Girls soccer: Fairview earns bragging rights against Boulder

Knights record fourth straight win on early Gamble goal

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BOULDER -- That slow start endured by the Fairview girls soccer team earlier this season is officially history.

The Knights knocked off their cross-town rival on Tuesday, using an early goal from Berkley Gamble to post a 1-0 victory against visiting Boulder.

The win was the fourth in a row for Fairview, which scored 18 goals against their previous three opponents but managed to defeat the Panthers in a more conventional style after Gamble scored the game’s lone goal off a perfectly executed set piece in the eighth minute.

The win allows Fairview (5-3-1, 4-1-0 Front Range League) to enjoy some breathing room in the conference race. Both clubs entered the match with one league loss behind conference front-runners Fossil Ridge and Fort Collins.

"It's really important because it's a cross-town rival, but also because it's in the league," Fairview senior goalie Rachel DeCurnou said. "The league is wide-open right now. No one is really the clear winner right now, so it's really important to have these wins on our side."

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Fairview earned its scoring opportunity when Meghan Higgins was taken down while on the attack, setting up a free kick for the Knights from just outside the penalty box.

The Fairview trio of Gamble, Olivia Fear, and Nikola Machalek made a shrewd read of the Boulder defense to get the Knights on the board. With Gamble lined up beside her, Machalek took the free kick by tapping the ball to Fear, who was camped out in front of the Boulder defensive wall.

Encountering no resistance, Fear tapped the ball back to Gamble, whose blast into the top corner of the net eluded Boulder goalkeeper Katie Simpson-Johnson and gave the Knights a 1-0 lead they would never relinquish.

"We practice set pieces a lot in practice, but we haven’t had a really close set piece like that in a game yet,” the University of Washington-bound Gamble said. "Since the angle was kind of off for a shot, we decided we would do one of our plays. It worked out really nicely.”

Boulder (5-2-2, 4-2-0) was unable to produce a shot on goal during the first half against the Knights’ stifling defense, and the Panthers’ best chance at a tying goal came from sophomore Sarah Radziohovsky in the 75th minute. Radziohovsky was able to unleash a solid line drive, but DeCurnou made the save to preserve the one-goal advantage.

Boulder, which has no seniors on its roster, has lost consecutive games after matching last year's win total with a 5-0-2 start. Following losses against the Knights and Fossil Ridge, the fifth-ranked team in Class 5A, the Panthers will look to regain their winning ways when they continue league play on Wednesday with a road match against last-place Loveland.

"We’ve got to take care of Loveland, which isn’t going to be easy," Boulder coach Gary Grammer said. "Physically, it’s tough. But emotionally, after playing our cross-town rival, that’s what I worry about. There’s teams coming up that we can score on. If we put some goals in the back of the net, we’ll get the confidence up and we’ll be ready for the end run.”

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**Fairview 1, Boulder 0**

At Fairview H.S.

Boulder (5-2-2, 4-2) 0 0 -- 0
Fairview (5-3-1, 4-1) 1 0 -- 1

Goals (assists) -- Fairview: Gamble (O. Fear), 80th minute.

Goalkeepers (Min-Goals allowed-Saves) -- Boulder: Simpson-Johnson (80-1-4); Fairview: DeCurnou (80-0-1).