

Warriors get depth scoring to down Cardinal O'Hara

By Adam Gorski

Having players that can step up and score whenever their number gets called is often a recipe for success, and it's something the Tonawanda boys soccer team prides itself on.

That depth proved important on Friday, as the Warriors defended their home field by shutting out Cardinal O'Hara 5-0 in a nonleague showdown.

"It's nice to put in some guys off the bench and still get the same type of intensity and the same type of ball movement," Tonawanda coach JJ Gabor said. "When you got multiple guys that can put the ball in the back of the net, it makes it tough for the other team."

Despite the Warriors (6-1-0) staying in control for the majority of the game, the O'Hara defense stayed stout, preventing the Tonawanda from finishing their chances early. Finally, with 15 minutes to play in the first half, junior Chris Garbo stole the ball off a Hawks goal kick, weaved his way past defenders, and buried the ball in the bottom corner to give the Warriors a 1-0 lead.

Ali Al-Haddad tallied five minutes later, and Tonawanda finally had separation, as they sat 2-0 up halftime.

"I saw they were holding a lot of defense back, and I knew we had to get through," said Garbo, who tallied his second goal of the night in the second half. "I knew once I got past one defender, it was an easy shot."

Adding insurance in the second half was senior Tyler Baker and junior Colin Kisloski, with Kisloski's being his first of the season.

While they could not manage to produce much offense on the evening, the O'Hara defense managed to hold strong against an onslaught of over 30 Tonawanda shots. Junior goalkeeper Sean Nemeth tallied nearly 20 saves in just under 60 minutes of work. Their only scoring chance came in the first half, as sophomore Isaih Serrano barely missed out on a breakaway.

Nemeth, along with his defenders, have been a big reason the Hawks (2-7-0) are having a strong campaign following their move to the Independent Athletic Conference for the 2020 season. They currently sit at 2-1-0 in league play, and are positioned well for the upcoming playoffs.

"Sean (Nemeth) obviously held us in the game, he's an unbelievable goaltender, and I don't think anyone can deny that," O'Hara coach Chris Dirmeyer said. "We're a young team, we

only have four seniors. I think we played them well to the point that we could ... our defense has got it down, we need to get the ball [to the offensive end] and get some shots on goal.”

As for Tonawanda, who currently sit at 5-0-0 in league play, they know there is still work to be done to claim a title in the tightly contested and talented ECIC IV division. Three of the Warriors’ five divisional wins have come by just one goal.

“We have to keep getting better each game,” Gabor said. “We need to make sure we’re winning those important league games, and playing our best soccer in the next couple of weeks going forward.