

A GPAC CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE AGES



*THE STORY OF THE 2022
CONCORDIA MEN'S SOCCER TEAM*



Overall: 15-3-3 • GPAC: 8-1-2 (2nd) • Home: 9-0-1 • Away/Neutral: 6-3-2

2022 Concordia Men's Soccer Schedule

Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Result	Record
Aug. 25	Northwest University (Ore.)	Salem, Ore.	W, 1-0	1-0
Aug. 27	Corban University (Ore.)	Salem, Ore.	L, 0-1	1-1
Sep. 3	Tabor College (Kan.)	Hillsboro, Kan.	W, 3-2	2-1
Sep. 6	York College	York, Neb.	W, 2-0	3-1
Sep. 10	Bellevue University	Seward, Neb.	W, 1-0	4-1
Sep. 13	Bethany College (Kan.)	Seward, Neb.	W, 2-0	5-1
Sep. 17	*Mount Marty University	Yankton, S.D.	W, 2-1	6-1, 1-0
Sep. 21	*Dordt University	Sioux Center, Iowa	L, 3-4	6-2, 1-1
Sep. 24	*Northwestern College	Seward, Neb.	W, 2-1	7-2, 2-1
Sep. 28	*Midland University	Fremont, Neb.	W, 3-2	8-2, 3-1
Oct. 1	* Dakota Wesleyan University	Seward, Neb.	W, 6-1	9-2, 4-1
Oct. 5	*Morningside University	Sioux City, Iowa	T, 2-2	9-2-1, 4-1-1
Oct. 8	* University of Jamestown	Seward, Neb.	W, 6-0	10-2-1, 5-1-1
Oct. 15	* Hastings College	Seward, Neb.	T, 1-1	10-2-2, 5-1-2
Oct. 19	* Briar Cliff University	Seward, Neb.	W, 1-0	11-2-2, 6-1-2
Oct. 22	*Presentation College	Aberdeen, S.D.	W, 9-0	12-2-2, 7-1-2
Oct. 26	* Doane University	Seward, Neb.	W, 2-1	13-2-2, 8-1-2
<u>GPAC Tournament</u>				
Nov. 3	Briar Cliff University (Quarterfinals)	Seward, Neb.	W, 2-0	14-2-2
Nov. 8	Dordt University (Semifinals)	Seward, Neb.	W, 1-0	15-2-2
Nov. 11	(23) Hastings College (Championship)	Hastings, Neb.	T, 2-2 (2 OT) CUNE won 4-2 on PKs	15-2-3
<u>NAIA National Championship</u>				
Nov. 17	(9) Keiser University (Fla.) - First Round	Winona Lake, Ind.	L, 0-3	15-3-3





Jason Weides



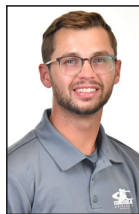
Head Coach

Tanner Knorr



Assistant Coach

Michael McIntyre



Goalkeeper Coach

Nick Holmes



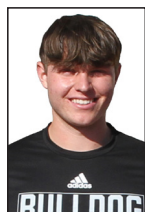
Assistant Coach

#0 Federico Simonetti



JR • GK

#00 Caleb Babisak



FR • GK

#1 Callum Goldsmith



SR • GK

#2 Iker Casanova



SO • D

#3 João Pedro Veríssimo



SR • D

#4 Adrian Wambua



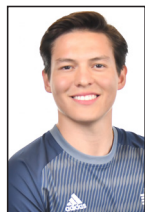
FR • D

#5 Matt Schultz



JR • MF

#6 Carlos Orquiz



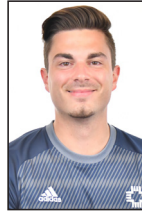
SR • MF

#8 Max Bisinger



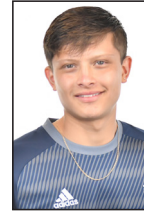
JR • D

#9 Dominic Abdel-Ahad



SR • F

#10 Martin Herrera



SO • F

#11 Ryan Wokutch



SO • F

#12 Miguel Navarro



FR • F

#13 Terry Harold



SR • MF

#14 Isaiah Shaddick



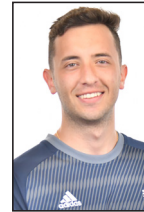
JR • F

#15 Carter Hinman



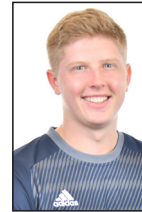
SO • F

#16 Eduardo Rojas



JR • F

#17 Ryan Brown



SO • D

#18 Spencer Kaufman



SO • MF

#19 Braden Spath



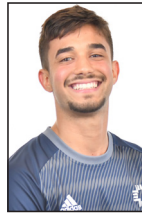
SO • MF

#21 Ty Harold



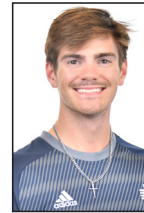
SR • D

#22 Victor Meneses



JR • F

#24 Michael Lindberg



SO • D

#25 Lance Kiango



FR • D



#26 Marc Ackerman



JR • F

#27 Slade Leicht



FR • MF

#28 Jarrod Henson



SO • D

#29 Daniel Campbell



SR • F

#30 Manuel Rodriguez



SO • MF

#31 Nolan Fuelberth



FR • GK

#32 Gabriel Mendoza



SO • GK

#33 Josh Bergt



SO • F



2022 SEASON PREVIEW



The season can't get here soon enough for a Concordia University Men's Soccer program looking to put behind the 2021 campaign. Entering year 15 as head coach of the Bulldogs, Jason Weides believes strongly in the talent of his group, which has learned that the margins are often razor thin within the competitive GPAC. The offseason has been about finding and maintaining the proper mentality that could be the difference in those physical one-goal GPAC battles.

One of the more consistently solid men's soccer programs in the country, Concordia has bigger goals than placing fifth in the GPAC, where it resided last year. All four of last season's conference defeats (as well as the GPAC tournament quarterfinal loss) were suffered by just a single goal margin. Can the Bulldogs find a way in those nail-biting moments in 2022?

"Certainly there's talent in this group, but what I'm more excited about is the mentality that has been fostered," Weides said. "The returners did a really good job of that throughout the spring and our offseason, helping lay some better foundations for this team and our success this season. The newcomers have adapted really well to that. This collection of guys seems to have that extra bit of mental resolve and they see how important our team chemistry is, understand how to deal with conflict and have that grittiness to them.

We want to have that true championship mentality. That's what can set us up for success."

A championship mentality might be what pushes Concordia back near the top of the league standings after placing either fifth or sixth in each of the past three seasons. In the not-so-distant past, Weides led the Bulldogs to a GPAC tournament championship (2015) and to a record setting 16-win campaign (2017). Coming off the program's lowest win output since 2010, Weides acknowledges that he too must take responsibility as Concordia seeks a bounce-back campaign. From 2011 through 2020, the Bulldogs won at least 10 games each season. In other words, the foundation is in place.

This is the time of year to be optimistic, and there are plenty of reasons for such sentiment in Seward. Let's start with having six players back who started at least 10 games last season: Max Bisinger, Daniel Campbell, Iker Casanova, Martin Herrera, Carlos Orquiz and Isaiah Shaddick. Herrera, Shaddick and Ryan Wokutch are the team's leading returning goal scorers (four goals each in 2021). Concordia also welcomes back a veteran leader in defender João Pedro Veríssimo, who is gearing up for a sixth year inside the program.

