

Portland Timbers bounce rival Sounders on penalty kicks

By **Tim Booth**
The Associated Press

The first bit of celebrating by the Portland Timbers was premature. The confusing MLS playoff rules created a moment of misunderstanding at the end of extra time and a wild 120 minutes.

The second celebration, after Dairon Asprilla deposited his winning penalty past Seattle Sounders goalkeeper Stefan Frei, was pure elation for the Timbers as they advanced to the Western Conference finals and ended the season for their Cascadia rivals to the north.

"I thought it didn't disappoint. Seattle and Portland brought the

rivalry to this match and it was incredible," Timbers coach Giovanni Savarese said.

Asprilla's kick sent the Timbers past Seattle 4-2 in a penalty shootout Thursday night after an emotionally exhausting second half and extra time that saw the teams combine for five goals and wild swings of elation and desperation.

Seattle won the second leg of the semifinal matchup 3-2, scoring late in regulation to force extra time before both teams scored early in the extra session. Eventually, the sides decided the winner via penalties, although Portland initially believed it had won at the end of extra time

after scoring a second road goal in the match.

The Timbers claimed the celebration at the end of extra time was due to pride and exhaustion for taking the match to penalties. It ultimately didn't matter because the Timbers finished the job in the shootout.

Asprilla, Lucas Melano, Diego Valeri and Sebastian Blanco scored penalties for Portland. Seattle's goals came from Raul Ruidiaz and Handwalla Bwana, but Will Bruin hit the post and Osvaldo Alonso's shot was saved by Portland goalkeeper Jeff Attinella, atoning for an earlier mistake that led to Seattle's

first goal.

"Being a goalkeeper, you have to shake that off because you always know another one is coming," Attinella said. "All the credit to the guys — they responded so well for me. I'm just very grateful for the way it turned out."

Portland will face Sporting Kansas City or Real Salt Lake in the West finals. It's the Timbers' first trip to the conference finals since winning the MLS Cup in 2015.

"The end result was not good. But certainly, there were moments of joy and euphoria, happiness. Thinking you had the game in control," Seattle coach Brian Schmetzer said.

"And then that gets snatched out away from you."

Portland held a 2-1 lead after the first leg at home and the match reached penalties only because of a wild final 25 minutes of regulation and a beginning to extra time that was equally crazy.

Seattle took a 1-0 lead in the match and pulled even at 2-2 on aggregate — with the road goal tiebreaker — when Ruidiaz scored in the 68th minute after Attinella mishandled a cross into the penalty area. Less than 10 minutes later, Blanco scored to put the Timbers ahead 3-2 on aggregate and even in the match at 1-1.

POY

Continued from Page 8A named defensive player of the year," Bassett said. "It makes all the hard work pay off when I get to play with such a talented team. I was very excited to find out, but I couldn't have done it without my team, especially my back line and goalkeeper (Cydni Cottrell)."

Both Boyer and Bassett were named to the all-CCC first team, along with two other Mountaineers — freshman MacKinley Gregus and Cottrell, a junior.

Gregus, who asserted herself as one of the key pieces off the bench for EOU, finished the regular season with 10 goals. As a result, she was named CCC newcomer of the year.

Cottrell, the Mountaineers' netminder, surrendered 10 goals in 15 contests, and had 49 saves for an .830 save percentage. She had seven individual shutouts and a hand in three others.

Three additional players were recognized by the CCC, including senior defender Chelsey Nicol. The three-



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

Eastern Oregon's Josee Bassett was selected as the CCC defensive player of the year.

year starter, like Bassett, has been an anchor for the EOU defense this fall.

Junior midfielder Jenna Jensen and sophomore defender Sarah Mitchell garnered honorable mention. Jensen, a transfer from Highline College, had a goal and three assists in 14 regular-season starts.

Mitchell, in her first season with Eastern, became an important part of the defense, playing in 13 matches total and starting nine. She also has a goal to her credit.

"It's nice to see they were recognized for the caliber of players (they are) and team we have," Plocher said of the selections.

FINALS

Continued from Page 8A single-season list behind Crystal Schuder's 17 goals in 2015. With her goal in Wednesday's quarterfinal win, she also became the second Mountaineer to score 20 goals in her career. She trails only Kristen Rice, who had 29 goals from 2003-2006.

The defense limited Rocky's offense to seven shots total, and goalkeeper Cydni Cottrell needed just two saves to record her eighth individual shutout.

It was EOU's second 1-0 victory over Rocky this season.

EOU did have 16 shots, but Battlin' Bears' keeper Maia Wetzel had seven saves to keep RMC close.

