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Monday, 11/6/00

Franklin girls win Class 3A state soccer title

By Jeff Lockridge / Sports Coordinator

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. -- Amanda Martin grabbed the Franklin High flag and paraded it around the field at Finley Stadium. Coach Jimmy Burchett pumped his fist like a victorious prize fighter while Brittney Potts did something resembling the Texas two-step.

These had been images of years past for the Lady Rebels soccer program. Now they are back.

Franklin defeated Knoxville Farragut 1-0 in the Class 3A state soccer championship game yesterday to claim the team's eighth title and first since 1993.

"This is incredible," said Franklin goalkeeper Martin, who posted her 16th shutout this season. "Our defense was amazing. They came out there knowing they were the best and they played like it."

Things could not have panned out better for Franklin at this year's state tournament. The Lady Rebels (19-4) dodged Germantown, which beat Franklin 2-0 in the state finals last year, when Farragut (17-5-4) ousted the Lady Red Devils in the first semifinal in a shootout.

As nice as the situation appeared to be, Burchett was worried before the game.

"Germantown is a power team and Farragut is a finesse team, so we match up better with Farragut," he said.
"But that is also a concern. We beat Farragut 7-3 earlier this year over Labor Day weekend (at the Katie Hunter Classic in Oak Ridge) under different circumstances when Farragut was a different team. If our girls try to compare that game to this one, they may think they're in for an easy time."

It turned out the Lady Rebels had anything but an easy time. The game was scoreless at halftime and saw Franklin mount very few charges on goal early on.

"We kind of thought we would score a lot more," said Potts, who was named Tournament MVP. "Personally, I didn't think they were going to be this tough. But I realized five minutes in that we were in for a tough game. We all realized it."



Potts finally broke through for the game's lone score with 28:58 remaining. Her sliding kick into the lower, left side of the Farragut net from 20 yards out just passed the outstretched arms of Lady Admiral keeper Ann Zimo.

"It happened really quick" Potts said. "I said, 'Hmm, I've got a space for a shot.' So I went for it."

Zimo made two spectacular deflections on shots from Franklin's Katie Jackson and Jessica Bransford in the following moments to keep Farragut in striking distance. But the Franklin defense never allowed the ball to cross midfield for more than a handful of seconds in the final 25 minutes, and Martin only handled the ball in play once over that span.

"I didn't want to sit back on a 1-0 lead and just play defense, but I didn't want to get too aggressive," Burchett said. "I think the girls did a great job of handling it."

Farragut's best scoring opportunity came with about 30 minutes to play when freshman Alicia Frear sailed a shot over the Franklin net from seven yards out.

Franklin returns everyone on the team except backup keeper Ashley Minor and, even then, will have just four seniors next year.

"The pipeline is back to where we can compete for it every year," Burchett said.

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