The Bandera Prophet

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Bandera boys soccer finishes third at Pleasanton Tournament

By Brady Keane
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The Bandera boys soccer team continued its strong start to the season and recorded a couple of big wins in the Pleasanton Soccer Tournament over the weekend while securing a second consecutive third place finish. The Bulldogs recorded wins over Ingleside and district rival Wimberley, and tied in 1-1 finish against Uvalde. Bandera's only loss of the tournament came to Floresville in the semifinals.

"We had a solid showing in the tournament," Bandera Head Coach Westley Miller said. "The win over Ingleside was one of our best team efforts this season, and it was great to see our defense step up and keep control of the game."

As Miller noted, the team's opening win over Ingleside was dominant from start to finish. Hayden Swalve scored two goals, Ibie MacNeil scored one goal, Quin King had one goal and an assist, and Diego Gomez finished with one goal and four assists. Connor Garrett (1 save) had a slow game as the goalkeeper, with defenders Nino Martinez, Micah McCreary, Keegan Perales and Landon Munoz stepped up to keep the ball on Ingelside's half for most of the game in a 5-0 win.

In a rematch against Uvalde, the Bulldogs jumped out to an early lead on another goal from Swalve that was assisted by Gomez. Garrett posted three saves but Uvalde eventually broke through to tie the game at 1-1 late in the second half.

Against Floresville, the Tigers' high-powered attack was too much for Bandera. Floresville pulled away early and rolled to a 7-0 win, the Bulldogs' largest deficit of the season. Standouts in the loss included Martinez (9 steals), McCreary (10 steals), Sammy Roque and King with

8 steals each and Gomez with 10 steals. Swalve, filling in as a reserve goalie, ended up having 9 saves in the match.

“Floresville’s attack tested us in ways we haven’t faced before this season," Miller said. "Even though the result wasn’t what we wanted, I was proud of how our players responded by working hard defensively and giving maximum effort. Matches like this help us grow and prepare for tougher challenges we’ll see in district play."

With the loss still fresh on their mind, the Bulldogs faced off against district rival Wimberley with third place on the line. Bandera jumped out to a 2-1 lead at the half and went on to win 4-3 behind a dominant performance from Jace Knowles, who posted three goals and an assist. King added four steals and Roque had five steals to help control the midfield while Gomez finished with a goal and an assist. Swalve collected seven saves to finish off the win and bring home third place.

“The guys bounced back in a big way against Wimberley," Miller said. "Jace was phenomenal, and we played with energy and focus from start to finish. It was a statement win against a district rival, and it showed what we’re capable of when we work together."

Both JV and Varsity will have their final match vs Uvalde this Tuesday, at home, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., then travel to San Antonio Memorial out of Edgewood ISD, on Friday, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Bandera’s varsity squad is 5-2-1 on the season thus far.

"We’re off to a strong start, but there’s still a lot of work to do," Miller said. "Every match is an opportunity to improve, and with district play approaching, we’re focused on continuing to improve each day so that we put ourselves in the best position to make a run at the postseason.”