

Kennedy girls top Linn-Mar, 1-0

Written by

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The Kennedy girls soccer team narrowly edged out Linn-Mar 1-0 after a late goal at Linn-Mar Stadium on Thursday.

Kennedy, ranked No. 6 in Class 3A, ran its record 7-1 overall and 6-1 in the Mississippi Valley Conference. No. 10 Linn-Mar fell to 4-4, 4-4.

The game was the third annual Breast Cancer Awareness game between the schools with both teams wearing pink and the proceeds from ticket sales went to breast cancer awareness.

"It's a good way for the girls to identify and start the volunteering that they need to learn to support the local community," said Linn-Mar Coach Steve Dickinson. "They get up for it and they really enjoy it. It is good because the two groups play club together, they see each other every day."

The fact that the two teams know each other so well added to the atmosphere and hyped both teams up.

"It's a rivalry with Linn-Mar," Kennedy's Katherine Helmlinger said. "We lost to them last year and we didn't want to lose again. A lot of the girls on the team we play with for club, so we didn't want to lose."

The hype and excitement of the game seemed to get the best of the Cougars in the first half, as the Lions dominated possession and put heavy pressure on the Kennedy goal.

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"We hit the crossbar, and we hit a couple other items," Dickinson said. "That is just sometimes the luck of soccer, just that slight difference."

One of those "other items" that the ball bounced off of was the gloves of Kennedy keeper Allie Hutcheson who came up big, keeping the Cougars in the game through the first half by keeping the furious Linn-Mar attack out of the goal.

"It was basically not letting them have any," Hutcheson said. "When it is 0-0, you always got to make sure that they aren't the first ones to score because that puts a lot more pressure on. Just having that mentality of, 'They don't get one,' is really important."

In the second half, the play evened out significantly, with Kennedy even gaining a little bit of an upper hand in terms of possession and chances. The Cougars finally broke the scoreless tie in the 73rd minute when Claire Hellweg played a through ball to Helmlinger.

"I just saw the ball go through and I wanted to beat the keeper to it, stay composed and not rush the shot and it went in," Helmlinger said.

The goal put the Lions back on the attack as they pushed to try to tie the game back up. Their best chance to tie the game came with 27 seconds left when Lindsey Harms found herself in front of the goal with space to shoot. She fired a nice shot at the post but Hutcheson came up big yet again with a diving one handed save.

"It was a little scary," she said. "I didn't quite know where it was going, but I stretched out and got it and hoped my team was there to pick it up and they were."

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Kennedy plays at Class 2A No. 1 Xavier Friday (May 6) at 4:15 p.m.

Kennedy 1, Linn-Mar 0

Goal -- Kennedy: Katherine Helmlinger (73rd min). Assist -- Kennedy: Claire Hellweg.