

# Women's season ends after 7 OT marathon loss

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Call it Heartbreak Valley.

The wind-swept soccer field of Lees-McRae saw the bitter end to two brilliant seasons for the men's and women's soccer teams of Brevard College — both of whom lost to the Bobcats in the NJCAA Region X championship games, Nov. 4 and 5. The men lost 5-3 Sunday, and the women were nipped in a marathon six-overtime melee, on Saturday, Nov. 4.

## WOMEN'S GAME

It was a game between equals, a match of giants in the junior college women's ranks. Both teams came into the game having lost only once — earlier in the season to each other.

When Coach Joe Bartlinski urged his Lady Tornados to "give me 90 minutes of solid soccer" at the Region X Championships, he had no way of knowing they would have to give him double that and more.

It would be difficult to imagine a more physical and evenly matched soccer game. The grueling four-hour contest actually involved not one 90-minute period, but 113 minutes of overtime as well.

The Lady Tornados jumped out to an early 1-0 lead on a Wendy Washburn goal with 27:30 left in the half. That period belonged entirely to Coach Joe Bartlinski's women. The Bobcats appeared flat and devisive.

But they returned to get it together in the second half and match the BC goal with a shot by Shannon Johnson with 29:14 left in regulation time. A more poised and aggressive L-M team paced the Lady Tornados to end of the game, and the contest went into two 15-minute overtimes.

But neither team could put the ball in the net and much of the action was at midfield, throwing the game into a 15-minute sudden death overtime.

For the next hour, nothing was "sudden." What resulted was five more of these "sudden death", prolonged, heart-aching overtimes with no more one scoring and both keepers making repeated spectacular saves. In the third such overtime BC's defense deflected four unbelievable shots — shots bouncing off defenders right in front of the goal and shots bouncing off the goalposts.

The level of intensity on the field was palpable. Players were knocked to the ground and fell down so often that there were times when spectators wondered in particular if, Mackie McMaster would be able to get up yet again and resume play. One injured player, Samantha Griffiths, had to be carried off the field by Coach Bart.

On balance, the Lady Tornados were handing out plenty of punishment too. Several Bobcats had to leave the playing field, but L-M's bench depth made it inconsequential.

Several intensely competitive personal matches were worth watching all by themselves, particularly that of Laura Clark and her L-M foe, who earned each other's respect by game's end. They would blast into each other as if they hated each other's guts, and then help each other up.

But in the end, just after BC keeper



An unforgettable moment from the Region X women's soccer championship game: After four hours of soccer and a bitterly disappointing 2-1 loss after seven overtimes, the BC women's soccer team lets Coach Joe Bartlinski know how they feel about him being named Region X Coach of the Year — though one injured player is too hurt to move. (Clarion photos by Jock Lauterer)

Cathy Reinhardt had beautifully deflected a perfect goal shot, Lees-McRae managed to sneak a goal through during a wild and confusing piece of action, coming from a corner kick to right in front of the goal that looked more like a rugby scrum than soccer.

Some of the BC players contested the shot's legality, but when the bleachers emptied and fans swarmed on the field, it was apparently too late to question.

It was also too late for the men's game, scheduled for Saturday, and that contest had to be moved to Sunday. How that affected BC's play had to be negative.

The bitterly disappointed BC women received their runner's up trophy with good grace, and applauded for the All-Tournament players from their team: Colleen Runion, Samantha Griffiths, and Jennifer Keltner.

When it was announced that Coach Bart had been named the Region X Coach of the Year, the Lady Tornados went wild, except for several players who were so banged up they couldn't even get up off the ground to hug their mentor. It was a poignant sight, and Coach Bart, typically self-effacing, reacted "It's all them."

Now that the season is suddenly over, Lady Tornados, to the women, freshman all, will likely remember what Coach Bart told them before that fateful game: "No matter what happens, we're team, we're family."

And upon that, the new Coach of the Year has something indeed with which to build next year's powerhouse.

Mark these words: there will be a rematch in '90.



Lady Tornado Colleen Runion watches as Jennifer McMaster gets a solid header on the ball during the seven-overtime 2-1 loss to Lees-McRae Saturday.