

Walpole comeback cut short

By Corbin Brown/Daily News Correspondent
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Duxbury -

No one would have been disappointed if Walpole High, down 8-4 to Duxbury at the half, had slowly surrendered the game and gone home with an impressive season and a quarterfinal appearance. After all, there would be no shame in losing to the 16-3 Duxbury, the No. 1 seed in the Division 2 South girls lacrosse bracket.

However, Walpole, led by coaches Aubrey and Anna Cochrane and their eight seniors, had no plans of quitting. The Rebels fought back to tie the game at 10-10 but the Green Dragons eventually proved to much in 14-11 loss that ended their season at 13-8.

"A lot of our seniors have been playing for four years, and they really stepped up today," said Aubrey Cochrane. "We have a lot of experience and a lot of leaders, especially captains [Darby Webber, Alex Guisti and Tricia Maloney]. They have been great all year."

Neither of the teams were able to get into a set offense for the first five minutes of the game, as the players came out with incredible energy and aggression. Walpole struck first, as junior midfielder Marissa Saad had her team's first three shots, converting on her third, which came in a reposition directly in front of the net.

The furious pace continued, and neither team, particularly Walpole, was able to avoid a flurry of stick checks and hold onto the ball. Duxbury answered with a transition goal and a reposition goal, but the Rebels tied the score at 2-2 when midfielder Jess Guisti capitalized on a reposition from in front, the first of five goals on the day for the junior. The referees were calling a tight game, and Duxbury scored two more goals off repositions that came from over-aggressive stick checks from an energized Walpole defense.

The players began to feel the repercussions of their torrid, full-field pace, and the teams began to possess the ball. After Duxbury added two more goals, senior attack Tricia Maloney made two huge plays to pull her team back.

Content with their four-goal lead, the Green Dragons began to work the ball around the perimeter of Walpole's defensive zone, dodging sporadically to test the Rebels' mettle. When midfielder Darby Webber deflected a pass, Maloney picked up the ground ball and streaked down the right side of the field. Faking to a teammate, Maloney gained a step on her defender and rifled a shot that found a pocket of net just off the ground to the left of the keeper.

After another big defensive stand and a string of quick poke checks on dangling Duxbury sticks by senior defender Tacy Zysk, Walpole finally recovered one of the turnovers that Zysk created but were called offside as they advanced up the field. Duxbury capitalized on Walpole's mistake, taking a 7-3 lead.

After Zysk made another goal-saving check on a Duxbury restart, Maloney cut the lead to three when she scored of a reposition in her favorite spot -- bottom left -- to make it 7-4. Despite two key saves by Emily Painten, Duxbury scored again, and ended the half with an 8-4 lead.

"We could have started the game stronger," said Cochrane. "Our players are where they are going to be skill-wise, but we just needed to get more motivated. I told them what they needed to do better on offense, on defense, and they went out there and did that in the second half. I told our seniors that this is it, this is your last game, and they left it all out there."

Inspired by their coaches' words, the Rebels came out firing in the second half, scoring two unanswered goals. Kellie Sullivan scored first for the Rebels, off a repossession, and Jess Guisti added her second of the day. Starting at the top left corner of the box, Guisti dodged hard to her strong right hand, ducking by two Green Dragon defenders. Nearing the goal, she took a jab step with her left foot to gain space from a third defender and fired the ball over the Duxbury goalie's right shoulder, forcing a Duxbury timeout.

"Part of our comeback was getting the momentum," said Cochrane. "Those two early goals had a big impact on the way we played for the rest of the half."

Jess Guisti struck again with 14 minutes left in the game when Katherine Butts scooped a loose ball in the Walpole defensive zone and fed Guisti in transition for another right handed goal. Then, off the next faceoff, captain Alex Guisti made a deft stick check just as Duxbury thought it had possession. She then sprinted down the field, faked one defender at the restraining line and beat a second wide as she streaked down the right wing, sniping knee high to cut Duxbury's lead to 9-8.

Duxbury went up 10-8, but Jess Guisti put her team on her shoulders and completed the Rebels comeback. Immediately after the Green Dragons' 10th goal, Guisti retrieved the faceoff and scored with her right hand, displaying outstanding separation speed as she caught Duxbury's defense flat-footed and sped right through them for her fourth goal of the day.

