

Sports

Pioneers start championship hunt with win

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – Joao Bernardo has been the public address announcer at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow for many years.

Bernardo made his usual announcements during last Tuesday night's USL-League 2 qualifying playoff match between FC Motown STA and the Western Mass. Pioneers. He didn't make his famous goal call for the home squad until the 83rd minute.

The Pioneers tied the score at 1-1 with a penalty kick goal before taking the lead for the first time in the 104th minute. They also added an empty net goal in the final seconds of extra time giving them a 3-1 victory.

"We had a lot of opportunities during the first half, but we just couldn't score a goal," said West Mass Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. "We were able to score three goals in the second half, which was nice to see."

The Pioneers, who finished the regular season in second place in the Northeast Division with an 11-2-1 record, faced FC Motown for the first time. It was also the Pioneers first playoff victory since they defeated Manhattan SC in the 2022 quarterfinals at Lusitano Stadium.

FC Motown, who are from Morristown, New Jersey, also finished in second place in the Metropolitan Division with an 8-1-3 mark. They joined USL-League 2 in 2021 and qualified for the playoffs for the first time.

The Pioneers had three corner kicks during the first ten minutes of the opening half.

Two of them were headers by Kerman Sukia, who's a member of the Bryant University men's soccer team. Both of Sukia's headers sailed high over the crossbar.

FC Motown took a 1-0 lead during the 12th minute following an unassisted goal by Jason Bouregy.

The Pioneers had five more corner kicks during the first 45 minutes of the contest, but the visitors from New Jersey held a 1-0 halftime advantage.

The Pioneers also outshot FC Motown, 12-4, during the first half.

In the 61st minute, Laurie Goddard, who'll be a member of the Hofstra men's soccer team in the fall, fired a low shot from the top of the box, but FC Motown goalie Ryan Friedberg made a diving save keeping the score at 1-0 for a little while longer.

Friedberg made another save on a shot attempt by Jared Smith in the 75th minute.

The Pioneers were given a penalty kick seven minutes later by referee Dan Aloï following a foul in the box. Alec Hughes, who's the USL-2 Golden Boot winner with 16 regular season goals, fired a low shot into the left corner of the net tying the score at 1-1.

"We had a lot of chances to score the entire game," said Hughes, who'll be play-



Alec Hughes takes a shot on goal.

ing one more season of college soccer at UMass Amherst. "Before I took the PK, I tried not to think about it very much. I was relieved when I saw the ball go into the net. I knew we would be able to take control of the game after that."

With less than five minutes remaining in regulation, FC Motown's Bryce LeBel received his second yellow card resulting in a red card.

The Pioneers held a man advantage until the 101st minute of extra time when Aidan Kelly received a straight red from the referee.

The home team took the lead for the first time on a goal from Ali Taleb three minutes later.

Goddard was credited with the assist on the go-ahead goal.

"Laurie made an amazing pass to me, and I just finished off the play with a goal," said Taleb, who's a first-year Pioneers player. "It just felt amazing, especially doing it in a home playoff match. This place has a lot of history."

Taleb, who's from Glastonbury, Connecticut, entered the match for the first time during the 93rd minute. Taleb and Hughes attended the same high school, but they weren't teammates on the same soccer team.

"Alec is from my hometown, and I grew up watching him play soccer," said Taleb, who scored four goals for the Pioneers this summer. "He broke a lot of records for the high school soccer team, but I played for the Oakwood Soccer Club. It's nice to finally be teammates with him."

Taleb began his collegiate soccer career at AIC before transferring to Northern Kentucky University.

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The head coach of the NKU men's soccer team is Tom Poitras, who was previously the head coach of the men's soccer team at the University of Hartford.

The Pioneers sealed the home playoff victory with an empty net goal by Mamadi Jiana in the final seconds of extra time.

Jiana, who played high school soccer at Chicopee High School, scored another goal in last Friday night's round of 32 contest against Lionsbridge FC giving the Pioneers a 1-0 halftime lead. Lionsbridge FC, who hosted the round of 32 playoffs, netted a pair of second half goals which ended the Pioneers outstanding season.



Mamadi Jiana sprints upfield with the ball.



Scott Testori looks to make a pass.



Franco Vila Nieves shoots in traffic.



Lawrence Goddard fights to keep the ball just past midfield.

Public Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by USA Towing, 71 Garden St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030, sale of a motor vehicle pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. C. 255, Section 39A, that on **July 29, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.**, at USA Towing, said motor vehicle will be sold at a private sale to satisfy the garage keeper's lien for towing, storage and costs of sale. 2000 Buick Century VIN:2G4WY55J0Y1156519 No Plates w/ vehicle Last known reg. owner: Adam Pro 1191 E. 92nd St. Brooklyn, NY 11236 07/11, 07/18, 07/25/2024

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by USA Towing, 71 Garden St., Feeding Hills, MA, 01030, sale of a motor vehicle pur-

suant to the provisions of M.G.L. C. 255, Section 39A, that on August 12, 2024 at 8:00 a.m., at USA Towing, said motor vehicle will be sold at a private sale to satisfy the garage keeper's lien for towing, storage and costs of sale.

2017 Infinity Q50 VIN:JN1EV7AR7HM839499 Plate: 5AXX69 - MA Last known reg. owner: Keshawn Vonte 45 E. Alvord St., Apt. #1 Springfield, MA 01108

2023 Honda Civic VIN:2HGFE1E56PH474645 Plate: 2KJV81- MA Last known reg. owner: Ashley Estrada 16 Willow St., Apt. #3 Springfield, MA 01103. 7/18, 7/25, 08/01/2024

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA., on **Monday, August 12, 2024 at 6:30PM** for all parties interested in the request of Viktor Savonin, who is requesting a Variance from the Town of Agawam's Zoning Ordinances. Ch.180, Section 41 to allow for the construction of a residential dwelling on a lot with less than the required lot size at the premises identified as 131 Coronet Circle (formerly known as 71 Maynard St.).

Doreen A. Prouty Chairperson, ZBA 07/18, 07/25/2024

Agawam Advertiser News

OBITUARY POLICY

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One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.