

Varsity Girls Soccer Vs New Milford, Oct. 7

The Joel Barlow girls' soccer team pulled ahead of New Milford in the second half of their senior night, Oct. 7. Seniors, Olivia Taylor, Amelia Winter, Berkeley Hanson, Ava Gillon, and Mia Tartaglia were honored. During the ceremony, I learned that Olivia Taylor is continuing her soccer career at Babson College, and dual-sport athlete Mia Tartaglia will play basketball at St. Lawrence University.

Olivia Diblasi and Emma Ogden each scored goals in the first half. Barlow went into halftime with a 2-0 lead, but the team knew they could do better. There wasn't much fluidity with the ball. It seemed like a lot of individual play. "We are a passing team. When we pass the ball, we can go through teams," said Coach Weiss. That was evident in the second half. After the first ten minutes in the second half, Barlow looked very comfortable moving the ball and using teammates to set each other up. Mia Tartaglia appeared to be a catalyst for this improved ball movement.

Coach Weiss described their previous match versus Pomperaug as a confidence builder for this game. "I said if you can play with Pomperaug, you can take care of this game." Pomperaug was 9-1-0 before their match against Joel Barlow, which ended in a 0-0 tie. Joel Barlow then scored four goals in the second half and shut out New Milford, winning 6-0. Amelia Winter scored two goals; Olivia Taylor and Cecilia Rahner each scored once. Of the six goals, three were assisted by Cecilia Rahner, Manuela Mejia, and Mia Tartaglia.

Goalkeeper Sophia Bianco had a quiet night with only two saves. The defense, led by Ava Gillon, Berkeley Hanson, and Mia Tartaglia, held New Milford to just two shots on goal. Hanson and Tartaglia were very active on the sideline, pushing the ball upfield and taking command of throw-ins. Coach Weiss said they don't assign those roles; instead, they take those upon themselves. "They are comfortable doing it. I feel comfortable with them doing it, and it forces numbers up in different spaces of the field," said Coach Weiss.

Amelia Winter showcased her talent all night, displaying impressive skills and a collegiate-ready presence on the pitch. Olivia Diblasi played very aggressively, which doesn't surprise Coach Weiss. "She can play by herself. She can find people, she can turn defenders twice her size, and she's always a competitor. And then there's games where she is just unstoppable," he said.

Coach Weiss was able to rotate 18 or 19 players versus New Milford, compared to the usual 13 to 15. Key substitutes included Emma Ogden, Mia Muscarele, Brooke Cameron, Mackenzie Kassner, and Christina June. It was a luxury for Barlow to have fresh

legs available to substitute. Coach Weiss mentioned that there isn't much difference in talent when they bring players off the bench.

With the win, Joel Barlow officially qualified for the state tournament. Following this game, they faced a critical stretch of matches, including Bethel, Immaculate, New Fairfield, and Masuk, going 3-0-1 in those contests.