The Lincoln Southwest High School alum Shaddick sees a team hungry to show that last season was something of a fluke. "That was a big topic in the offseason this year," says Shaddick of the team's mentality. "We came together as a team and with Coach Weides and decided there needs to be something culturally within the team that we need to change. We came together and created a set of rules that we have as a team to help lead us to that goal of being successful. We're

GPAC PRESEASON COACHES' POLL

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Northwestern - 116 (8) | 7. Jamestown - 44 |
| 2. Hastings - 110 (3) | 8. Mount Marty - 42 |
| 3. Morningside - 100 (1) | 9. Doane - 36 |
| 4. Briar Cliff - 92 | 10. Dordt - 34 |
| 5. Concordia - 83 | 11. DWU - 32 |
| 6. Midland - 70 | 12. Presentation - 11 |

implementing it and we're holding each other accountable. I think that's a step in the right direction. We'll see how it plays out."

To begin preseason, Weides and his coaching staff put an emphasis on the fundamentals of what it takes to be a strong defensive side. In that department, the Bulldogs know they have a rock at center back in Casanova, a two-time Second Team All-GPAC honoree from Mexico City. Weides describes Casanova as one of the team's steadiest and most consistent performers on a daily basis. In the midfield, Orquiz (second team all-conference in 2020) returns for a fifth year. Campbell is another fifth-year member of the program.

As a team, Concordia was plus-13 in goal differential (35 goals scored, 22 allowed) in 2021 and will likely need to be a fair amount better to be a conference championship contender in 2022. As a reference, the stellar '17 team scored 51 goals and allowed 16. Fortunately, there's a surplus of talent and better depth at positions that were a bit thin a year ago. Other previously unmentioned returners who saw significant time last year include Jarrod Henson, Carter Hinman, Matt Schultz and Braden Spath.

"There's good depth overall," Weides said. "It's never easy losing impactful seniors and we lost some very impactful seniors from last year. Some returners have taken a step forward and are better than they were last year in many facets of the game. We've also added some really good depth and competition in some areas. We've had some great goalkeepers here in our time, but I'm not sure we've ever had as good of a goalkeeper group as we have right now. There's some great competition there and some great competition at our striker and forward positions. We didn't have enough depth last year in that striker position and now we have some great quality depth there. We have some newcomers that are definitely going to impact us right away. We even have several guys who are exceeding our expectations these first couple of weeks. There's good competition every day."

The battle at keeper referenced by Weides is an intense one featuring returners Callum Goldsmith, Gabe Mendoza and Federico Simonetti and Northern Illinois University transfer Nolan Fuelberth, a Lincoln Southwest grad. Goldsmith, Mendoza and Simonetti have each started at some point in the Bulldog kit. The competition at keeper will be a continuing storyline throughout preseason training. Fuelberth is a potential impact newcomer along with others such as forward Dominic Abdel-Ahad, midfielder Slade Leicht, forward Miguel Navarro and defender Adrian Wambua.

If Concordia can become more efficient at putting away the chances it creates, it just might crack a top four of a conference that has seemingly become better and better each season. According to the GPAC preseason poll, the Bulldogs will be chasing the likes of Northwestern, Hastings, Morning-

side and Briar Cliff at the top. There just might be a handful or more teams in the league capable of winning the GPAC regular season title.

Says Shaddick, "The GPAC is a quality conference with quality competition. You really can't take a day off against our opponents. We have to make sure to come prepared and sharp every day, whether it's training, meetings, looking at film or when we're on the field. We have to make sure we bring our all. If somebody's down or not at their best, we have to bring each other up. I think that's what will lead us to a successful season and hopefully finish with a GPAC championship."

Added Weides, "Our conference has gotten better overall, top to bottom. Our conference, in a way, has been compressed. There's less of a gap between the top team and the second team or the top couple teams and everybody else - and there's less of a gap between the bottom team or the bottom couple teams. It makes for a much more competitive conference and for more teams that are truly in the hunt. The challenge in the GPAC is you can't stumble much. You lose two games - that's more than most of our regular season champions have had. You have to be really good and really consistent over the long haul. Most every game you play could go either way."

As part of a unique trip out to the Pacific Northwest, Concordia will open the 2022 season by playing Northwest University in Salem, Ore., on Aug. 25. The Bulldogs will also take on Corban University in Salem on Aug. 27. Weides' squad will make its first home appearance on Sept. 10 when it hosts No. 12 Bellevue University.



BULLDOGS OPEN SEASON WITH VICTORY, CLEAN SHEET ON OREGON TRIP

Aug. 25, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 1, Northwest 0

GOALS

70' - (C) Ryan Wokutch (1)

SALEM, Ore. – Following a travel day on Wednesday out to the Pacific Northwest, the Concordia University Men's Soccer team rang in the 2022 season on Thursday (Aug. 25) in hot and muggy weather in Salem, Ore. The Bulldogs showed no signs of jetlag while holding off Cascade Collegiate Conference opponent Northwest University (Wash.), 1-0, as part of the Corban Jamboree. Concordia used 18 different players to help combat the heat and got a 70th-minute goal from Ryan Wokutch.

This was the first time in his 15 seasons as head coach that Jason Weides had ever taken the program out to Oregon. The victory will only enhance the unique experience.

"Northwest is a good team that returned a lot from last season, so we knew we were going to be up for a challenge," Weides said. "It was certainly a tough game. We walked away with a win after a long day of travel. Our guys showed really good energy and effort. They weren't going to let travel be an excuse. Overall I was really pleased. Most of that first half, we were all over them. They came out in the second half and were much better than us in the opening minutes before we settled into the game. It was about grinding out a 1-0 game. It wasn't pretty at times, but we did enough to squeak by. We'll find ways to improve heading into our next game."

A nice contingent of Bulldog fans witnessed the win in Salem, Ore., where a four-team event is taking place. A major moment on Thursday came in the 15th minute when the Northwest goalkeeper was issued a red card for for recklessness that resulted in a Bulldog being leveled to the ground.

Despite the man advantage, Concordia waited until the 70th minute to find the back of the net.

For Wokutch, a native of Paola, Kan., it was the continuation of a strong run during preseason. His strike (ninth career goal) was assisted by Dominic Abdel-Ahad. The latter was one of four players to make their Bulldog debuts. Wokutch was active on the attack in putting three shots on frame over the 90 minutes.

As a team, Concordia held an overall advantage of 12-4 in the shot category. Federico Simonetti emerged from the battle at goalkeeper to start the match. He collected three saves on his way to a clean sheet. One of those saves came in the 89th minute as the Eagles made a late push for a draw. Dangerous Northwest striker Elliot Mistic (15 goals in 2021) managed just one shot. In other words, it was a nice first outing for a backline that includes captain and Second Team All-GPAC honoree Iker Casanova.

Said Weides, "We played well overall. They have a really good striker. I thought our guys did a good job to hold him in check throughout the game. Certainly it was harder for them to create shots once that red card came, but our guys did a good job to limit quality opportunities."

With an off day on Friday, the Bulldogs will recover while also taking in some sights. The team plans to head to Silver Falls State Park and also hangout on the beach. Said Weides, "We want to enjoy the experience while we're here and have some fun."

Action from Salem will resume on Saturday as the Bulldogs will take on host Corban University at 1 p.m. PT / 3 p.m. CT. The Warriors began their season on Thursday with a 3-0 shutout of GPAC foe and 25th-ranked Northwestern. Since 2013, the Corban program has reached the national tournament seven times.



CONCORDIA DROPS 1-0 BATTLE IN FINAL GAME OF MEMORY-FILLED ROAD TRIP

Aug. 27, 2022

FINAL: Corban 1, Concordia 0

GOALS

27' - (Cor.) Andres Labate

SALEM, Ore. – A day after taking in the forests and beaches of Oregon, the Concordia University Men's Soccer team returned to the home turf of Corban University, host of this week's Corban Jamboree. The Warriors managed to silence the Bulldogs' offensive attack and turned away the visitors, 1-0, on Saturday (Aug. 27) afternoon. Concordia may have been limited to three shots (none on frame), but it went toe-to-toe with a team that had beaten No. 25 Northwestern, 3-0, on Thursday.

