

## ***Bay Rockets win District Championship!***

### ***Match #19: Bay Rockets vs. Rocky River Pirates***

Date: Saturday, October 31, 2009

Temperature: in the 50's

Wind: from the west

Location: Bay Memorial Stadium

**Result: Bay (2)- River (1)**

This division II boys district final soccer match featured two Westshore Conference rivals, the Bay Rockets and the Rocky River Pirates. Bay has been steadily taking care of business since being beaten by Avon in their last conference game of the regular season through a series of wins with scores of 5-0, 8-0, and 6-0. Rocky River, on the other hand, got to this point by upsetting Avon in the district semi-final match by a 2-0 score.

If the regular season match between these two teams, a 1-0 Bay win at Rocky River, was any indicator, then goals would come at a premium. The Rockets came out with play in the opening half that resulted in numerous shots, but not many on frame. Those that were on frame were easily saved by the Pirates goalkeeper. Most of the possession was Bay's in their attacking end of the pitch, and at the 22 minute mark, junior Jackson Heller had possession in the Pirates penalty area when he was tripped from behind. The resulting penalty kick was taken by senior Shane Williams. His low-right shot was saved by the goalkeeper to keep the game scoreless. That missed opportunity by Bay seemed to give River a bit of a boost. As it was only seven minutes later that River's senior tri-captain Andrew Triplet took a high shot from just inside the penalty area that eluded the out-stretched reach of senior goalkeeper Nate McDonald to give River a 1-0 lead. Bay quickly resumed their attack, but junior Eric Linhart's shot from inside the penalty area deflected off the side post rather than go in to tie the game at the eleven-minute mark. The half ended with River leading 1-0.

Both teams found it difficult to control possession and string together a series of passes in the second half. Bay had more chances at goal, as they played the ball wide to their wing players, junior Alec Petro and senior Sam Dickinson, both of whom were able to beat their markers down the sidelines to win corners or create the width needed to stretch River's defense. However, River packed it in defensively with their 1-0 lead and played most balls to safety first, which prevented the Rockets attack from getting good opportunities at goal. As the clock approached the ten-minute mark, it was getting a little scary for the favored Rockets on this Halloween Day.

At the nine-minute mark, it was Bay's Linhart, who took a left-to-right bending shot from just outside the penalty area that went into the side net for the Rockets first goal of the match. Linhart had put himself in position to score numerous times all match long, so this was well-deserved. Bay was obviously lifted by the goal, and it was just two minutes later that Dickinson was able to get possession of a long ball played to him at forward, work his way through two River defenders, and finish with a shot off the outside of his right boot that hit the side net for a 2-1 Bay lead that they would not relinquish.

The Bay rally in the last nine minutes was enough to propel the Rockets into the next round of the Division II State Playoffs. Their next opponent in the Regional Semi-Final is a familiar one, the Revere Minutemen. In the final state coaches poll, Revere was ranked third and Bay was fourth despite Bay beating Revere 2-1 in their regular season match. The game will be played at Rocky River High School on Tuesday, November 3rd at 7:00 PM.