

St. Cyr saves the day

Senior captain delivers twice in Barlow win

By Dan Farrand Staff Writer

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FAIRFIELD -- Scott St. Cyr may not be an actual saint, but after his heroics Friday night they are certainly ready to canonize him in Redding.

The senior captain headed home the game-tying goal with just two seconds left in regulation and then delivered the game-winner less than five minutes into overtime, lifting seventh-seeded Joel Barlow to a thrilling 2-1 win over No. 3 Wethersfield in the semifinals of the Class L boys soccer state tournament on a bitterly cold and windy night at Fairfield Ludlowe High School.

The win gives Barlow the right to play No. 12 Brookfield, who beat top-seeded Bethel 1-0 in penalty kicks on Wednesday, for the state crown at 6:30 p.m. on Monday at Pomperaug High School.

"The theme of this whole postseason has been: 'We won't lose,'" St.

Cyr said while being mobbed by his teammates and fans. "We haven't made it easy, but we always find a way to get it done."

St. Cyr and the Falcons certainly waited to the last possible moment to save their season.

With just 8 seconds left in the second half, Mike Flynn launched a throw-in from about 10 yards out into the penalty box.

St. Cyr rose up and headed it, initially hitting the center of the crossbar.

The senior, however, raced down the carom and headed the ball just inside the left post as time apparently expired.

"I've never run that fast in my life," St. Cyr said. "I thought the first (header) was going in, so I stopped at first, but then just sprinted after the rebound."

Officials took several minutes to discuss whether the goal had been scored before time expired.

The overflowing crowd that decided to fight the biting cold drowned out the soft horn at Ludlowe, leaving the officials without much help.

"It's hard to take (a goal) away on a play like that unless you are absolutely certain," Wethersfield coach Robert Jachym said. "In all my years of soccer at the high school, college and MLS level, I've never seen a play like that."

And with all the momentum, it was only a matter of time before the rejuvenated Falcons struck again.

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After being dominated by Wethersfield all game, Barlow controlled the brief overtime period.

The Falcons finally got back to their possession game, which quickly resulted in a prime chance for St. Cyr.

Just under five minutes into the extra-session, Dylan Stone fed a ball ahead to Jake Soodek.

As Wethersfield defenders converged on Soodek, the sophomore dropped the ball to a streaking St. Cyr.

The senior made one quick move inside to slip an Eagle defender and fired a shot from about 20 yards out that sailed into the top right corner of the net.

"You can't question the heart of this team," Barlow coach Paul Winstanley said. "Things were not going our way, we weren't playing well and they just battled and battled into literally the final seconds."

St. Cyr's two goals were the first scores the Eagles had given up in the state tournament.

The game certainly was a battle of survival for the Falcons, who were missing three starters for the semifinal game.

Sophomore Dan Goldman was out with a concussion while senior sweeper Taylor Armstrong and senior forward Alex Van Steinburgh were out serving suspensions for yellow cards they received in the quarterfinals.

Their absences forced Winstanley to shuffle his lineup, taking St. Cyr out of his normal center-midfield spot and moving him to sweeper.

Stone was also pushed up to the forward position, leaving Barlow without its two key facilitators in the center of the field.

The results were almost disastrous as Wethersfield dominated the game and scored after St. Cyr made a mistake in the back.

The Eagles went up 1-0 with 17:04 left in the first half after Colin Doody stole the ball from St. Cyr at the top of the goal box.

The Wethersfield junior, alone with Barlow keeper Cody Hickok, fired a low laser that found the bottom left portion of the net.

"We were out of sync," Winstanley conceded. "You have to credit Wethersfield. They are a great team and they had us. Fortunately, we just figured out a way to survive."

The Falcons will have Armstrong and Van Steinburgh back for the title bout against Brookfield and Winstanley believes Goldman will be back as well.

But no matter who Barlow has on the field, it seems the Falcons -- who have now won nine straight games, including the South-West Conference championship, and are 13-0-2 in their last 15 outings -- always find a way to scratch out a win.

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"From the beginning of the playoffs we believed we were the team to beat," St. Cyr said. "The only way anyone can beat us is if we beat ourselves."

Joel Barlow (16-2-4) 0 1 1 "" 2

Wethersfield (17-2-1) 1 0 0 "" 1

SCORING: 1. W, Colin Doody 22:56; 2. JB, Scott St. Cyr 79:58; 3. St. Cyr (Jake Soodek) 85:26.

SHOTS: Joel Barlow: 11; Wethersfield: 9. SAVES: Cody Hickok (JB) 3; Hami Kara (W) 3. CORNER KICKS: Joel Barlow: 3; Wethersfield: 3.

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