Fifteenth-year Head Coach Jason Weides' squad will return to Nebraska with a 1-1 record. The Bulldogs claimed a 1-0 win over Northwest University (Wash.) on Thursday as part of the two-game swing in Salem, Ore.

"It was a hard-fought game," said Weides of Saturday's action. "It was just a battle between two good teams. It was nice to get that type of test early in the season. They were all over us to start. We kind of struggled with our defensive organization. As the half wore on, we got better and better. Credit to Corban, they played pretty well. They are right there with other teams we've seen that are top 25 quality. We still have room to grow and be better in possession."

Corban broke up the 0-0 stalemate in the 27th minute with a goal from Andres Labate. That was all the goal scoring it took on a day when the two sides combined for four shots on goal. The Warriors (2-0) wound up with eight shots total while seeing out a defensive conflict. In goal, Callum Goldsmith collected three saves as Concordia hung tough with a program that has been a frequent national qualifier since 2014.

The stat sheet credited a shot apiece to Bulldogs Carter Hinman, Victor Meneses and Miguel Navarro. They were three of 17 Concordia players to see action against Corban. The early litmus test will give the Bulldogs something to work off of once they return to Nebraska and prepare for another nonconference road clash next Saturday.

"They pressed well and were really sharp in possession," said Weides of Corban. "We had some moments where we were a little off. I think it was the result of a little fatigue. We were probably a little heavy-legged, but our guys fought until the final whistle. I was proud of our performance and the fight. We just fell a little bit short. We did have a couple chances where it looked like we were going to score and our shots

were just narrowly wide. It was a good learning experience for us."

Results aside, Concordia will remember this adventure for years to come. The players will likely recall the experience for the bonding time they shared on hiking trails and sandy beaches.

Said Weides, "It was a great trip. We were all really glad we came out here. We played two games against quality opponents and were tested. We had a business trip to make and a vacation to make. I think the guys did a good job of delineating that line ... It was definitely a trip they'll never forget."

A mid-week bye will give the Bulldogs a chance to get their legs back underneath them. Concordia now looks forward to playing at Tabor College (Kan.) next Saturday (Sept. 3) with kickoff set for 8:30 p.m. CT from Hillsboro, Kan. The two sides met last season in Seward with a final result of 4-0 in favor of the Bulldogs.





CONCORDIA FENDS OFF 2021 NATIONAL QUALIFIER

Sept. 3, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 3, Tabor 2

GOALS

35' - (C) Miguel Navarro (1)

67' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (1)

68 - (C) Carlos Orquiz (1)

75' - (T) Aitor Jorde

80' - (T) Cooper Allan

HILLSBORO, Kan. – It got a bit hairier than the Concordia University Men's Soccer team would have wanted, but the final result was a satisfying one for the visitors. Three different Bulldogs notched a goal in what amounted to a 3-2 win at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., on Saturday (Sept. 3). Two late goals by the Bluejays made it a stressful final 10 minutes.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad still has yet to make its 2022 home debut. Concordia is 2-1 having also earned a win over Northwest University (Wash.) as part of the season opening journey to Salem, Ore.

"Tabor's a good team. They made the national tournament last year for a reason," Weides said. "They have some dangerous players. I thought our guys came out flying – we almost scored in the first 35 seconds of the match. They were definitely up for it. Tabor kind of settled into the game and we finally got the breakthrough goal before half."

Last season in Seward, the Bulldogs had beaten Tabor in a 4-0 rout. This one had similar vibes in the 68th minute when Concordia capitalized on a penalty kick opportunity. Daniel Campbell drew the foul in the box and Carlos Orquiz subsequently drilled the PK. Miguel Navarro (35') and Dominic Abdel-Ahad (67') previously found the back of the net for their first career goals as Bulldogs.

Tabor didn't quit. IT got a goal from Aitor Jorde in the 75th minute and one from Allan Cooper in the 80th minute. Over the final 10 minutes, no shots were recorded although the Bluejays did have a corner kick in the 85th minute. Concordia had managed to survive the scare while outshooting Tabor, 14-11, overall and outnumbering it, 5-4, in shots on goal.

The tense moments down the stretch could have perhaps been avoided. Weides sees it as a potential learning opportunity.

"We really looked in control at that point," said Weides of the 3-0 lead. "Unfortunately it didn't stay that way. Those lost 20



minutes were a bit hectic. They got a goal to make it 3-1 and it breathed a little life into them. We were maybe not quite as composed as we needed to be. Suddenly it was 3-2 and we were just defending. It was an anxious last few minutes, but we fought it out and did just enough to get the win. Once we were up 3-0, I did not expect us to be in a moment where we were fighting for our lives, but we were in that moment. It was a good lesson for us for how we can be better to see out games."

Through three games, the Bulldogs have started three different keepers. Gabe Mendoza got the call on Saturday and played all 90 minutes. He made two saves. From an attacking perspective, Abdel-Ahad (six shots, two on goal) and Navarro (three shots, two on goal) were the most active players for Concordia. For Tabor, Jorde got four shots off.

The Bluejays (1-2) own defeated Briar Cliff, 1-0, a week ago. Tabor recovered well from its loss in Seward in 2021 and went on to go 12-8-1 overall with an appearance in the opening round of the national tournament.

The longstanding rivalry between Concordia and York College will be renewed on Tuesday when the Bulldogs and Panthers convene in York, Neb., for a 5:30 p.m. CT kickoff. A year ago, Concordia opened the 2021 season with a 4-2 home win over York. In his tenure, Weides has lost just once to the Panthers.

HARD-FOUGHT GAME WON BY CONCORDIA IN RIVALRY CLASH

Sept. 6, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 2, York 0

GOALS

3' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (2)

53' - (C) Carter Hinman (1)

YORK, Neb. – In perhaps the most commonly held rivalry in the history of Nebraska collegiate soccer, it was the Bulldogs who got the best of York College on Tuesday (Sept. 6) night. Concordia held the host Panthers to only two shots on goal in a 2-0 workmanlike victory. The two sides matched up on the natural grass field at Cornerstone Sports Complex in York.

In 15 seasons at the helm of the Bulldogs, Weides has led his side to wins in 13 of 14 clashes with York. On the season, Concordia has moved to 3-1.

“Each game has brought us something different,” Weides said. “I think a theme in this game was you just never quite knew how it was going to go. Today we scored like three minutes in, and it looked like we might be able to bang in a bunch of goals because of how we showed up ready to play. Those first 15 minutes we were really all over them but just couldn’t quite get that second goal. York fought hard – it was a physical and intense game. It was one of those where you have to manage your emotions. I was really pleased with how our guys showed great composure.”

Only 2:29 had elapsed off the clock when Dominic Abdel-Ahad put away his second goal of the season. The transfer from Northwest Nazarene University was assisted by Isaiah Shaddick. At that point, the Bulldogs appeared on their way to a productive offensive day like the one they enjoyed a year ago versus the Panthers in the 4-2 win in Seward. But York dug in and came close to finding an equalizer later in the first half.

Concordia earned some breathing room in the 53rd minute when Carter Hinman found the back of the net. He was set up by Marc Ackerman, who made the first appearance of his Bulldog career on Tuesday. Ackerman, a transfer from Central Community College, figures to show off his track speed moving forward. Meanwhile, Abdel-Ahad wound up putting three shots on goal. As a team, Concordia only narrowly out-shot York, 11-9, but had an 8-2 advantage in shots on goal. Corner kicks were even at 5-5.

In goal, Federico Simonetti started for the second time this

season and made one save to help preserve the clean sheet. Johan Rodriguez (four shots and one shot on goal) was the most active striker for the Panthers (2-3). By the time 90 minutes were up, the Bulldogs were satisfied to have seen out the physical battle.

