

A Reason to Celebrate

For the 8th time in 9 years, the LHS soccer team is in the final four of the 5A playoffs. Liberal overcame a slow start to beat Bishop Carroll 4-1 Tuesday night in front of easily the biggest soccer crowd of the year at Redskin Field. Thirteenth year head coach Lori Navarro says it's a great feeling. "It's amazing," Navarro said shortly before the crowd circled around the Redskin emblem on the field chanted her name. "It's a feeling unlike any other. To start off with 38 teams keep ending up in the final four is amazing. Like I tell these guys, you want to know why you're called great? This is why. Because you have to make it to the final four. But we're not happy with just making it to the final four. We are going to go in their like we always do and we are going to play our hearts out and represent Liberal to the best of our ability. That's the best we can do."

Carroll (7-12) scored first at the 10:57 mark giving more fuel to their defensive oriented game plan. But Liberal's Isai Gutierrez found Jose Chavira at the 5:56 mark to tie the game. Gutierrez scored with 2:33 to play before half to give LHS a 2-1 halftime lead. Liberal was on the attack throughout the second half with Socorro Martinez finding the back of the south net with 34:31 to play and Hector Mata blasting in a goal with 22:31 to go. Several goals were also called back due to offsides.

In other quarterfinal action Tuesday night, Topeka Seaman beat Blue Valley 2-1. St. Thomas Aquinas handled Bishop Miege 6-1. Kapaun took care of Salina Central 2-1.

Liberal is 15-1-3 and plays Topeka Seaman in Emporia Friday at 5 p.m. St. Thomas Aquinas and Kapaun meet in the other semifinal. The championship is Saturday at 2 p.m. with consolation Saturday at noon.

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