

Mats Make it to NCS Soccer Finals, Clinch Title

By Kevin D. Shallat

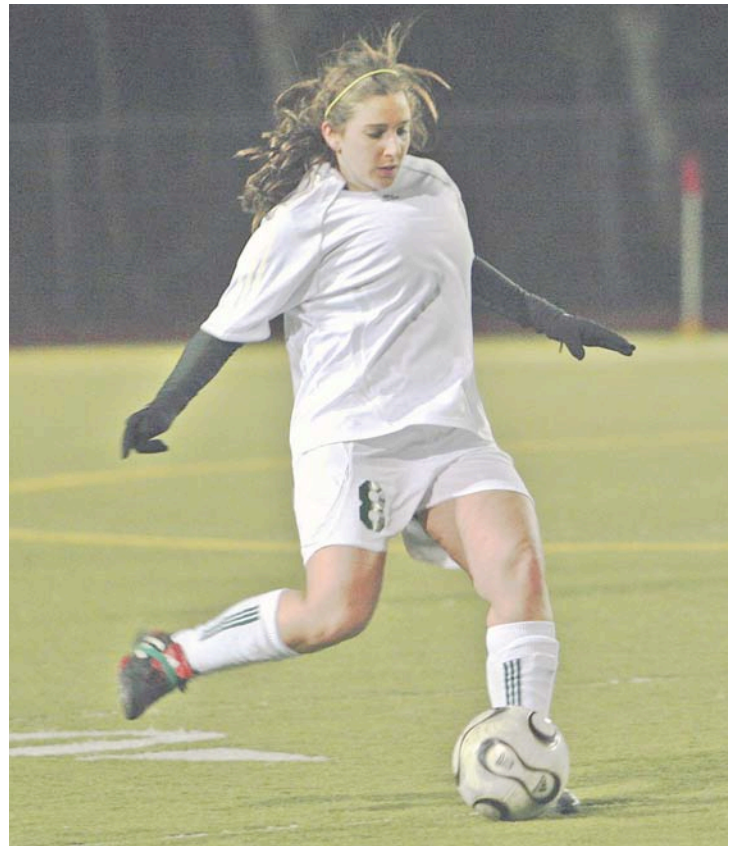
The Miramonte women's soccer team hosted the NCS match against Bishop O'Dowd on Wednesday, Feb. 20, on the night of a total lunar eclipse. The moon may have been obscured Wednesday, but there was no disguising the talent of the Matadors' soccer team. The Mats may have preferred to record more goals in this match, but they were able to dominate the Dragons in this game in almost every statistical category. The one first half goal in this game was enough to secure another NCS victory, as the 1-0 win allowed Miramonte to continue on to the NCS finals.

Miramonte got off to a slow start in this game, as they controlled the ball, but remained on their own side of the field for a good portion of the opening minutes. Bonnie Zeiger and Marisa Rowland were very active for the Mats in the opening period, but were unable to turn some nice passes into goals. In the twelfth minute of play, the Mats had a breakdown on their defense, which set up a point blank shot for O'Dowd. Luckily, the O'Dowd player missed her shot high, as the ball bounced up and over the field goal cross bar. Shortly thereafter the Mats kicked it into gear, and were able to respond with a goal. Rowland set up a beautiful pass to Kendall Pegan, who took a shot on goal that was partially blocked by the O'Dowd goalkeeper. Pegan kept her cool and stayed with the play, as the ball leaked out from under the goalie's grasp. Pegan calmly kicked the loose ball into the net for the go ahead goal.

Despite scoring a goal in the first half, the Mats were lucky that O'Dowd could not take advantage of some Miramonte miss-cues. On one play, Miramonte tried to play it safe by kicking the ball back to the goalie. The play almost backfired, as Miramonte was just able to secure the loose ball. Seconds later an O'Dowd player had the easiest shot of the game, and again, the point-blank shot was missed, as it sailed wide right.

The second half was a much cleaner period for the Mats. The whole second half appeared to be played in Dragon territory, as Miramonte applied the pressure. Conversely, the Dragons were hard pressed to get a shot on goal against the Mats.

Rowland was everywhere for Miramonte Wednesday night. If there was a shot on the Dragon's goal, chances are Rowland had something to do with the shot, or the set-up. However, Rowland was not alone, as she had plenty of help. Elaine Tanski had a solid game for the Mats, as she was active on the offensive and defensive ends of the ball. Miramonte's Alex Seclow also did a nice job of setting up her team-



Julia Hurwitz (8)

Photo Jordan Fong

mates in this match with a number of nice passes down the line.

"It's nice to finally get through the semi-finals to go to the finals, because I think we really deserve it," said Pegan.

The Mats went on to beat Piedmont (21-1-1) at the finals on Saturday, Feb. 23 at Acalanes High School, clinching the NCS title.