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Laurentians earn entry into final

By JOHN BROWNE - The Telegram



An airborne Mount Pearl goalkeeper Gerald Connolly lunges desperately as the ball sails past him into the net in Challenge Cup soccer action Saturday against St. Lawrence. The Laurentians won the game 3-1 for an entry into the final. Photo By Gary Hebbard/The Telegram

There is not enough Dijon mustard in France to cover St. Lawrence hot-dog Richard Kelly, but as long as the Laurentian sniper delivers on the field, it is hard to criticize his sometimes colorful antics.

King Richard didn't score the winner in Saturday's Molson Challenge Cup contest that sent St. Lawrence to today's final, but his thunderous third goal seemed to deflate Mount Pearl/That Pro Look/Molson as the Laurentians carried off a 3-1 victory before about 2,500 spectators.

Mount Pearl will now meet Marystown United in the semifinal 1 p.m. today.

Marystown advanced by defeating Holy Cross/The Keg 1-0 in Saturday's other match.

Kelly's goal was a thing of beauty about two minutes into the second half after St. Lawrence had built up a 2-1 first-half lead on goals by Adam Loder, at five minutes, and Rudy Norman, at 11 minutes.

Kelly picked up the ball and crossed in front of the Mount Pearl net from about 25 yards out, not giving any indication whether he would pass or a shoot.

Suddenly, he turned on the ball and sent a screaming, high shot into the top corner of the net that gave Mount Pearl goalkeeper Gerald Connolly no chance to make a save.

Mount Pearl seemed to completely deflate after that and the rest of the half was a dull affair, enlivened only by several fine stops by Connolly.

"They came at us pretty hard to start the game, but we scored an early goal," said Kelly.

"Then we went up 2-1 but they were still putting pressure on us until the third goal," added Kelly, who had to sit out last year's championship series because of card trouble.

"We've lost in the final the last two years, so it would be nice to get back on top," said Kelly, who, with 20 goals, has wrapped up the season's scoring crown.

Kelly's hot-dogging display emerged about 30 minutes into the second half when he was yellow carded by referee Gary Martin for delay of the game.

St. Lawrence was awarded a corner kick and Kelly, after picking up the ball, began walking very slowly to the corner flag.

"I was just walking over to take the corner and said hi to one of my buddies from Fortune and he (Martin) chased me with a yellow card," explained Kelly with just the hint of a twinkle in his eye.

Kelly said the yellow card was without a warning, but the referee said he had cautioned both clubs earlier about wasting time.

None of the other Laurentians argued the call and Kelly was wisely taken out of the game moments later.

Ryan Caines had Mount Pearl's lone goal on a perfectly-placed free kick that beat Laurentian goalkeeper John Douglas low to the corner of the net at the nine-minute mark.

"We pretty much started the game a goal behind and that's tough," said Caines.

Mount Pearl's build-up was superior to the Laurentians in the first half, but the finish wasn't there.

Mount Pearl overall play then simply deteriorated in the final 45 minutes.

"Our game is keeping possession, not slogging the ball up the field which obviously didn't work," said Caines.

"We want to be in that final, so we'll be up for the semifinal. If we have to win that extra game than that's what we've got to do." he added.

Marystown 1, Holy Cross 0

A heroic defensive effort in the final 45 minutes earned United a trip to the semifinal.

The only goal of the game was gift wrapped by the Holy Cross defence.

A red-shirted defender, in an attempt to clear the ball from inside the 18-yard penalty box, instead set it up for Patrick Fewer, who promptly drilled it into the back of the net behind goalkeeper Colin Doyle at the nine-minute-mark of the contest.

"I didn't think their defender would muck the ball, but he did and it went right to me, so I just let one go," Fewer said.

Fewer admits his club has to play better, "but it shows the character of the team that we can get by with one goal.

"Our strength is our defence, by far," he said.

Holy Cross has a pretty good mix of veterans and young players but the team's lack of big-game experience may have cost them against United.

Holy Cross had the run of the play by a fair margin in the first half.

Each side had some scoring chances with Marystown having an opportunity to double its score late in the opening half from a free kick.

The initial shot cracked off one post and a United player then drilled the rebound off the other corner post.

However, most of the second half was played in the Marystown end of the field as Holy Cross fought desperately hard to tie the match.

Holy Cross had numerous corner kick opportunities but failed to connect. Other times, hesitation and poor shooting and decision making cost them.

Marystown got some defensive stops by a number of players at key moments in the second half when Holy Cross had an enormous amount of pressure on the Burin Peninsula club.

United keeper Scott Edwards made a clutch diving save on a low shot by J.B. DeRizzo that seemed headed to the corner of the net on the short side. Edwards jammed his right hand on the play, but stayed in the game.

Holy Cross had a glorious scoring opportunity late in the game when Jon Hawco, the team's top scorer had about three feet of open net from about six yards out, but missed the net completely.

Rough play

The game got a little scrappy in the waning minutes as Holy Cross flooded United's penalty area and, at one point, roughed up Edwards.

"We outplayed them for most of the game, but we had that one mistake basically," said Holy Cross coach Fox Reddy.

"The boys played with their heart, but if you don't win what are you going to do? They got the lucky shot and the breaks just didn't go our way."

Referee Keith Pike handed out yellow cards to Jeremy Brenton and the overly aggressive Nick Hurley of Marystown along with Hawco, Ryan Kirby, Brian Reddy, John Lacey and Jeremy Babstock of Holy Cross.

The championship game is set for 10 a.m. Monday.

Meanwhile, Breen's Jubilee Trophy women's semifinal between Sundance Sorella and Mount Pearl/Konfusion will be held at 3:30 p.m. today at King George V field.

The final is slated for 6 p.m.

Monday.

The international match between Canada and Germany's under-17 female teams will be played at 2 p.m.