

St. Charles dominates rival Neuqua Valley

By Chris Walker

Daily Herald Correspondent

Posted Friday, April 20, 2007

The St. Charles boys lacrosse club warmly welcomed its biggest rival, Neuqua Valley, to Norris Stadium on Thursday but treated the Wildcats the same way it has treated the other six Illinois opponents it has faced this spring —by beating them.

Riding a strong offensive effort from its senior trio of C.J. Nemeč, Conor Hamilton and Thomas Feicco, St. Charles defeated Neuqua Valley 15-5. The victory improved St. Charles to 9-2 on the season, 7-0 against in-state opponents, and 3-0 in conference. Neuqua fell to 2-3, 2-1.

"We pretty much dominated this game," Hamilton said "They couldn't do too much, their clears were pretty much not there and they didn't have much offense. All-around we had a solid game and a great effort.

"We're feeling great. It's our biggest rival and beating them is probably the best you can have in a season other than a state championship."

Leading 4-2 after the first period, St. Charles started to take control of the contest in a matter of seconds nearly midway through the second period. Nemeč (3 goals, 1 assist) scored a goal unassisted with 7:49 remaining before Feicco assisted on a goal by Hamilton 7 seconds later to make it a 6-2 lead.

After yielding the Wildcats' only second period goal with 6:14 remaining in the first half, Feicco (4 goals, 1 assist) responded with a pair of goals to help St. Charles head into halftime with an 8-3 advantage.

"We put 8 goals in the first half and I felt pretty confident that we could do the same in the second half and sure enough we had 15," St. Charles coach Andy Thompson said. "It was nice. There was no letdown and the second half mirrored the first half."

St. Charles stretched its lead to 12-5 in the third period. Hamilton scored 2 of his game-high 6 goals in the period, one which came after his footwork froze the defense to create an open shot. But it might have been a fastbreak goal by Feicco that was created by goalie Sean McGushin (15 saves), Ben Dvorak and Nemeč that best represented the exciting St. Charles offense.

"When (McGushin) gets the ball on a save he's looking downfield and he gets that from being a quarterback in football," Thompson said. "We teach our infielders to put their heads down and start sprinting as soon as a shot is fired and that makes it so exciting to get a fastbreak started and then scoring a goal."

Hamilton added two more goals to close out the scoring in the fourth period, but it was the lone goal by Dylan Ward with 11:46 remaining that'll probably be remembered most.

Ward took a couple of checks up high, one that was flagged for a penalty, but he wouldn't allow it to slow him down. The senior eventually broke free, charged into the attack goal area, and fired a shot past goalkeeper Eric Ziegler.

"The progression of these seniors like Dylan has been special," Thompson said. "He so unassuming. He's a little guy but he's solid and tough and I've seen him take on guys twice his size."