

Tight game ends with Picayune victory over PRC

By Jonathan Mitchell
Picayune Item

The boys soccer teams from Picayune and Pearl River Central met Tuesday night to not only play for bragging rights within the county, but for a playoff spot since they are in the same district.

It was a must-win game this early in the season due to Long Beach leading the district with an undefeated record of 3-0 in district play.

The fast paced game was played on a cold and blustery night and showed both teams are evenly matched, but the Maroon Tide struck first.

Just six minutes into the game senior Muhanid Naji guided the ball into the back of the net to give Picayune a 1-0 lead.

PRC had several chances to add a goal to the board, but Picayune’s goalkeeper Will Walerius made some key one-on-one stops to preserve Picayune’s lead.

In fact, both goalies had monstrous performances with Brody Marshall coming up big for the Blue Devils multiple times.

PRC’s Head Coach Joe Weems said his team’s shape wasn’t what it needed to be.

Players were in pursuit of the ball and got pulled out of position, which Weems said hurt the team.

“We tried to play too fast, were over aggressive and over pursued. I don’t have a problem with the effort, the smart decisions just weren’t there,” Weems said.

For the Maroon Tide and Head Coach Britton Fortenberry, the match up against PRC was one Fortenberry thought his team needed to win.

The season has been up and down for the Maroon Tide, so Fortenberry said he was hoping to see his team at its best



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MEETING IN THE AIR: Picayune goalkeeper Will Walerius collides with a PRC attacker after a free kick was lofted into the box.

against the Blue Devils.

“I think it’s huge for us man, that was a must win for us. We wanted to come out and play our best soccer to this point. I wanted my boys to come out and compete hard,” Fortenberry said.

Neither team gave an inch in a game that ended with Picayune winning 1-0 on Naji’s early goal.

Now the squads will be heading into the second half of the season and Weems said the focus is going to be improving on the mental side of the game.

“For them it’s just about more focus and about mentally

how they come into the game. We’ll just focus on the positive because that’s all we can do at this point,” Weems said.

The back half of the season will determine who gets into the playoffs as both squads are chasing Long Beach at the top of the district.

PRC will have an important district match up right after the holidays against Hattiesburg on Jan. 10 with the game set to start at 7 p.m.

Picayune on the other hand will have one more game before the end of the year against West Harrison on Dec. 20 with the game set to start at 7 p.m.

Column: Better helmets won’t settle safety vs mayhem race

By Jim Litke
Associated Press

Football helmets are almost as old as the game itself and, by now, about as safe as they’ll ever be.

The polycarbonate outer shell flexes at impact to redistribute shock, yet remains strong enough to ram a car windshield at 40 mph without cracking. The facemasks wrapped around them are space-age steel. The layered construction and medical-grade foam underneath provide the cushioning equivalent of industrial-strength bubble wrap.

But just like those jerry-rigged helmets made from leather, felt and rubber introduced around 1900, they can’t stop concussions, but they can turn men with bad intent into missiles. That discovery launched an arms race between safety and mayhem that continues to this day.

“When we began researching helmets, one of the first arguments was, ‘Aren’t you just making a better weapon?’” recalled Stefan Duma, director of the authoritative and independent Virginia Tech Helmet Lab, founded in 2011. “That wasn’t the intention, but I agreed completely with the assessment. Anytime you put that much force and effort around somebody, there will be risk. That’s why enforcement is a key piece.”

An unbroken line of brutal defenders and spectacular collisions, among other things, helped turn the NFL into must-see TV. Indeed, many of its most-enduring images are photos capturing the devastation those missiles caused, especially after the league switched from hard leather to even-harder plastic helmets in 1950. Think of Eagles linebacker Chuck Bednarik celebrating his knockout of Giants receiver Frank Gifford.

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foundation when he builds his defenses.

“We like to play fast and hard with reckless abandon. Hopefully we can get playmakers. We need guys who can are ready to turn it loose and do whatever they need to do during the offseason to get Pearl River back where it used to be,” he said. “We can help the (Wildcats) get better and coach them up. Effort covers up a lot. That will be the No. 1 thing, effort. You can’t take it lightly. It has to be fanatical effort.

“If we can get that out of them along with putting them in the right spots I think we’ll be OK.”

PLAYING HISTORY

Trahan first emerged on football radars as a standout at nearby Pearl River Central High School as the Blue Devils won the 1993 and ’95 district championships. Trahan was a three-year varsity player for PRC, earning first team all-district honors in 1993, ’94 and ’95. He also landed on the 1995 All-State team and participated in the Bernard Blackwell All-Star Game in ’95.

Trahan went on to star at Southern Miss as part of the

“Nasty Bunch” defense. His career at USM is littered with accolades. The Golden Eagles amassed a 33-14 record during Trahan’s tenure from 1996-99.

Trahan won three Conference USA Championships and was named as a 1st Team All-Conference USA linebacker in 1998. He made the Second Team All-Conference USA team the next season. Trahan was a two-time Conference USA Defensive Player of the Week selection and was also awarded the Special Teams Big Hit Award in 1996 and ’97, Strength and Conditioning Athlete of the Year in ’99 and the Heart of the Eagle Award in ’99.

Trahan later signed with the San Francisco 49ers as a free agent in June 2000.

COACHING CAREER

Trahan broke into coaching in August 2000 with Klein Forest High School in Houston Texas. During his four seasons at KFHS (2000-03), the team was 38-11 with three playoff appearances with Trahan’s roles ranging from defensive backs coach in 2000 to defensive ends coach in 2001-03.

Trahan returned to Mississippi as a head coach in 2004 when he took over Southeast Lauderdale High School. In his five years with the Tigers (2004-2008), Trahan was named the 2006 Meridian Star Coach of the Year when he led the team

to the district title. His team made the playoffs in three of five years while compiling a 23-28 record.

From July 2009-May 2010, Trahan served as a graduate assistant at Southern Miss, where he worked with special

teams and the defensive line.

Trahan got back into high school coaching in 2010 when he joined Amory High School’s staff as the defensive coordinator.

From 2012-14, Trahan served as the defensive

coordinator at Madison Central High School. During that span, his defenses averaged 30 or more turnovers annually. Trahan coached safeties at Northwest Rankin in 2015 before returning to Madison

Central in 2016 to coach the defensive line.

Trahan returned to South Mississippi in 2018 when he was hired at Picayune as defensive coordinator. Trahan has two children, Kortney (17) and Kirkland (19).

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blessed to be a part of his staff. He’s a great, great, great fella,” Sims said. “One thing you notice about Seth immediately is his passion and fervor; his energy. He’s a juice man. I like that about him. He has a really strong personality. “He brings a lot of leadership and comes from a winning tradition.”

COACHING HISTORY

Sims coached defensive backs at Hattiesburg for six seasons (2013-18) prior to joining last year’s PRCC staff. While at HHS, Sims helped turn the Tigers’ secondary into one of the top position groups in their classification.

Sims previously coached at East Marion in 2011-12 in a student assistant capacity while attending Southern Miss. Sims holds a bachelor’s degree in Sports Administration from USM.

He graduated from Holly Springs High School in 2005.

Sims is married to the former Jocelyne Brown of Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

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