

THE Acorn

'It felt like a win'

Coyotes improve with new, positive outlook; 1-1 tie vs. Oaks Christian is monumental step

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GIRLS' SOCCER /// Calabasas Coyotes

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MAKING PROGRESS—Calabasas High girls' soccer seniors Megan Rich, left, and Jordyn Rosen, No. 5, celebrate with sophomore Dylan Parker after Parker's goal against Westlake on Feb. 8 at home. Photos by MICHAEL COONS/Acorn Newspapers

Seven goals.

Calabasas High's girls' soccer team allowed Oaks Christian to put a seven spot on the scoreboard on Jan. 10, the first of two showdowns between the Marmonte League foes.

It wasn't just another loss for Calabasas, which failed to nab any points in the Marmonte last winter and has only earned one league win in head coach Brian Collins' four seasons at the helm.



HOWL AT THE BLUE MOON—Calabasas' Jordyn Rosen controls the ball against Westlake on Tuesday. Rosen is a senior midfielder.

It was the last straw for the Coyotes.

Collins and assistant coach Kaitlin Paletta, a former Moorpark star who played Division I soccer at California, had a meaningful talk with their players at the next practice.

“At times, we had an attitude of being defeated before we stepped onto the field,” Collins said. “We talked about going out and competing. Good things can happen. We wanted them to go out there and play to the best of their ability.”

The Coyotes responded.

“We were sick of losing,” senior midfielder Jordyn Rosen said. “All of us (the seniors) were like ‘Let’s put everything out and try our best and hopefully we’ll win.’”

The Pack hasn’t gotten into the win column, but the blowouts are a thing of the past.

Calabasas (2-8-4 overall, 0-6-3 in the Marmonte) narrowly fell to Thousand Oaks and Westlake in a pair of 1-0 losses before battling to a 1-1 draw against Agoura on Jan. 22.

The Coyotes then notched an epic 1-1 stalemate on the road against Oaks Christian on Jan. 31. It’s the Calabasas version of Harvard beats Yale 29-29.

“It was such an amazing experience,” said senior defensive midfielder Megan Rich, a fourth-year varsity player. “Everyone on the team can agree: It felt like a win. Oaks Christian was so



GAINING CONTROL—Calabasas' Carly Lipschitz dribbles the ball against Westlake earlier this week. Lipschitz is part of a strong sophomore class at Calabasas.

disappointed, which was such a good feeling. We've lost so bad on that field."

"People may say it's just a tie, but for this Calabasas program, I think it's more than just a tie," sophomore midfielder Dylan Parker said. "It really brings our self-esteem up. We want to do better and we're willing to do better."

A scoreless draw against Thousand Oaks in the next game was the first time Calabasas earned points in back-to-back league games since Collins took over.

"It's been going a lot better than usual," Rich said. "Every game is close and competitive. I look forward to every game because I know we have a chance."

Jollene "JoJo" Morales, a junior, excels at goalkeeper.

Amy Rich, Megan's twin sister; freshman Rachel Burak; and sophomores Sydney Zeto and Carly Lipschitz solidify the defensive back line.

Parker is Calabasas' engine in the middle.

"She's a workhorse," Collins said. "She's physical. Size in this game doesn't really mean much. It's about reading the game, knowing where to be and being there."

Catherine Chomyk, a senior, and Rosen also patrol the midfield.

Elizabeth "Ellie" Walters and Shay Cohen, both freshman forwards, have done well up top filling in for injured senior captain Jenna Weitzel, who had three goals in three games before suffering a season-ending knee injury.

The Rich sisters, who earn identical 4.5 grade-point averages, said they hope the youngsters on the team learn that winning starts with having positive attitudes.

"It's only getting better from all the years before," Amy Rich said. "I think we're slowly having more and more of a chance."

"They can carry the team after the seniors are gone," Megan Rich said of the sophomores. "There are so many underclassmen that play and are very talented.

I'm very excited for them. I think when they're seniors the team will win games."

Collins said he believes this season was a step in the right direction.

Calabasas wraps up the season at 6:15 tonight on the road against Agoura.

"We're actually starting to believe we can be competitive," the coach said. "That's the first step. The next step is to find ways to win."

The Coyotes in a nutshell

Calabasas High has emerged as one of the feistiest girls' soccer teams in the Marmonte League. The long-struggling Coyotes battled to earn three draws this season after failing to snag a point in league last winter.

Starters

- Jollene Morales, junior, GK
- Amy Rich, senior, D
- Sydney Zeto, sophomore, D

- Rachel Burak, freshman, D
- Carly Lipschitz, soph., D
- Megan Rich, senior, MF
- Dylan Parker, sophomore, MF
- Catherine Chomyk, senior, MF
- Jordyn Rosen, senior, MF
- Elizabeth Walters, freshman, F
- Shay Cohen, freshman, F

Record

- 2-8-4 overall, 0-6-3 in the Marmonte League

Season finale

- Calabasas vs. Agoura, 6:15 tonight at AHS