



Rockville, Severna Park Move Into State Final; Falcons Disrupt Springbrook's Plans With 2-1 Win

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Severna Park's Jim Crawford scored one of his team's goals and assisted on the other as the Falcons ended **Springbrook's** roller-coaster season, 2-1, in the Maryland State Class 4A semifinal tonight at Broadneck.

The third-ranked Falcons (14-0-1) will play Rockville (11-3-1) next Saturday in the championship at Old Mill. It will be Severna Park's first trip to the state final since 1983, when it finished as cochampion with Bowie.

"We can play soccer down here, too," said Severna Park Coach Don Gregg.

"Sometimes, we don't get as much respect as some of the other counties, but I think our players showed tonight they can play with anybody."

Severna Park countered **Springbrook's** superb ground skills with a physical air game. The No. 2 Blue Devils (9-5-1) appeared confused in the first half and Severna Park took advantage. Brian Peterson sent a shot from the right corner that Crawford headed past goalie Eddie Armenta at 21:40.

But **Springbrook** increased its pressure in the second half. The Blue Devils, with midfielders Juan Betancourt and David Sarano settling the ball and setting up forward **Albert Oni** and Jason Elsmore, tied the game with 16:41 to play.

Nathan Coons crossed a throw-in from Leo Diaz to Mike Stecklow, who scored past goalie James Fucetola.

With the goal, the Blue Devils began to take control. But the Falcons' defense, anchored by Ron Eckels, Ron Corwell, Brian Fields and John Moreira, along with Fucetola, managed to withstand a series of attacks by the Blue Devils.

Springbrook, which outshot the Falcons, 10-7, in the second period lost **Oni**, who left the game with a groin injury with 5:08 remaining.

One minute later, the Falcons stole a **Springbrook** clearing attempt. Crawford, who settled the ball, found Chuck McBee darting down the center. McBee took the pass and sent a shot past Armenta, who had come rushing forward in an attempt to cut the shooter's angle.

But it was Severna Park's ability to neutralize **Springbrook's** ground game that ultimately was the difference.

"They play a lot of control ball on the ground," said Severna Park midfielder Matt Steele. "We just wanted to disrupt it."

Severna Park had only given up four goals this season and its only blemish was a 0-0 tie with Glen Burnie in the fourth game of the year.

"Severna Park is a very physical team," said **Springbrook** Coach Ian Bain. "Their fullbacks play with a lot of intensity and they were able to break our rhythm over and over again."

For **Springbrook**, which appeared to be peaking after impressive victories over Churchill and Kennedy in the region playoffs, the loss brought an abrupt end to a topsy-turvy year.

"With everything that's happened to us this season, including the losses, it forces us to take a real hard look at ourselves," said Bain. "That type of delving also forces a lot of growth. Because of that, I think this team has grown more than any other team I've ever coached." @Slug: D06ROC

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