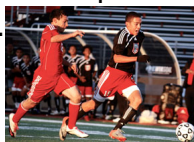


### By EARL WATT

• *Daily Leader*

There are no more easy games in the Class 5A soccer playoffs.

After knocking off Wichita West 10-0 in the opening seconds of the second half, the No. 4 Liberal Redskins were only able to get one shot past the McPherson goalie in the second round of the playoffs Thursday at Redskin Field.



But that one goal was enough in a 1-0 Redskin victory.

McPherson's Brice Thrower was bombarded with goal attempts by the Redskins all night.

In the first half, Liberal tried to kick the ball in the net 13 times.

Only one made it past Thrower, a goal by Jose Flores with 17:16 to play in the half off an assist from Isai Gutierrez.

While Thrower was deflecting shot after shot, he had some help. Most of the evening the majority of Bullpups were Thrower's assistant goalies, spending as much time in the box as Thrower.

The Redskins attempted to score through a forest of McPherson players who made few attempts to advance the ball to Liberal's side of the field most of the night.

But Liberal head coach Lori Navarro would not let the Redskins use a packed-in defense as an excuse for not scoring.

"That happens many times against us," she said. "When they pack it in, good teams still find a way to score. You have to stay mentally strong and find a way."

Liberal sent several shots off the cross bar of the goal, and Liberal put a second shot in the net only to have it called back on an offside call.

Most of the game, the Redskins were passing the ball around the McPherson goal box looking for an opening to the net.

"We didn't play very well," Navarro said. "We didn't run our set plays. We practice for moments like these and then ran sloppy sets. We have to pass better and set up the offense."

Finding open space was difficult since McPherson had basically given up on playing aggressively to score and was packed in on their own side of the field.

"We didn't attack," Navarro said. "We were restless and not anticipating well. This game exposed some of our weaknesses."

Still, Liberal advanced to the quarterfinals and will host Bishop Carroll, who upset Newton 2-0.

"We played a great team," Navarro said. "Any time the game is 1-0, you know you are playing for a championship. In those situations you have to keep them out of your net. You have to win the close games."

Liberal won another close one, and hoisted the district championship plaque into the cool air at Redskins Field, one step closer to another state tournament appearance.

### PLAYOFF ROUND-UP

The eight remaining teams in Class 5A are, by record, Liberal (14-1-3), St. Thomas Aquinas (15-3-0), Kapaun Mt. Carmel (13-5-0), Blue Valley Stilwell (12-6-0), Topeka Seaman (10-6-2), Salina Central (9-9-0), Bishop Carroll (7-11-0) and Shawnee Mission Bishop Miego (6-10-2).

## **Flores' goal sends Redskins to quarterfinals**

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Carroll has already pulled two upsets on their playoff run, defeating Hays in the first round and Newton for the District championship.

Defending Class 5A champion St. Thomas Aquinas advanced to the quarterfinals by defeating Lansing 8-0.

In Class 6A, Western Athletic Conference foe Dodge City earned a district title by knocking off Garden City in the second round of the playoffs, 2-1.