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SMC Men's Soccer Struggles Early in WCC Play

By Simon Tryzna



Andr•Rawls had a huge save with less than ten seconds remaining in the second half against SCU, sending the game into overtime. Photos Tod Fierner

the school's first WCC soccer title.

But with starting defender Jake Stenberg out with an injury, head coach Adam Cooper was forced to create a makeshift defensive back four. The back four struggled early, committing a foul that allowed Dan Delgado to score on a free kick, giving the Toreros an early 1-0 lead.

Inexperience hurt the Gaels; twenty minutes later USD scored again.

With a little over ten minutes remaining in regulation, freshman midfielder Austin Allison blasted a shot to bring the Gaels back within one. Fifty two seconds later, senior captain Trevor Newquist equalized on a header.

But another Gaels' defensive lapse gave San Diego a 3-2 lead and win.

Two days later, needing a huge win, the Gaels welcomed longtime rivals and early season conference leader Santa Clara to Moraga. The Gaels defense held the Broncos scoreless. A big save by Rawls with less than ten seconds remaining in the second half sent the game into overtime.

In overtime, freshman midfielder Alan Williams scored to give the Gaels their first WCC win of the year. "I really wasn't expecting (the cross)," said Williams. "I was just making a run like Coop always tells us to do. I scored a goal and didn't know what to do."

"It was a hard fought game and we just needed to come out, we needed one," said Tariq Adam, who passed to Williams.

Saint Mary's was unable to string consecutive victories in San Francisco. Although the Gaels equalized a minute after they conceded the game's opening goal, they were not able to score again, and despite outshooting the Dons 7-3 in the second half, the game went to overtime. Dons forward Brady Jamison scored in the 94th minute to give San Francisco their second conference win of the year.

The Gaels next travel to Gonzaga and Portland before returning home to take on the Bulldogs on October 26.

Just four games into regular season play, the Saint Mary's men's soccer team finds itself in sixth place in the WCC standings. Following a 2-1 overtime loss to San Francisco (2-1-0), the Gaels (1-2-1) will need to make a run in the remaining eight conference games if they want to hold on to the WCC title.

The Gaels entered conference play with momentum, having won the UNCW Hilton Garden Inn Classic in North Carolina before going on the road and defeating Davis 2-0. But whatever momentum they had was lost in the seventh minute of the first half of the first regular season game against LMU on September 28.

LMU's Ryan Felix scored from ten yards out for an early Lions 1-0 lead. The Lions scored again to go up 2-1. Freshman forward Gerardo Mendoza scored in the 86th minute to send the game to overtime, but both teams failed to score. "It feels pretty good (to equalize the game), but it is a team effort," said Mendoza. "I score, the whole team scores."

With the first conference game out of the way, an atmosphere that sophomore goalkeeper Andrew Rawls described as "intense," the Gaels next hosted the San Diego Toreros. SMC beat the Toreros last year at home to clinch



Tariq Adams #12 recorded an assist in the win over SCU.



Gerardo Mendoza #11

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