

**Bonn, Brookfield stymie Barlow****Sophomore goalie saves day for Bobcats**

BROOKFIELD -- Sophomore goaltender Matt Bonn was the lone question mark on the Brookfield defense entering the 2007 season.

Tuesday night Bonn proved he has all the answers.

Bonn made eight saves, including two diving, one-handed stops in the second half, to help preserve a crucial 2-0 South-West Conference boys soccer win for the Bobcats over Joel Barlow at Brookfield High.

"This was a huge win for us," said Bonn, who hadn't played in a varsity game until this year. "We wanted to come in and win this one and I wanted a shutout."

But he and the Bobcats barely got it.

Brookfield (6-2-0, 5-1-0) scored first, taking a 1-0 lead when Mike Shaker headed home A.J. Stueck's free-kick from 30 yards out less than five minutes into the first half.

But when the Bobcats took the lead, the Falcons went to work.

Joel Barlow (4-2-2, 3-2-1), which out-shot Brookfield 15-11, dominated ball possession and created the majority of the scoring chances, many of which left Bonn sprawling.

In the 51st minute, Bonn made his first phenomenal save of the evening, deflecting a header by the Falcons' Scott St. Cyr just wide with his left arm.

But the sophomore keeper saved his most sensational stop in the 69th minute.

After St. Cyr played the ball forward to teammate Alex Van Steinburgh, the senior forward dropped the ball to a wide-open Alex Pelzar in the box.

The Falcons' junior midfielder fired a shot from the left box back across toward the upper right corner, but was denied by a diving Bonn and his out-stretched right arm.

"I thought it was in for sure," Brookfield coach Jared Sheihk said. "But nothing surprises me with Matt anymore."

When asked if the saves were his two best, Bonn couldn't help but smile.

"They were certainly up there," Bonn said of his two big stops.

The Bobcats would add another score with just less than two minutes left in the game as Jackson Isaacs scored on an open net after Joel Barlow goalie Cody Hickok had come out to play Luke Niarhos' free kick.

Hickok deflected the ball right to Isaacs, who easily put it home to ice the game.

"They were prettier than us," Sheihk said. "But being pretty doesn't always equate to a victory as we saw (Tuesday)."

That's especially true when facing Bonn and a stout Brookfield defense led by seniors Jeff Garofalo, John Smith and Mike Huttemann.

"They are so vital to our success," Sheihk said of his defense. "The effort we got from them was exceptional."

Brookfield needed an outstanding performance from its defense to slow a Barlow team that was unbeaten in its last four games and had out-scored its opponents 19-0.

The Bobcats also were desperately hoping to rebound from a tough 3-1 loss to rival Bethel Saturday.

The Brookfield defense responding by pitching just its second shutout of the season.

"We wanted to keep the pressure on Bethel," Bonn said. "We wanted all these teams to know how good we are and that we can beat anyone."

Brookfield will have to continue to win big games as the Bobcats still have the meat of their schedule left with Masuk, New Milford, Pomperaug, Immaculate and Newtown remaining.

"We can win the SWC this year," Bonn said. "If we play the way we did (Tuesday), no one can stop us."

NOTES: Prior to Tuesday both team's only conference loss was to Bethel" ♦ Joel Barlow goalkeeper Cody Hickok remains just a shutout shy of tying the Falcons' career mark with 31" ♦ Joel Barlow has delivered six shutouts in eight games this season" ♦ Barlow also has top SWC teams Immaculate, Pomperaug, Newtown, New Milford and Masuk left on their schedule" ♦ Brookfield will play at Masuk in an SWC game at 7 p.m. on Friday" ♦ Joel Barlow will battle Immaculate in Danbury on Friday at 6 p.m.

Joel Barlow (4-2-2, 3-2-1) 0 0 "" 0

Brookfield (6-2-0, 5-1-0) 1 1 "" 2

SCORING: 1. B, Mike Shaker (A.J. Stueck) 35:54; 2. B, Jackson Isaacs 78:04.

SHOTS: Joel Barlow: 15; Brookfield: 11. SAVES: Cody Hickok (JB) 6; Matt Bonn (B) 8. CORNER KICKS: Joel Barlow: 3; Brookfield: 5.