

The Pueblo Chieftain

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Garcia kicks Montrose out of playoffs



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/BRYAN KELSEN South High School's Brittany Kliesen (12) grimaces as she collides with Montrose's Katherine Bony during first-half action in Wednesday's first-round Class 4A soccer playoff game at Dutch Clark Stadium.

South sophomore scores three goals in 4A playoff victory.

By TOM PURFIELD
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Mike Frazer knew his team was facing a strong player in South High School sophomore Amanda Garcia.

He just didn't know how strong.

Garcia scored three goals Wednesday to lead the Colts to a 3-1 win over Montrose in the first round of the Class 4A girls soccer state playoffs at Dutch Clark Stadium. She was set up nicely on her first goal and displayed her smooth ball-handling skills and nose for the net on the other two.

"We knew we had to watch her. What we didn't know was how little room she needs to get a good shot off, because she doesn't need much," Frazer, the Indians coach, said of Garcia. "She's an awesome player."

The Colts (12-2-2) advance to the second round and will face old nemesis Cheyenne Mountain on Friday. Montrose's season ended at 10-5-1. There was a distinct discrepancy in aggressiveness Wednesday as South dominated the ball and peppered the goal with 24 shots compared to just nine for the Indians.

With a finisher like Garcia, that's all it took for South.

"We just came out hard because we knew we were going to have to play our game if we wanted to win. We came together as a team," Garcia said. "We knew we couldn't overlook this team and just because they scored first doesn't mean the game's over. We've got all 80 minutes."

Garcia was referring to the Colts falling behind early on a goal by Montrose's Elizabeth Dearstyne. The Indians' Karla Morales got behind South's defense and lost the ball on a one-on-one, but the bounce went directly to a trailing Dearstyne for an easy goal to the right of South keeper Danielle Johnson.

An early deficit was a situation that hasn't been too kind to these Colts this season.

"That's the first time I've really seen this team come back from when they scored before we did," veteran South coach Franco Miceli said. "They came back and just capitalized."

Just more than 4 minutes later, Garcia measured a short pass from Kindra Sanchez and blasted the ball under the crossbar to tie the game with 24:16 remaining in the first half.

In the 30th minute, Garcia gave the Colts the lead for good with the play of the day.

About 10 yards out, Garcia juked two defenders by quickly switching the ball between her feet and rifled a shot to the left for a 2-1 lead.

"I just knew we had to score," Garcia said. "We didn't get down on each other after they scored first and we were all going 100 percent."

In the 45th minute, Garcia put the game away with the tail end of her hat trick. Montrose keeper Katherine Bony dove for Sanchez's shot but didn't secure it and Garcia knocked in the loose ball for the final score.

Miceli said it took his team some time to adjust to a shuffled approach but was pleased with the way it adapted and improved throughout the game.

"We had to change around a little bit in strategy play and it paid off down the long run," Miceli said. "It took them about 15-20 minutes to get used to it and we finally got the precision we wanted.

"Brooke (Hatton) and Jesse (Engel) had a pretty good game on defense and Morgan (Purkey), Brit (Kliesen), Amanda and Kindra had a pretty good offensive game."

Both Garcia and Miceli said the team was disappointed at having its two-year hold on the South-Central League championship snapped this season, but with the arrival of the playoffs, it's time to let that go and embrace the second season.

South has reached the quarterfinals the last two seasons. The Colts and Centennial are the only girls soccer teams from Pueblo to make it that far in the state playoffs.

"Now it's time to regroup. This is the playoffs," Miceli said. "We've been up here a lot of times and hopefully this is the year we promote ourselves to go farther than the quarterfinals."

South 3, Montrose 1

Class 4A first round

Montrose	1	0	-	1
South	2	1	-	3

SCORING

M-Elizabeth Dearstyne (unassisted), 11:27.

S-Amanda Garcia (assist Kindra Sanchez), 15:44.

S-Garcia (unassisted), 30:18.

S-Garcia (unassisted), 45:20.

TEAM STATISTICS

Shots-Montrose 9, South 24.

Saves-Montrose (Katherine Bony) 11, South (Danielle Johnson) 5.

Fouls-Montrose 11, South 7.