Said Weides, “It was one of those that became a grind-out win. Even at 2-0, it wasn’t easy the last 10-15 minutes. York fought hard all the way to the final whistle. It was a really good overall performance for us to shut them out and walk away with the victory ... Naturally there’s that rivalry because of proximity and because we play each other every year, there’s familiarity there. We’ve been fortunate to have the upper hand, but many of the games have been really intense battles. We expended a lot of energy to get this win.”

After four games away from home to start the 2022 season, Concordia will be ready to host its home opener on Saturday when No. 12 Bellevue University (2-3-1) will be in town for a 1 p.m. CT kickoff. The two programs play each other on a near annual basis. The Bulldogs will attempt to defeat the Bruins for the first time since 2019.



ORQUIZ PK, IMPROVED SECOND HALF LEAD TO 1-0 WIN OVER BELLEVUE

Sept. 10, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 1, Bellevue 0

GOALS

84' - (C) Carlos Orquiz (2)

SEWARD, Neb. – Four days after a rivalry victory at York College, the Concordia University Men's Soccer team found itself in a rough-and-tumble affair with a perennially strong Bellevue University opponent that was ranked No. 12 in the 2022 NAIA preseason coaches' poll. The Bulldogs defended corner kick after corner kick and survived to claim a 1-0 victory in their 2022 home debut. Carlos Orquiz broke the scoreless draw with a penalty kick goal in the 84th minute.

The win over the 2021 national qualifying Bruins helps legitimize a 4-1 start for Head Coach Jason Weides' squad. The only blemish on the record so far is a 1-0 defeat against Corban University (Ore.), currently ranked No. 25 in the NAIA.

"We joked with the team that we defended 48 corner kicks today – it felt like that," Weides said. "I think what we learned about this team is that we can get better throughout games. We really weren't very good in the first half minus the defensive side of the ball and the transition side of the ball. With the ball, we struggled. We were maybe a little overhyped, a little tense, and Bellevue came out flying. They were preseason No. 12 in the nation for a reason. In the second half, we came alive and got better throughout the game. The guys made some good strides at halftime."

By the end of 45 minutes, Concordia had mustered only a single shot and was forced to stave off 12 corner kicks from Bellevue. The Bulldogs kept it at a 0-0 stalemate thanks in large part to a back line that included Max Bisinger and Adrian Wambua at the center back spots and Iker Casanova and Braden Spath at left and right back, respectively. In goal, Federico Simonetti made six saves and earned his second shutout of 2022.

It eventually came down to Orquiz putting away the PK with 6:43 remaining in the match. Initially, it looked as though Concordia was going to be awarded a corner kick before the official signaled for a PK, following some discussion. Orquiz drilled it for his second goal of the season, setting off a celebration in the southwest corner of the field.

The Bulldogs were on the wrong end of plenty of decisions



like this one in 2021 – but not this time. Said Orquiz, "Last year was something similar with a one-goal difference in games, but I feel like this year is different. We're taking more advantage of our opportunities and we're defending really hard in the back. That's massive to get the win and keep a clean sheet."

Around 70th minute, Concordia narrowly missed out on a goal. Miguel Navarro had put away the deflection made by the Bellevue keeper on a quick strike in the box. However, the goal was negated due to offside. Just seconds later, Daniel Campbell's shot missed just wide left on another prime scoring opportunity.

The Bruins (2-4-1) likely walked away feeling they missed some of their own chances, considering they had 17 corner kicks and put eight shots on goal. Leading striker Oumar Sissok (17 goals in 2021) was limited to one shot total for the match. Bellevue hasn't gotten out to the start it would have wanted, in part due to a challenging nonconference schedule.

"Bellevue's a good team and we're going to face other good teams," Weides said. "This prepares us for what those are like. Whether it's the prettiest game in the world or the ugliest game, you have to be willing to battle and scrap and win second balls. We learned today that if we do the little things, we can probably compete with anybody."

The Bulldogs will be right back at home on Tuesday to host Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference opponent Bethany College (1-2) with kickoff set for 8 p.m. CT. The two programs last met in 2014 when Concordia edged the Swedes, 1-0, in Seward.

SUCCESSFUL NONCONFERENCE SEASON CONCLUDES WITH GRIND-OUT WIN

Sept. 13, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 2, Bethany 0

GOALS

56' - (C) Carlos Orquiz (3)

74' - (C) Matt Schultz (1)

SEWARD, Neb. – The formula was similar to the one used three days earlier by the Concordia University Men's Soccer team: get a PK goal from Carlos Orquiz and shut the opponent out. This time around, a second goal provided some breathing room as the Bulldogs defeated Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference foe Bethany College (Kan.), 2-0, on a warm Tuesday (Sept. 13) night inside Bulldog Stadium. Matt Schultz also notched a goal that was set up by Orquiz.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad ends the nonconference portion of the regular season schedule at 5-1. Concordia will enter GPAC action ranked as the league's No. 3 team in the latest official GPAC poll.

"We took a good approach," Weides said. "Ultimately, it wasn't as pretty as we would have liked. I think we have an opportunity to be better and grow as a team, but I think we're learning through wins and not ties or losses. When you come off an emotional game like that (1-0 win over Bellevue University), there's a tendency for teams to drop off a little bit or overlook an opponent. I don't think our guys did. I think we had a good mentality, defended well and put in a full effort."

Some credit is due to the Swedes (2-3), who scrapped and

kept the Bulldogs off the scoreboard for more than 55 minutes. A few days earlier, Bethany earned a 3-1 win over a GPAC opponent in Doane. Though the Bulldogs were not as sharp on the attack as they would have hoped, they were not about to suffer the same fate. Concordia completely stifled the Swedes, who managed just three shots (two on goal). Bethany's Josh Amador entered the game having scored five goals already this season, but he did not register a single shot on Tuesday.

Without many chances on either side in the run of play, the Bulldogs kept up their knack for drawing penalty kicks. Orquiz drilled his third PK goal of the season in the 56th minute, breaking the scoreless draw. The native of Chihuahua, Mexico, also had a hand in Schultz's goal in the 74th minute. After Orquiz's free kick hit the crossbar, the opportunistic Schultz was there for the rebound and a goal from just a couple yards away.

The fourth goal of Schultz's career came roughly 40 minutes after he had missed high on a scoring chance in the first half. Another key play came not long after Orquiz's goal when a potential Swede goal was wiped out by an offside call. Bethany voiced its contention to no avail.

Said Schultz, "After that huge win over Bellevue on Saturday, we came in trying to keep that same mentality. I think we did a good job of that. Though we didn't score as many goals, we put up a big fight. I'm just proud of my boys and all that we've done – 5-1."

Concordia finished the night with a 12-3 advantage in shots (5-2 in shots on goal). One of the bums of the night was the sight of João Pedro Veríssimo being carted off the field. His hopes are to recover and return to the field soon.

On the plus side, this was the fourth clean sheet already for the Bulldogs. Keeper Callum Goldsmith made two saves while earning the shutout. He was aided by a backline that included Schultz and Iker Casanova on the outsides and Max Bisinger and Adrian Wambua at the center back positions.

Said Weides, "I think it's about team defense. We have a great goalkeeper unit and our backline is doing a good job, but it takes everybody putting in a shift."

Next up is the start of conference play. The Bulldogs will be headed to Yankton, S.D., for a 7:30 p.m. CT kickoff versus Mount Marty (4-0-1, 0-0 GPAC), which plays its home games at Crane-Youngworth Field.



WINNING WAYS CONTINUE WITH 2-1 DECISION OVER LANCERS

Sept. 17, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 2, Mount Marty 1

GOALS

54' - (C) Jarrod Henson (1)

73' - (M) Sloan Tshilenge

76' - (C) Miguel Navarro (2)

YANKTON, S.D. – Call it a workmanlike effort against an opponent that had not yet been beaten in 2022. Ultimately, a goal from Miguel Navarro in the 76th minute provided the difference on the scoreboard as the Concordia University Men's Soccer team walked away from Yankton, S.D., with a 2-1 victory over Mount Marty on Saturday (Sept. 17). The result marked the fourth time this season the Bulldogs have won by a one-goal margin.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad has jumped out to a 6-1 overall record while winning its conference opener. It got all it could handle from the Lancers.

