

Alta edges Bengals in rivalry game

Hawks pull away
in the second half
to take Region 3 lead

By Sarah Thomas
Deseret News

The Alta and Brighton girls soccer teams are quite familiar with each other.

Year in and year out the two squads find themselves in the same region, maintain a competitive rivalry and even have players who are on the same roster during the summer season.

Heading into Thursday's matchup, which Alta ultimately won 2-0, the two teams even shared the same record — 7-1 and 4-0 in Region 3. When the Hawks and Bengals face off, however, what each team has already accomplished during the season no longer matters.

"You throw the records out the window when Alta and Brighton play," said Hawks coach Lee Mitchell. "Brighton-Alta games are probably the most fun games of the year. They're always nail-biters, they're always two teams fighting and scrapping, trying to win."

He added that while the rivalry is not necessarily talked about in the game plan, the players know the match is a little different.

"The kids know," Mitchell said. "It's kind of like Utah-BYU: the players know it's different."

The Hawks recorded their



Racquel Watts and an Alta defender go up high to head the ball.

first goal when Sydney Fitzpatrick set up Bizzy Phillips in the 23rd minute.

"Biz is a great offensive mind," Mitchell said of the senior who has committed to play at BYU next season. "We've got other people who fed her the ball real well up there; (she) did a great job of finishing, which she does well."

Phillips, who is the younger sister of University of

Utah place kicker Andy Phillips, is averaging a 5A-best 1.6 goals per game.

"She's started varsity for three years and played some her freshman year," Mitchell said, highlighting Phillips' leadership. "She knows what it's all about, she knows what it takes. She's got a good supporting cast. The rest of the seniors do a great job

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BRIGHTON SOCCER: Alta 2, Bengals 0



ABOVE: Raquel Watts

RIGHT: McKell Kellogg (both)

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of keeping the kids going as well.”

The Hawks’ second goal was scored by freshman Sadie Mertlich in the 63rd minute. It was her first experience in a varsity match, and Mitchell was pleased with her composure.

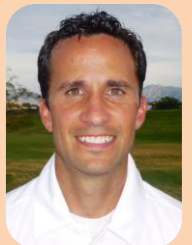
“She’s got a bit of speed and she’ll go after everything,” he said. “What more can you ask of a freshman in a varsity game?”

The region foes will meet at least once more this year at Brighton in the last game of the regular season. That game could very likely determine the region title, but regardless of how the standings look, Mitchell knows it will be yet another tough matchup.

“We could be 10-0 and they could be 0-10 or the reverse of that and you’d still have this kind of game,” he said. “We’ve always had that. At least for soccer, there’s always been that rivalry. We’ve got great respect for each other and love playing each other because they’re always great games.”

Coach Stoker’s comments:

As always, the Alta match was a battle. We played hard and had moments of great combination play that led to scoring opportunities.



In the end, Alta was able to make the two plays that gave them the goals and the win. This match provided great motivation through the second half of the season.