

SPORTS

SECTION C • WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2013 • VICTOR VALLEY & THE HIGH DESERT

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Page edited by Jeff Galian

Stolp's save helps AAE get back on track



DAVID PARDO, DAILY PRESS

ROOM TO MANEUVER:

Academy for Academic Excellence's Joel Burdette, right, gets past University Prep's Jose Roman during the second half Tuesday at Victor Valley College.

By **KYLE GLASER / STAFF WRITER**

VICTORVILLE • Only two weeks ago, the Academy for Academic Excellence boys soccer team appeared to be a lock to win the Cross Valley League title.

But after a surprising loss to Riverside Prep on Jan. 17 and a sluggish first 10 minutes of play against University Prep on Tuesday, the Knights were in need of a jolt.

Dylan Stolp gave them what they needed.

The senior goalkeeper saved a penalty kick early to energize his squad, and AAE rolled to a 3-1 victory over UP to move closer to its first CVL title.

"I feel in many ways we were very fortunate in the beginning of the game," Knights coach Lucas Kim said. "Had that goal gone in, the momentum of the game would've changed completely. Dylan's save started and sparked our momentum."

AAE (10-5-1, 5-1-1 CVL) is now one game ahead of Riverside Prep (4-2-1 CVL) in the standings with two league games to play. They play again in the final league game of the season on Feb. 5 in Oro Grande.

University Prep (7-7-3, 3-3-2 CVL) needs Riverside Prep to lose and for some other tiebreaking scenarios to play out in order to guarantee a playoff berth. The Jaguars won the league in its first two years of existence and reached the division finals last season.

University Prep appeared to have the early advantage Tuesday and had a prime opportunity to take the lead when Julio Serrano was awarded a penalty kick in the 10th minute.

Rather than guess and dive to either side, Stolp stayed patient, read the play correctly and needed to make only one step to his right to make the save.

“If you don’t take care of your opportunities, the other team is going to do it for you,” Jaguars coach Sammy Lara said. “(Missing the PK) was a huge part of the game. If we scored that, it would’ve been a different result. Once we missed that, then the game went downhill from there.”

The Knights took control immediately after that and it wasn’t long before they scored. Junior Angelo Colizzi drilled a shot into the upper-right corner from 30 yards out in the 15th minute to give AAE the lead, and Jake Korthuis followed about 10 minutes later with a laser into the same corner from 25 yards out. Kyle Rodriguez assisted on both goals.

“If they scored (on the PK), our heads go down and they have the momentum,” Rodriguez said. “That changed the whole game. Once he saved that, you could tell the momentum change and we just attacked and attacked.”

Joel Burdette tacked on the Knights’ final goal in the 57th minute when he stole the ball at midfield, raced down the middle and fired a grounder into the lower left corner just under the charging goalkeeper.

The Jaguars avoided being shut out when Daniel Flores scooped up a loose ball in the AAE goalie box and found back of the net in the 71st minute.

“It was an important win,” Rodriguez said. “We needed it and we came through and got it.”



DAVID PARDO, DAILY PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER

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