

Airline to face Jesuit in soccer quarterfinals

Written by Russell Hedges

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With her team trailing Sulphur 1-0 at the half, Airline soccer coach Sarah Yarina made sure the Vikings knew what was at stake.

"I said, 'Seniors, this could be your last 40 minutes, and this could be my last 40 minutes to coach you. Leave it all out there.' That emotion and that intensity is what won them the game." The Vikings scored two goals in the second half to rally past the Tors 2-1 in the second round of the Division I boys playoffs Wednesday night at Tinsley Park.

The No. 7 seed Vikings (27-2) will travel to New Orleans Tuesday for a 4:30 game at No. 2 seed Jesuit. The Blue Jays (18-3-1) defeated Airline's District 1 rival Caddo Magnet 3-0 in the second round.

This marks the first time in school history Airline has made it past the second round in boys soccer.

Abdullah Rayyan scored both Airline goals. He tied it about seven minutes into the second half on a free kick.

Rayyan scored the game-winner with about 10 minutes remaining, netting a shot near the goal with an assist from Matt Hanisee.

Rayyan said he didn't give up on the play and just stuck his foot in.

"Always stay on your feet, hustle, don't stop," he said. "It was awesome. We work very hard in practice and we play hard."

After Sulphur took the 1-0 halftime lead, Yarina made a few adjustments.

"We changed the formation from a 4-4-2 to a 4-3-3," she said. "I told the kids to apply more pressure, to be more aggressive, to win the second ball.

"If they win the first one, because they're very good in the air, then we need to win the second one which we did a fantastic job of doing."

Airline's Chris Galvin said the team continues to receive inspiration from teammate Patrick Laurent, who was lost for the season after suffering a broken leg in a game against Caddo Magnet Dec. 10.

"Ever since Patrick was out we started playing for him," Galvin said. "Once we had that first goal we just had the adrenaline to just get another one in."