.

For the Little Giants (1-5-1), the goal sparked a new life, as they started to get away from Woodmore's fast-paced play.

"We didn't play our game in the first half," said Ross coach Phil Collison. "In second half, we settled down and started to get into a little more rhythm and kept the ball wide.

"When we're keeping the ball wide, we're more successful and we can at least keep control of the match, which we did after we got that goal."

The Little Giants out-shoot the Wildcats 14-6 in the second half, including 5-2 in shots on goal. Ross would finish with eight total shots on goal to four for the Wildcats.

"Our guys just wanted to play at Woodmore's pace and play their game in the first half," said Collison. "They're a fast team and we wanted to try to play that game and that's not our style of play."

Right from the opening kick, the Wildcats' speed gave the Little Giants problems, as Ross couldn't keep the ball wide to the outside and was forced to the middle of the field.

Still, neither team could generate many quality chances till Woodmore finally broke through with the game's first goal at 31-minute mark.

With the ball up for grabs in the Wildcats' zone, Woodmore sophomore forward Hans Deckman came away with the ball and ran towards the Ross goal. Little Giant's goalie, Jay Speer, playing to the left

side of the net was unable to cut down on Deckman's angle, as he sent a hard kick into the right side of the net from the left side of the penalty box for the unassisted tally.

The Wildcats' goal came on one of three or four quality breakaway chances that looking back at the first half, coach Pocino knows his team could've converted on more.

"We had at least three or four occasions where we could've put the ball away and put the game away," said Pocino. "Brian Alexander, our point-man, had a few good breakaways, but sometimes you win those and sometimes you lose those."

Woodmore breakaways were hard to come by in the final half, as Ross' pressure kept the ball in the Woodmore end for the majority of the play.

In the game's final 10 minutes, the Little Giants kept heavy pressure on the Wildcat net, forcing Aspacher to be on his toes.

Ross' best chance for the winning score came from senior Travis Pasch, whose kick from just outside the right-side of the penalty box trickled past the left goal post with six minutes left after Aspacher got just enough of the ball to re-direct it wide.

Aspacher and the Wildcats held for the final five minutes, as he finished with seven saves. His counterpart, Speer would finish with three saves for the Little Giants.

Ross returns to the field Saturday when it hosts Lima Senior, while Woodmore next plays Tuesday at Lake.

"When we can recognize to not let the other team's play to dictate ours, I think we'll be more successful," said Collison. "We saw what we can do in the second half today and we just need to find a way to put that into a full game."



Fremont Ross' Anton Alm battles for the ball against Woodmore's Gavin Camp. (Jonathon Bird | News-Messenger)