"This is one of the best Mount Marty teams we've seen," Weides said. "They certainly made it challenging for us. It's a small field with tight spaces, but I think our guys did pretty well overall. I thought we fought hard and responded well from an own goal. I saw a good mentality in our team and a good response. We got a lot of quality energy from our bench. I think it spurred the guys to keep on fighting. We didn't play beautifully, but we did the job."

The closely contested clash was a 0-0 stalemate all the way until the 54th minute. Out of a scrum, the Bulldogs emerged with a goal that was credited to Jarrod Henson. Roughly 20 minutes later, Mount Marty celebrated a goal that was helped into the back of the net by a Concordia player at-

tempting to clear the ball. The Bulldogs responded affirmatively and regained the lead just a few minutes later when Navarro found the back of the net while assisted by Martin Herrera.

Over the final 15 minutes of play, Concordia keeper Gabriel Mendoza made a pair of saves in thwarting the Lancers' attempt to pull even. Shots were not easy to come by on a night when both teams took exactly six apiece. Mendoza totaled five saves in what was nearly a fourth-straight clean sheet.

Shutout or not, the Bulldogs are showing their mettle in games that come down to the wire. They are stockpiling wins even as a big goal scoring outbreak is yet to happen. The program has won at least six of its first seven games for the third time in four seasons. The 2019 squad reached 7-0 before suffering a loss in game No. 8.

Said Weides, "We can get better and improve, and we will. It's good when you're finding ways to win. It was a good team effort top to bottom. They worked hard for this win and our guys deserve it. Mount Marty was undefeated for a reason. I think they're going to be a challenge for a lot of GPAC opponents."

Mount Marty finished last season at 6-9-1 overall (4-7 GPAC) and entered the weekend at 5-0-1 this fall. Prior to Saturday, the Lancers had been dangerous on the attack with outbursts of 10 goals versus Trinity Bible College, five versus Nebraska Wesleyan University and four versus York College.

Another GPAC road trip is coming up Wednesday when Concordia will be at Dordt (2-2-3, 0-0-1 GPAC) for a 7:15 p.m. CT kickoff in Sioux Center, Iowa. The Defenders drew with Briar Cliff in their GPAC opener this past Wednesday. In the 2021 meeting, the Bulldogs edged Dordt, 1-0.



FIVE-GAME WIN STREAK HALTED BY DORDT

Sept. 21, 2022

FINAL: Dordt 4, Concordia 3

GOALS

4' - (C) Martin Herrera (1)
 20' - (D) Kaleb Lee
 32' - (C) Carlos Orquiz (4)
 35' - (D) Javier Moscardo
 46' - (D) Blake Hansen
 64' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (3)
 84' - (D) Blake Hansen

SIoux CENTER, Iowa – Coaches and players for Concordia University Men's Soccer never saw this one coming, especially considering the team had allowed a grand total of one goal over the previous four outings. In a wild one, host Dordt got the best of the Bulldogs, 4-3, underneath the lights in Sioux Center, Iowa, on Wednesday (Sept. 21) evening. Concordia squandered leads of 1-0 and 2-1 in the defeat.

The result snapped a five-game winning streak for Head Coach Jason Weides' squad. The Bulldogs (6-2, 1-1 GPAC) will have to quickly flush this performance.

"It's a tough one," Weides said. "I felt like we had the right mentality and had energy and effort but collectively, we made a lot of mistakes. When we played simple and executed, we looked like a really good team. Unfortunately, we made a ton of errors and some of them were punished with goals. It was abnormal for us. Early on, I thought we played well and were on top of them. Then we had a 15-minute stretch where we really struggled. There were some bright moments, but too many where we made mistakes."

Not since the 2016 season had Concordia surrendered four goals to an opponent. Perhaps fittingly on this particular night, it was a mistake by the back line that led to the game-winning goal for the Defenders. Blake Hansen stole the ball, had his initial shot rejected by Federico Simonetti and then chased down the rebound and slotted it into the back of the net. Hansen's goal occurred in the 84th minute and represented the final shot taken by either team.

For as many goals as were scored on Wednesday, the shot counts were actually fairly low – 10-9 in favor of the Bulldogs. Both teams capitalized on their offensive chances. The goals for Concordia came from Martin Herrera (4'), Carlos Orquiz (32') and Dominic Abdel-Ahad (64'). An assist apiece was credited to Isaiah Shaddick and Herrera. The goal by Abdel-Ahad had brought the Bulldogs back into a tie (3-3)

after Dordt had held a one-goal lead for roughly 18 minutes. A Concordia shot off the post nearly gave the visitors a 4-3 advantage.

A year ago, the Bulldogs defeated Dordt, 1-0, though possession was decidedly one-sided (20-4 Concordia shot advantage). This was a significant win for the Defenders (3-2-3, 1-0-1 GPAC), who finished last season at 2-9 in the GPAC.

"So many unusual things," Weides said. "We don't usually concede that many goals. We don't usually lose leads. I think we were uncharacteristically sloppy in possession. They did a good job of punishing us for our mistakes. There's a razor thin margin sometimes. We'll find a way to learn and grow from this and do everything we can not to have this feeling going forward."

On a positive note, João Pedro Veríssimo returned to the lineup after missing this past weekend's 2-1 win at Mount Marty. It was feared he may miss a much lengthier portion of the season when he went down with an injury in the victory over Bethany on Sept. 13.

The Bulldogs will be back in Seward on Saturday to host Northwestern (2-3-3, 1-0-1 GPAC). Kickoff is set for 1 p.m. CT from Bulldog Stadium. Concordia will attempt to avenge the 1-0 defeat it suffered last season in Orange City, Iowa. The Red Raiders shared the 2022 GPAC regular season title.



WOKUTCH'S LATE HEROICS LIFT BULLDOGS TO COMEBACK WIN

Sept. 24, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 2, Northwestern 1

GOALS

28' - (N) Niklas Fitter
 84' - (C) Ryan Wokutch (2)
 87' - (C) Ryan Wokutch (3)

SEWARD, Neb. – With time running out on a week that had been frustrating to that point, Ryan Wokutch emerged as the hero. He found the back of the net twice in the final six-and-a-half minutes as Concordia University Men's Soccer came from behind to claim a 2-1 win over Northwestern inside Bulldog Stadium on Saturday (Sept. 24). The Bulldogs had trailed for the entirety of the second half before Wokutch's goal off the free kick from Carlos Orquiz tied the score.

This was a much better feeling than the one felt three days earlier when Concordia suffered a 4-3 loss at Dordt in a contest marred by uncharacteristic gaffes. This was the type of bounce-back win the Bulldogs (7-2, 2-1 GPAC) needed in order to be in the hunt as a top-four team in the league.

"Credit to Ryan for taking those chances and the team for fighting and staying into it," Weides said. "It's another game where we kind of gifted our opponent a goal. I'm sure Northwestern could have found a goal themselves within that game. They're a good team. They won the league last year for a reason. They gave us a great challenge today. I was impressed to see our guys' resolve and response. It truly was a championship response we saw from the team. It was a very important three points for us."

Wokutch's two goals came less than three minutes apart as he stole this one away from the Red Raiders. The goals came in two very different forms. First, in the 84th minute, Orquiz volleyed a free kick into the box that Wokutch managed to redirect past goalkeeper Ezekiel Foltz. Roughly two-and-a-

half minutes later, the native of Paola, Kan., showed off his track speed in outrunning a pair of Northwestern defenders for a ball led into the box by Max Bisinger. Wokutch then slid the ball to the right of a flat-footed Foltz.