At the 10-minute mark, Guisti evened the score at 10 off a reposition. However, the deeper and more athletic Duxbury scored four straight goals, and despite a rebound goal by Maloney, the Green Dragons were able to pass around Walpole's double teams and kill the rest of the time on the clock.

Jess Guisti finished with five goals, Maloney had three, and Alex Guisti had one. Duxbury was paced by Trish Babson, who finished with five assists and two goals.

"We started slowly but we finished well," said Cochrane. "We played consistently well throughout the second half, and that is all you can ask for as a coach."

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No delaying Walpole boys lax

By Corbin Brown
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Walpole -

WALPOLE – Though he has been producing for his team all year, Walpole High sophomore midfielder Davis Butts won't be able to fly under anyone's radar any more.

With Friday's Division 2 East first round game with Masconomet tied 4-4 at half and hanging in the balance at 10-7 in the fourth quarter, Butts scored back-to-back goals – from his own face off wins – and put away a 14-9 win for the Rebels.

With the win, the Walpole (16-4) advances to the quarterfinals and will face the second-seeded Wayland.

“Davis Butts was dominant, lights out,” said Walpole coach Jason Andalo. “Those two goals right in a row – that meant the game for us. It was a huge individual effort by him today.”

After a nearly 40-minute rain delay at the half, the teams traded goals to begin the third quarter. Brian Orecchio scored to make it 5-4 Rebels, but Masconomet answered back immediately. Neither team could settle the ball for nearly five minutes after, as players from both teams threw sloppy passes and slid all over the muddy surface as they traded quick, meaningless possessions. But the Rebels weren't worried.

“Twenty games into the season we know we aren't a first half team, so we didn't panic,” said Andalo. “We just stayed calm and patient and waited for the game to turn in our favor. When we started to work our transition game, it did.”

Realizing they couldn't beat their defenders one-on-one, they instead worked the ball around the outside to free up space for cutters. Once the ball came around to junior attackman Greg Nash, Davis Butts made a cut from the top of the box to the crease. Nash hit him with a perfect pass and Butts finished at a nearly impossible angle with his left hand to give his team a 6-5 edge with the 6:05 left in the third quarter.

Masco won the ensuing draw, but Walpole, led by quad-captains Steve Smith and Russell Jones, came up with the ball with 4:51 on the clock. Jones hit a streaking Paul Orecchio just below the midfield line. Orecchio sped through a cluster of defenders at midfield and pulled away with tremendous speed. Drawing a Masco long pole, Orecchio fed Nash, who ripped the ball sidearm into the top right corner with his strong right hand to make it 7-5.

After Walpole took an 8-5 lead, the Chieftains responded again, cutting the Rebel lead to two. Then, midway through the fourth quarter, Masco was still hanging around, and Butts put a stop to that.

“I just got pumped up with my team,” said Butts. “I was lucky enough to take advantage of the opportunities that I got.”

With 10 minutes left in the game and Walpole ahead, 10-7, the lanky midfielder poked the ball through a Chieftain’s legs off the face off, scooped the ball and sprinted toward the goal. When he didn’t see a slide coming, Butts took a few more steps to goal, set his feet and fired the ball head-high past a stunned Masco keeper.

The Walpole bench erupted, but Butts didn’t stop there. He slipped the ball through his opponent off the ensuing face off and raced toward net exactly as he had done 10 seconds prior. However, the Masco defender was right on his hip, and as Butts raised his stick to shoot, the Chieftain dove and hit Butts as he shot. The ball skipped by the Masconomet goaltender, and Butts’ teammates mobbed him knowing that he had put the game out of reach at 12-7.

“Those fast breaks at the beginning of the fourth really finished us off,” said Masconomet coach Tom Cobb. “Our scouting report said they were a fast-break team, and if they get those [chances] the momentum is going to slide and it will be hard to get it back. Obviously, that’s what happened.”

The first half was a defensive clinic, as both teams displayed sharp team man-on-man defense, surrendering only second chances and broken play goals, including two from Greg Nash in the first and one from sophomore Leo Ajemian.

In addition to Butts’ standout day (4 goals), Greg Nash (4 goals, 2 assists), Brian Flanagan (goal, 3 assists), Leo Ajemian (2 goals), and Paul Orecchio (2 assists) contributed for the Rebels.