

BOYS SOCCER

Hankes explodes for 5 as Crimson Tide get first win

By Jeff Brown
Special to The Reporter

The Crimson Tide boys soccer team goes into its match with Deerfield/Cambridge today having achieved in its third game this season what it took seven games last season to do—get their first win.

Powered by the atomic right foot of midfielder Westley Hankes, the Tiders thrashed Madison Country Day School 7-1 in a home game on Sept. 2. Hankes scored five goals, three off the single-game state record.

The Tiders began the match on the front foot and never let up. They dispossessed MCDS soon after the kickoff and unleashed a barrage of shots on goal, one clanging off the crossbar.

Hankes scored the game's first goal early in the first half. Midfielder Kacper Durski scored the Tiders' second goal on a penalty kick at the 27:09 mark. Hankes' second goal came five minutes before halftime, to put the score at 3-nil.

Hankes scored three straight goals in the second

half to make the score 6-nil. Dribbling with a dead-eyed intensity and precision that belied the fact he's only a sophomore, Hankes sliced through the opponent's back shape, the white-clad defenders fluttering haplessly like stricken gulls. Forward Riley Ottman finished the scoring for Edgerton, netting the team's seventh goal late in the second half.

“He definitely came to play last night,” Blatchley said of Hankes on Sept. 3. “He’s a hard worker. He puts in the work at practice and for his club teams year-round. He wants to get out there . . . he wants to win and play well, and it shows.”

Blatchley said there was more to the win than just Hankes' net-shredding



Midfielder Westley Hankes launches a shot on goal during the Tiders 7-1 win over Madison Country Day School on Sept. 2.

Photo by Jeff Brown

very strong central midfield,” Blatchley said. “And we’ve just been working on a few different things—a lot of it has to do with not holding on to the ball too long and looking for the pass and making the pass.”

The only blot on the Tider's score-sheet was the red card (ejection) dealt out to goalie Kiavid Diaz in the second half. The red card came after Diaz tackled an onrushing MCDS player who'd broken away from a defender and was setting up for a shot. Blatchley said the penalty was automatic because Diaz failed

to touch the ball during the tackle.

“It's tough to connect on a player who's running as fast as they can at you. It's unfortunate that he didn't get a hold of the ball.”

performance. Much of the credit to the team's stellar form against MCDS was attributable to “finding the right mix of players in the right spots.”

“Obviously, we have a

Tiders 2, Lodi 2

The win against MCDS came two days after the Tiders played Lodi to a 2-2 draw at home.

Lodi took a 1-nil lead into halftime. The Tiders scored the equalizer in the second half when midfielder Andrew Gonzalez kicked a bouncing ball and sent a bloop over the keeper's head and into the net.

Lodi regained the lead on a free kick near the 80-minute mark. The Tiders' goalie, Isaac Zielke, tried to catch the ball but it caromed off his gloved hands and a Blue Devils player knocked the ball home.

With only ten minutes left in the match, things looked grim for the Tiders. But they equalized again on a goal by Westley Hankes.

Blatchley said the team's offensive production—14 shots on goal—was matched

by their perseverance.

“They never stopped. They just kept pushing and pushing and pushing. We definitely kind of hit our groove a little bit.”

Looking ahead

Tonight's home match presents Blatchley with an opponent he knows well—he served as the JV coach at Deerfield/Cambridge for three years.

Blatchley said the Deerfield/Cambridge team has a thin roster stocked with younger players. But several of the freshmen he coached two years ago are good players who are likely even better now after two seasons of experience.

“We're going to have to take it serious,” Blatchley said of the matchup. “We're going into it just like we would against a team we think is really strong.”

Kickoff for tonight's match is scheduled for 4:45 p.m.

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