In a blink of an eye, the Bulldogs had erased some of the first 80-plus minutes of attacking misfires. Going back to the 28th minute, Concordia had conceded a weak goal that came due to some defender-goalkeeper miscommunication. The Red Raiders' Niklas Fitter was the beneficiary. The Bulldogs led the final shot count, 15-6 (6-4 in shots on goal), though Northwestern (2-4-3, 1-1-1 GPAC) had more corners, 8-3.

This will be one Wokutch won't soon forget. This may be one Concordia looks back to as a key point in its season when a near defeat was flipped into a win in the waning moments.

Said Wokutch in response to the closing minutes, "A lot of emotions. I came back on the field with a couple minutes left and I knew we needed at least one goal. The opportunity arose and we got the one goal and continued to get a second one. I just found the extra energy at the end to help the team out as much as I could and get the win."

In goal, Gabriel Mendoza started for the Bulldogs and made three saves. Weides used five subs off the bench in an unseasonably hot late September day in Seward. While Concordia feels like this one could have easily been a clean sheet, the response to adversity was a positive development.

Said Weides, "We were most focused on not talking about what our response was going to look like, but to show it. We just had to bounce back. We didn't watch any game film from Dordt. It was, 'hey, we have to move on.'"

The Bulldogs now look forward to playing at Midland (5-1-2, 1-1-1 GPAC) at 7:15 p.m. CT on Wednesday. Heedum Field in Fremont, Neb., will serve as the location. Concordia will try to avenge last season's 1-0 home loss to the Warriors.



BULLDOGS HOLD OFF MIDLAND, PULL OUT ANOTHER ONE-GOAL WIN

Sept. 28, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 3, Midland 2

GOALS

6' - (C) Max Bisinger (1)
 32' - (C) Jarrod Henson (1)
 49' - (M) Tomas Pereira
 72' - (C) Ryan Wokutch (4)
 77' - (M) Thomas Moulder

FREMONT, Neb. – The Concordia University Men's Soccer team has plenty of experience now in these nip and tuck GPAC battles. In a fourth-straight conference game decided by a single goal, the Bulldogs prevailed at Midland, 3-2, on Wednesday (Sept. 28) evening. Twice Concordia pushed its advantage to two goals (2-0 and 3-1) before the host Warriors tightened things back up. Both teams went scoreless over the final 14 minutes as the Bulldogs saw out the road win.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad has moved to 8-2 overall and to 3-1 in the GPAC. Concordia effectively avenged its 1-0 loss last season to Midland (5-2-2, 1-2-1 GPAC), a fierce rival.

"Midland is a good team. There's a reason why it was a competitive game," Weides said. "We knew we were in for a battle. We were pretty solid overall in the first half. I thought we were in control of the game, defending well and limiting Midland's quality possession. It was a bit of a tale of two halves. I thought we were the better team in the first half and

they were the better team in the second half. Credit to Midland for coming to play. We've got to be a bit better once we have a two-goal lead. The last 15-20 minutes became about scrapping and fighting and doing the dirty work, and I think our guys did a good job of that."

Chalk up another close one in the always competitive series with the Warriors. The Bulldogs got it done in the latest installment of the rivalry in part because of their ability to finish on the attacking end. The first and third goals came after set pieces while the second was beautifully executed within the run of play. Goal No. 3 was delivered by this past weekend's hero, Ryan Wokutch, who was on the other end of a Carlos Orquiz free kick. Wokutch (12 career goals) wound up with another game-winner.

Lincoln Southwest High School product Matt Schultz had a hand in the first and second goals while being credited with an assist in each instance. His well-placed header off a corner kick enabled an attacking flurry in the box, resulting in Max Bisinger's goal on the rebound. Later in the first half, Schultz played a ball through that led Jarrod Henson into the box. He calmly slotted past the Warrior keeper.

It would have been foolish to expect this one to be easy though. Of the 21 times Weides has coached against Midland (10-8-3 record), 14 of those games have ended with ties, PK shootouts or one-goal decisions. The Warriors sprung to life early in the second half on Wednesday when Tomas Pereira scored off the assist from Alex Mee, making it a 2-1 game. Midland also got a PK goal in the 77th minute to initiate a tense closing stretch.

Overall, the Bulldogs were strong defensively in limiting the Warriors to four shots on goal. Keeper Gabriel Mendoza made two saves, including a difficult one when it was 2-1 in the second half. Mendoza is now 4-0 this season as a starting keeper. Both teams finished with exactly eight shots while 10 total yellow cards were issued. On another note, Concordia went 7-1 during the month of September.

Said Weides of the close calls in the GPAC, "It shows that we have to be really good throughout the long haul. Obviously we've had one stumble already, but we're proving we have a good mentality and spirit in those moments. Tonight was another opportunity to showcase that."

The Bulldogs now look forward to hosting Dakota Wesleyan (1-7-1, 0-3 GPAC) at 3:30 p.m. CT on Saturday. In his tenure leading Concordia, Weides owns a record of 9-5 versus the Tigers. The Bulldogs won handily, 5-1, in the 2021 matchup played in Mitchell, S.D.



ABDEL-AHAD PRODUCES HAT TRICK, BULLDOGS ROLL PAST DWU

Oct. 1, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 6, Dakota Wesleyan 1

GOALS

9' - (D) Ignacio Iglesias
 21' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (4)
 51' - (C) Matt Schultz (2)
 73' - (C) Martin Herrera (2)
 74' - (C) Martin Herrera (3)
 79' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (5)
 90' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (6)

"It took us doing the fundamentals well and being simple," Weides said. "We overcomplicated the first part of this game. Credit to Dakota Wesleyan – they came out playing well and got a goal that we didn't defend very well. Once we focused on the foundations of the game, we started to do some good stuff. Our combination play improved throughout the game. In the second half it was probably better combination play than we've had all season. Hopefully it's a show of things to come."

The visitors from Mitchell, S.D., held a 1-0 lead thanks to Ignacio Iglesias' goal in the eighth minute. The rest of the way, DWU had almost no scoring chances as it finished with three shots (two on goal). Abdel-Ahad found the equalizer in the 21st minute with his fourth goal of the season. He was just getting started.

Concordia finally enjoyed a breakout over the closing 45 minutes. Goals were put on the board by Schultz (51'), Herrera (73' and 74') and Abdel-Ahad (79' and 90'). Down to the final whistle, the Bulldogs never stopped attacking. They produced season highs for not only goals, but also shots (29) and shots on goal (14). Herrera's tenacity paid off in the form of a bullet of a strike for his first goal of the game. Assists were rewarded to Herrera, Jarrod Henson, Spencer Kaufman, Braden Spath and Adrian Wambua.

Those exploits made it easy to forget about the first half. "We had a rough start to the game," Abdel-Ahad said. "We got down 1-0 pretty quick and then tied the game 1-1. At halftime, we said, 'Hey, we need to respond. We need to score a lot of goals in the second half.' Our last games were kind of close, so today we had to make a statement and I think we did that. I'm proud of the team."

Weides is still looking for a complete performance. Said the 15th-year head coach, "We just have to continue to get better. I still don't think we've put together a full 90. It's something we have to find at some point. Hopefully we're saving those for the last stretch of the season. We're going to be challenged. We have to come out and perform each and every day."

Federico Simonetti made the start in goal and saved one shot. He spent most of his 90 minutes watching his teammates attack. There were full Bulldogs who registered at least four shots. As for Abdel-Ahad, he was the first Concordia player to post a hat trick since Moises Jacobo in a 4-1 win at Dordt on Sept. 23, 2020.

The Bulldogs will take to the road on Wednesday for a trip to Morningside (3-5-3, 2-1-2 GPAC). Kickoff from Elwood Olsen Stadium in Sioux City, Iowa, is set for 8 p.m. CT. The two sides met twice last season with the Mustangs prevailing both times. The second matchup occurred in the quarterfinals of the GPAC tournament.