The win puts Eastern (15-1-2 overall) into a championship match Saturday afternoon against Northwest, which routed College of Idaho, 4-0. Plocher said the team's return to the

CCC title match is a proving point that last year's run to the CCC title and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics berth were not just a flash in the pan.

"It's (a) validation of how we view ourselves as a program, whether (other teams) thought last year was a fluke or we got lucky," he said. "I said it from Day 1 — we have a talented team."

Northwest and Eastern played to a 1-1 tie in the only regular season contest, on Oct. 5 in Kirkland, Washington. The teams also met in last season's CCC final, a 2-0 win by the Mountaineers.

Junior defender Josee Bassett is looking forward to the rematch.

"It will definitely be a challenge, but I can't wait to see what we bring on Saturday," she said.

Both teams have locked up NAIA playoff berths.

MOUNTAINEER OPENER

The EOU women's soccer team opened play Wednesday with a come-from-

behind victory, 4-1, over the Corban Warriors in the CCC quarterfinals in Springfield.

The Mountaineers pulled away with three goals in the second half for the win.

Jenna Jensen opened the second-half scoring for Eastern with a goal in the 52nd minute to break a 1-1 tie and give the Mountaineers the lead for good. EOU iced the game in the latter minutes of the game with a Korilynn Goller goal in the 77th minute and a MacKinley Gregus goal in the 78th.

The Warriors took a 1-0 lead less than 10 minutes into the contest on a Riley Smetzler goal, which ended a five-match shutout streak for EOU. Boyer knotted the score with a goal in the 35th minute for Eastern.

EOU generated a 28-8 shot advantage on offense, and on the defensive end Cottrell registered four saves.

EASTERN

Continued from Page 8A and Bears played an even, scoreless match until Kummerle delivered the eventual game-winner to send RMC to nationals.

"That's definitely the hardest pill to swallow on this run," Mills said of EOU being on the verge of a national berth. "We felt good about it (before the match). We went in feeling confident."

The Mountaineers battled for the equalizer, and put eight shots on goal in the match, but Kristofer Wenin made seven saves to keep Eastern off the board and end the Mountaineers' six-game winning streak and

eight-game unbeaten streak, both of which were the longest in program history.

Aidan Wright, one of 10 seniors who played for EOU for the last time, recorded five saves.

The season ends for EOU at 11-4-4 overall.

"It's hard to have to leave it and say this is the end of our season," Mills said.

EOU ADDS TO ITS HISTORY

The Eastern Oregon men's soccer team picked up their first CCC tournament victory in program history with a 2-0 win over Providence in the quarterfinals Wednesday night in Springfield.

A quick scoring burst in a span of less than nine minutes was all the Moun-

taineers needed to secure the victory. Carlos Solorio made it 1-0 in the 26th minute when he converted on a 1-on-1 opportunity, and Jack Rose scored on a strike off a corner kick in the 34th minute.

"I loved it. They came out and they had so much confidence," Mills said. "We knew we were going to win that game."

The Mountaineer defense did the rest, limiting the Argos to four shots on goal, all of which were stopped by Wright. EOU also had four shots on goal, and had 13 total.

The match saw the teams combine for 36 fouls — 24 of which were on Providence — and nine yellow cards — six by the Argos.



Ronald Bond/Observer file photo

Eastern Oregon senior defender Steven Beaudry, left, was selected to the all-Cascade Collegiate Conference second team.

AWARDS

Continued from Page 8A hard work, could get so much recognition," EOU Head Coach Zach Mills said. "We are so thankful and proud of their hard work and what they did for this program. I came in as a first-year coach and it was cool to see them work hard for each other. We've all worked together to get better and better. You could see it throughout the season. At the end we had the most successful season ever, and they set a standard."

Carlos Solorio led the Mountaineers with first-team all-conference honors after the newcomer netted 11 goals and added two assists in the regular season. The junior, who redshirted a season ago, had an immediate impact on the Mountaineers' level of play with his scoring ability, even though it took him a bit to adapt, according to Mills.

"Carlos (is) a very passionate (player who) had to turn himself around and mature a lot,"

Mills said. "It was really cool to see the way he has grown. I'm so excited to have him back next year."

EOU mainstay Steven Beaudry and newcomer Connor Young were both selected to the second team. Beaudry, a senior who has played in all but two of EOU's games during its four-year existence as a program, led a defense that gave up just over a goal a match and recorded three shutouts in the regular season.

Young, a freshman, had seven goals and two assists, helping an offense that upped its output by 16 goals, from 25 to 41, in the regular season.

Defender Jack Rose and midfielder Abraham Garcia earned honorable mention. Rose, a transfer from England, started each match for EOU on the back line, and Garcia, who started 15 games, had a goal and an assist and helped set up the offense.

"Those guys stepped up and stood out," Mills said.

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