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Crowning glory

Catholic League girls soccer prepares for championship playoffs

By Sue Teggart
C & G Sports Writer

When the Catholic League girls soccer playoffs kick off May 7, Bloomfield Hills Marian should be the team to beat.

The Mustangs, six-time Catholic League A-B champions, were posting a 6-0 record in the loaded Central Division at press time.

Defending Catholic League C-D tournament champion Royal Oak Shrine — which grabbed its first Catholic League crown last season — should also be a favorite to repeat in its tournament.

“For every team, that’s your primary goal for the season,” Marian coach Barry Brodsky said about winning the Catholic League championship. “For us in the Catholic League, if we win the (league title), we don’t think anything of it unless we win the Catholic League championship.”

Playing by the rules

The Catholic League has changed its format a bit this year to guarantee three games for the eight teams playing for the A-B title.

The C-D tournament is single elimination and will only consist of semifinal and final games.

Warren Regina coach Jonas VanCleeef said the addition of the crossover playoff provides a great opportunity for teams to contend against the top-notch Catholic League competition.

“It provides a playoff-type atmosphere,” VanCleeef said. “The girls get used to the high-tempo of the games and importance of skill play.

“It really helps them focus on how important each play is and how it could mean the difference between advancing and or ending the season.”

Playoff poise

While winning the Catholic League championship may be a sweet reward, the playoffs pay dividends for all teams by preparing them for the impending state tournament.

“I think it really forces everyone to step up the intensity and really focus on each play and realize this is their one opportunity,” VanCleeef said about challenging for



Photo by Tracy Dresklinski
Bloomfield Hills Marian senior captain Anina Cicerone calls for the ball during a game earlier in the season. Marian, which leads the Central Division at press time, is preparing for the Catholic League championships, which kick off May 7.

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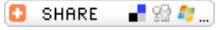
Though the A-B tournament guarantees three games this season, for those with intentions of winning it all, a loss at any time puts the title out of reach.

“It gives you a taste for being done if you don’t win,” Brodsky said about the playoff structure. “It gives you that intensity, that if you lose today, then you’re done.

“At the end of the day, you’re playing for the championship game, which has the same ramifications as the state tournament.”

To find out specific matchups, contact the Catholic High School League at (313) 237-5960 or visit www.aodonline.org/CHSL.

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