SEWARD, Neb. – The Concordia University Men's Soccer team ensured that it would not have to sweat out a wire-to-wire game on Saturday (Oct. 1). A 1-1 halftime tie turned into a blowout victory for the Bulldogs, who sent Dakota Wesleyan packing, 6-1, in Seward. Dominic Abdel-Ahad went wild for a hat trick and Martin Herrera put forth a pair of goals. The team's six goals represented a season high.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad had lived on the edge through the first four conference games, all of which were decided by one-goal margins. Concordia has pushed its record to 9-2 overall (4-1 GPAC).

CONCORDIA SETTLES FOR DRAW AFTER RELINQUISHING 2-0 LEAD AT MORNINGSIDE

Oct. 5, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 2, Morningside 2

GOALS

3' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (7)

38' - (C) Daniel Campbell (1)

54' - (M) Robin Thomala

64' - (M) Robin Thomala

SIoux CITY, Iowa – In tight situations throughout the season to date, the Concordia University Men's Soccer team has typically found ways to get the job done. On Wednesday (Oct. 5), the Bulldogs let go of a 2-0 lead and settled for a 2-2 draw at Morningside. Concordia had its way over the first 45 minutes before Morningside flipped the script over the final 45.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad hoped to avenge the two losses it was handed by the Mustangs in 2021. The Bulldogs (receiving votes in the NAIA poll released earlier in the day) now stand at 9-2-1 overall and at 4-1-1 in the GPAC.

"I felt like everyone who stepped on the field in the first half contributed and impacted the game," Weides said. "Our bench had great energy. In the second half, it was a little

bit different. We're incredibly disappointed in the result. It was an opportunity to position ourselves at the top against a good team. On the other hand, it was a hard-earned point against a good team. It was a point that could be very instrumental in the long run. I'm still proud of the guys' effort. We just felt like we dropped two points."

Reigning GPAC Offensive Player of the Week Dominic Abdel-Ahad had Concordia off and running with a goal less than three minutes after kickoff. The goal was set up by Ryan Wokutch. Late in the first half, a shot by Daniel Campbell (that may have been deflected) ended up in the back of the net. The Bulldogs took a 2-0 lead to the break.

Unfortunately, Morningside's Robin Thomala struck twice with a goal in the 54th minute and another in the 64th minute. Both teams made effective use of the five shots apiece put on frame. In goal for Concordia, Federico Simonetti made three saves. On the other end, Bjarne Huth collected three saves for Morningside.

It was another instance in which the Bulldogs were unable to pull a full 90-minute performance together. Concordia has lived on the edge at times this season with six wins coming by one-goal margins. The close ones should serve the Bulldogs well down the stretch of the conference slate.

Said Weides, "I thought we were really good in the first half and looked like the far better team. Second half, they were the far better team. I can't quite put my finger on it. We've struggled to defend two-goal leads and either score a third or keep the opponent from scoring. There's room for growth for us in the second half of games. It really was a tale of two halves. We were kind of hanging on in the second half."

A perennially strong program within the GPAC, Morningside (3-5-4, 2-1-3 GPAC) ended Concordia's 2021 season in the GPAC quarterfinals with a 2-1 decision. The Mustangs have had a rash of recent ties and are 0-2-3 over their last five outings. Morningside won the GPAC regular season title as recently as 2020.

Next up, Concordia will welcome Jamestown (3-8-1, 1-4-1 GPAC) to Bulldog Stadium for an 8 p.m. CT kickoff on Saturday. The Bulldogs have gone 2-0-2 in the series since the Jimmies joined the GPAC beginning with the 2018 season.



CONCORDIA EXPLODES FOR SIX GOALS IN TROUNCING OF JAMESTOWN

Oct. 8, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 6, Jamestown 0

GOALS

9' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (8)

15' - (C) Matt Schultz (3)

16' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (9)

42' - (C) Max Bisinger (2)

53' - (C) Adrian Wambua (1)

69' - (C) Miguel Navarro (3)



SEWARD, Neb. – On back-to-back Saturdays inside Bulldog Stadium, the Concordia University Men's Soccer team has gone wild for a half dozen goals. In the latest weekend home rout, the Bulldogs got two more goals from the surging Dominic Abdel-Ahad and ran away from visiting Jamestown, 6-0. A hyper-active version of Concordia put 14 shots on frame and tagged the Jimmies with their most lopsided defeat of 2022.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad felt like it had squandered a victory Wednesday night at Morningside in what amounted to a 2-2 tie. There would be no doubt on this crisp fall Saturday. The Bulldogs (10-2-1, 5-1-1 GPAC) have hit the 10-win mark overall.

"It was, top to bottom, a good performance by us," Weides said. "We had everybody contribute with guys who start-

ed and guys who came off the bench. Our communication was so much better today, which makes the game so much simpler. Our pressing was good today. We forced Jamestown into a lot of uncharacteristic errors. It was good to get some goals early and keep on coming."

Boy did Concordia make Jamestown pay for any mistakes that came about. This one was well in hand by halftime as Abdel-Ahad notched his eighth and ninth goals of the season in the opening 16 minutes while Matt Schultz and Max Bisinger also collected a goal apiece. Then in the second half, Adrian Wambua and Miguel Navarro found their way into the goal scoring column. By game's end, the shot count showed the Bulldogs with a 21-10 advantage.

Concordia managed to score in a variety of ways and was particularly dangerous in set-piece situations as Carlos Orquiz set up two of the six goals. As for Abdel-Ahad, his relentless paid off when he chased down his own deflected shot and drilled the back of the net in the 16th minute. The goal for Wambua in the 53rd minute marked the first of his career. Suddenly, the Bulldogs are averaging more than 2.5 goals per game in 2022.

Said Weides, "Early in the season we were winning 1-0 or 2-1 and couldn't seem to put a lot of goals in the back of the net. We're finally starting to see it. Dom's emerged to convert those chances, but we also have others scoring goals and some who haven't who are very capable. We're excited about how we're progressing on the attack as the season goes on. Our goal wasn't to be our best the first couple weeks of the season, it was to be our best towards the end."

Defensively, Concordia recorded its fifth shutout of the season and first since the 2-0 win over Bethany College (Kan.) on Sept. 13. Keepers Federico Simonetti and Nolan Fuelberth made two saves apiece while splitting up the 90 minutes. This marked the first action as a Bulldog for Fuelberth, a Lincoln Southwest High School alum.

Jamestown (4-9-1) had been coming off back-to-back wins by a combined score of 11-0. The Jimmies also had a 0-0 draw at Midland and played within a goal of Northwestern (1-0 loss). This was just the second time in conference play that Jamestown has been shut out.

The Bulldogs will have the middle of this coming week off while preparing to host Hastings (9-1, 7-0 GPAC) next Saturday (Oct. 15) in what will be a battle between the current top two teams in the GPAC standings. Concordia will attempt to take down the Broncos for the first time since the 2015 GPAC tournament championship game.

SECOND HALF DOMINANCE HIGHLIGHTS DRAW WITH FIRST-PLACE HASTINGS

Oct. 15, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 1, Hastings 1

GOALS

43' - (H) David Panter

66' - (C) Max Bisinger (2)

SEWARD, Neb. – Even in a draw, the Concordia University Men's Soccer team walked away from Bulldog Stadium on Saturday (Oct. 15) feeling better about itself. In another tense Hastings-Concordia battle, the Bulldogs were the clear aggressor in the second half and came within an eyelash of earning the victory. The visiting Broncos dodged plenty of bullets over the final 45 minutes in what ended in a 1-1 tie.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad really needed the win to keep hopes alive of catching Hastings (10-1-1, 8-0-1 GPAC) at the top of the standings. However, Concordia (10-2-2, 5-1-2 GPAC) most certainly gave a strong account of itself.

