



MARYLAND SOCCER; Springbrook Gains State Semifinal

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Springbrook had just lost its fourth game of the season to Churchill. Talking slowly and emotionally afterward, Coach Ian Bain told his players that for all intents and purposes, their season was over.

"We probably can't make the playoffs now," he had told his team. "But our school deserves our best. So let's go out there and play the best soccer we can for the rest of the season."

He clearly spoke too soon as his 12th-ranked Blue Devils (9-4-1) not only made the playoffs but advanced to the state semifinals as they defeated Kennedy, 5-2, in the Class 4A Region II final yesterday at Kennedy. **Springbrook** will play Severna Park at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Broadneck.

"We're blossoming at the perfect time," said **Springbrook** midfielder Juan Betancourt.

"All year we attacked but we couldn't get the ball in the net," said **Springbrook** forward Jason Elsmore. "Now we're finally scoring goals."

Springbrook spread the field wide setting up a series of triangles. And when Kennedy was able to penetrate, goalie Eddie Armenta was there for one of his nine saves.

"Armenta showed me more today than he has ever shown me," said Kennedy Coach Jeff Schultz.

Kennedy's attack was based on sending long crosses to the corners in hopes that Dialo Nelson and Brian Grossman could follow with a cross or shot on goal. But each time Kennedy tried that, **Springbrook** fullbacks Nathan Coons and Pat Gannon would intercept.

"We worked on that all week," said **Springbrook** midfielder David Sarano. "That's what they did against us last time {Kennedy won, 1-0}. We were ready this time."

"They were too quick for us," said Kennedy fullback Jono Halverson. "They play very high pressure defense and every time there was a loose ball there would be two of them and one of us."

The eighth-ranked Cavaliers (9-3-2-) scored first on Colin Curvey's goal, on an assist from Grossman at 15:50. **Springbrook** tied the game at 23:52 as Jason Elsmore headed in a beautiful pass from Leo Diaz. Roberto Gouveia, on a cross from **Albert Oni**, scored past goalie Andy King. **Springbrook** made it 3-1 as Sarano, on a cross from **Oni**, scored with 3 1/2 minutes left in the period.

Kennedy, which outshot **Springbrook** by 13-8 in the second half, cut the lead to 3-2 as Marco Fortini scored with 8:25 left. But **Springbrook's** Mike Stecklow broke free for two late goals. @Slug: E08SPR

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