

## St. Thomas Edges Bobcats on late Goal

Tuesday, September 18, 2012

by Al Pike



Pike/ Democrat Photo STA's Bryan King (left) and Oyster River's Liam O'Rourke battle for Possesion during Mondays Div II Game in Dover.

DOVER — TJ Tetreault isn't known for his offense. In fact, he played back for two years before being moved to midfield this season because of his foot skills. So when his shot from 35 yards Monday found the back of the net, he was as surprised as anyone. Tetreault's first varsity goal with a little more than five minutes left in the second half gave the St. Thomas Aquinas High School boys soccer team a 1-0 win over Oyster River and a sweep of the season series between the Seacoast rivals.

"I wasn't looking for the goal," said the senior co-captain. "I was just trying to get the ball (into the box) for someone to put a head on it and hopefully we'd score off of it. But I got lucky and hit the ball right, and it went over the goalie."

"Their goalie was playing very aggressive and that's why I think it caught him off guard," said St. Thomas coach Scott Suleski. "It saved him a number of times, but that one time it cost him."

The Saints improved to 3-3-1 in Division II and extended their unbeaten streak to three games (2-0-1). The Bobcats dropped to 4-2 with both losses coming against St. Thomas.

"They're a physical team," said OR assistant coach Greg Tucker. "They're a strong team. They've got very good players. They move the ball around. They play over the top a lot. They got a high shot into the net at the end." Tucker was filling in for head coach Charlie Crull, whose wife recently gave birth to the couple's first child.

The Saints defeated Oyster River, 2-1, in the season opener. The Bobcats hadn't lost since until Monday, snapping a four-game win streak.

"They've been one of the better teams," Tetreault said. "It feels good."

"I think this is one of those games we're lucky we won," Suleski said. "If we had played the second half like we played the first half it would have been no problem."

Oyster River outplayed St. Thomas in the second half, outshooting the Saints, 8-4. STA keeper. Ben Mardin made five of his seven saves in the second half.

His best might have come early in the second half on a point-blank shot by Seamus Clancy.

Mardin also smothered another Clancy bid in the eighth minute.

"Ben came up really big," Suleski said. "He earned that shutout."

The Saints dominated the first half, but couldn't finish. They outshot the Bobcats, 8-2, and had eight corner kicks to two for Oyster River.

For the game, St. Thomas outshot the Bobcats, 12-10. The Saints had 10 corner kicks overall and Oyster River three.

Jon Dutka and Griffin Sperry split time in net for the Bobcats and combined for three saves.

"Oyster River came out in the second half and possessed the ball," Suleski said. "I was getting nervous."

Oyster River not only lost the game, but also a couple of players. Connor Grove had to be removed by ambulance at halftime with a possible concussion, delaying the start of the second half.

"It's definitely a concussion," Tucker said. "It's just a matter of severity."

Grove collided in the air with STA's Bryan King when both were going for a head ball as the first half ended.

"We did well in the first half," Tetreault said. "I think we outplayed them. Oyster River's a great team. I'm not going to take anything away from them. Our passing and communication was on top. The injury was a horrible thing that happened.

They came back from that all fired up, and we were a little slow."

In the 15th minute of the second half OR's Zack Jones took an elbow just above his right eye and did not return.

Grove's injury seemed to energize the Bobcats, who carried the play early in the second half but couldn't convert.

"I think we moved the ball around a little bit better," Tucker said. "We played our style, we got it to the open player and we had a lot of shots."

"We were stepping back instead of marking," Suleski said. "I don't know if the head contact at the end of the (half) had some effect on the kids. They weren't playing as tight as they were."

The Saints had their own injury issue when Aaron Dubois — who was playing with a cast to protect a broken left arm — had to leave the game in pain in the second half after getting hit by a direct kick. Dubois was originally injured in the first meeting between the teams.

"I'm glad we don't have to play them again," Suleski said, "because they got a lot better since the first time we played them."



Pike/ Democrat Photo Oyster River's Patrick Mulhern (Left) competes for a 50/50 ball with STA's TJ Tetreault. OR's Jack Nimmo provides support.