

Father Judge advances in soccer playoffs

Father Judge boys' soccer coach John Dunlop knew his squad would have to bring its A game to Thursday's Catholic League quarterfinal matchup against Roman Catholic. The Cahillites gave the Crusaders a scare earlier in the month, and Dunlop wasn't about to let it happen again.

"The second time we played Roman, they were playing much better," Dunlop said. "They gave us a great game. It was a game they could have won, but we didn't finish our opportunities. Today we did that."

Father Judge hit its shots Thursday to roll over Roman Catholic, 6-1, and advance to tomorrow's Catholic League semifinal game against St. Joseph's Prep.

Thanks to senior forward Emmanuel Kollie, who ended with three goals, the Crusaders came out strong and never looked back. Kollie scored the first two goals of the game within the first 10 minutes to give Father Judge a commanding lead.

"My coach is always telling me, 'Manny, you've got to shoot the ball. You've got to shoot the ball.' So I just tried to take a shot," Kollie said of his first goal.

Kollie went on to seal the game in the second half to put Father Judge up, 6-1. He added his third score of the game on an assist from junior midfielder Eric Goldbloom.

Led by Kollie, Father Judge was relentless on the attack the entire game, keeping Roman Catholic goaltender Chris Woods and the Cahillites' defense on their toes.

Dunlop said his team's energy in the first half could be attributed to an extra day of rest because of a postponement.

"Every time you turn around it's a playoff game," he said. "The rain gave us an extra day to let our legs get back underneath us. We came out with energy."

Crusaders senior Chris Alimnde added to his team's first-half lead, forcing Roman Catholic's Woods to dive for a ball at the far post and deflect Alimnde's shot into the net.

"When we finish goals we're a very tough team to beat," Dunlop said. "I know that's easy to say, but we only gave up six goals all year."

Despite the early deficit, Roman Catholic was able to keep the game close heading into the half. Off a Mark Casasanto assist, junior Billy Goebig scored the Cahillites' only goal of the game late in the first half to make the score 3-1.

Father Judge commanded the second half. In addition to Kollie's final goal, junior Kevin Bushbeck nailed a penalty kick and senior Gavin Whelen added another score.

Led by senior Brian Wright, the Crusaders' defense supplemented their offensive prowess.

"Every practice, coach always tells me, 'If you get your goals in, the defense will do their job,' " Kollie said of his defense's performance.

If Saturday's game with St. Joe's Prep is anything like their first two meetings, don't expect Father Judge to put on another offensive show. In both their meetings this season, the Hawks held Father Judge to just one goal, once in a 1-1 tie and once in a 1-0 Father Judge victory.

For Dunlop and the Crusaders, they will approach their meeting the same way they have all season.

"We stay focused," he said. "We try not to look backwards. We play a system. The guys like it. It's aggressive. We don't change for anybody."