"I think the guys were ready at halftime," Weides said. "It's certainly disappointing to give up that first goal and be down 1-0, but we didn't panic. We knew we could get back in the game. Credit to the guys. I'm definitely proud of them and their effort. The things we struggled with in the first half were due to us rushing the attack so much. Once we were a little more patient in the attack, we were so much better. It was a really good second half and we created a lot of chances. I think we proved to ourselves, maybe more so than anyone else, that we can play with anybody."

A sterling night by Bronco keeper Brendan Dally (eight saves) is the main reason why this game resulted in a tie and kept the Bulldogs from sounding the victory bell. Concordia had seized control at the point in the 66th minute when Max Bisinger knocked in a goal from point blank range. Dally had saved the free kick from Martin Herrera, but even he wasn't quite in position to deny Bisinger.

Just minutes earlier, Dally had made a sprawling save of a bullet of a strike from Herrera. The Bulldogs relentlessly peppered him in those final 30 minutes. Concordia finished with significant advantages in shots, 18-9, and corners, 10-1. As sign of the work rate of the entire Bulldog lineup, eight players put at least one shot on goal. That included Isaiah Shaddick, who narrowly missed out on his first goal of 2022.

In goal, Gabriel Mendoza played all 90 minutes for Concordia and made four saves. The Bulldogs possessed the ball effectively enough to allow for only five Bronco shots on goal. Hastings went up 1-0 when Ross Murphy's long volley into the box was finished off by David Panter in the 43rd minute. Chances like that were few and far between the rest of the way.

Said Weides, "Hastings played well throughout this game too. They caused us some challenges. Their keeper made two or three outstanding saves in what were definitely goal scoring situations. Top to bottom, it was a really good college game. We know it's going to be like a conference final type of game every time we play them. You try your best to play one game at a time and focus on the game at hand. The reality is that, at the start of the season, the guys circle this one on the calendar."

The two rivals also played to a 3-3 draw last season in Hastings. Still unbeaten within conference play, the Broncos are on the verge of clinching a GPAC regular season title. Hastings placed third in the regular season in 2021 before winning the conference tournament.

The Bulldogs will remain at home to host Briar Cliff (4-6-5, 2-2-4 GPAC) at 8 p.m. CT on Wednesday. The Chargers have struggled to get results within conference play after sharing the 2021 GPAC regular season title with Northwestern. Concordia will attempt to avenge last season's 1-0 loss at Briar Cliff.



MENESES PLAYS ROLE OF HERO AS BULLDOGS EKE OUT 1-0 VICTORY

Oct. 19, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 1, Briar Cliff 0

GOALS

83' - (C) Victor Meneses (1)



SEWARD, Neb. – A contest that appeared headed for a draw concluded with a feel-good moment for the Concordia University Men's Soccer team. In his first action in nearly a month, Victor Meneses emerged as the hero as the Bulldogs celebrated a 1-0 home win over Briar Cliff on Wednesday (Oct. 19). It took nearly 83 minutes for that magic to come to fruition. For most of the night, Concordia was kept at bay while taking its chances from outside of prime attacking areas.

The win meant a lot in terms of the Bulldogs' hopes of locking up the No. 2 seed for the GPAC tournament. Head Coach Jason Weides' squad now has 20 league points (11-2-2, 6-1-2 GPAC), one more than third place Dordt.

"It was fun," Weides said. "I think it was a good effort. Credit to Briar Cliff too. They played well. Ultimately, they defended really well. We had the lion's share of possession throughout the game, but Briar Cliff was doing a really good job to limit the quality chances we had. We kept on fighting, kept on believing and were able to find one. We get it from a guy Victor who helped us get the victory. He's missed some time this year and missed all of last year because of injury. He was looking like one of our top players."

A native of Petropolis, Brazil, Meneses sat out the previous four games. When the opportunity came on Wednesday, Meneses capitalized. His goal with just over seven minutes left on the clock was set up by a ball volleyed into the box by Isaiah Shaddick. After it glanced off the head of a Briar Cliff defender, Meneses played one touch and then gathered himself in the process of launching a rocket past one defender and then the Charger keeper. It was Meneses' first goal of 2022 and his first since the 2020 season.

While being interviewed after the game, Meneses was interrupted by teammate João Pedro Veríssimo, who simply wanted to say how much Meneses deserved this moment. Said Meneses, "It was a very special moment for me, especially because I've been facing a lot of injuries since I came to Concordia. I just thank my teammates and coaches for the support, and my family and God, to be able to have this opportunity."

The shot total was lopsided in favor of the Bulldogs, 20-8. Plenty of Concordia players were active on the attacking end, including the likes of Martin Herrera, Carlos Orquiz and Shaddick. Meanwhile, keeper Gabriel Mendoza made six saves as part of the clean sheet. His record at keeper improved to 5-0-1 this season while helped by a back line starring Max Bisinger and Adrian Wambua, among others.

Not everything went exactly as planned, but the game still finished in a memorable way that helps signify what a special season it has been. Weides felt his team came back strong emotionally after the 1-1 draw with first place Hastings this past week. On the other hand, the 2021 co-GPAC champion Chargers slipped to 4-7-5 overall (2-3-4 GPAC).

Said Weides, "It was fun to see not only our team get that moment where we score and win the game, but it's really fun to see someone who's gone through some challenges come back and score such an important goal. I thought our team fought hard and played well. We just struggled to find that first goal to break through."

The longest road trip within conference play this season is coming up this weekend as the Bulldogs will be headed to Aberdeen, S.D., home to Presentation (2-11-1, 0-9 GPAC). The two sides are slated to kick off at 3 p.m. CT from Saint Soccer Field. Concordia has gone 4-0 versus the Saints since they became a GPAC member beginning with the 2018 season.

SHADDICK PRODUCES HAT TRICK IN LEADING 9-0 ROUT OF PRESENTATION

Oct. 22, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 9, Presentation 0

GOALS

14' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (10)
 15' - (C) Isaiah Shaddick (1)
 29' - (C) Carlos Orquiz (5)
 34' - (C) Ryan Wokutch (5)
 51' - (C) Ryan Wokutch (6)
 52' - (C) Isaiah Shaddick (2)
 58' - (C) Isaiah Shaddick (3)
 72' - (C) Iker Casanova (1)
 88' - (C) Victor Meneses (2)

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Once Dominic Abdel-Ahad scored in the 14th minute on Saturday (Oct. 22), the floodgates opened for the Concordia University Men's Soccer team. As part of the 9-0 rout of Presentation, Isaiah Shaddick went wild for a hat trick, six Bulldogs notched at least one goal and Carlos Orquiz racked up four assists. While dominating possession, Concordia peppered the Saints keepers with 18 shots on goal.

Head Coach Jason Weides had no complaints about how his team approached the road trip up to Aberdeen, S.D. The Bulldogs (12-2-2, 7-1-2 GPAC) moved a step closer to sewing up the No. 2 seed for the upcoming GPAC tournament.

"We talk to our guys about how, if we want to be considered a good team, we have to have consistent performances no matter who we play," Weides said. "Our guys did a good job of making sure they were focused and ready to go. We really dominated possession in the first half. We missed a few chances but overall played well. We were able to really unload the bench. It was really good to see some guys get minutes that haven't gotten a lot this year. Everyone who came onto the field helped us."

The complete goal scoring summary is included below. This was about Concordia taking care of business against an opponent that has finished at the bottom of the GPAC annually since joining the GPAC in 2018. Shaddick put away his goals in the 15th, 52nd and 58th minutes while becoming the second Bulldog this season to record a hat trick (joining Abdel-Ahad). Ryan Wokutch also got loose for a pair of goals, marking his fifth and sixth of the season. Abdel-Ahad's team leading goal count in 2022 now stands at 10.

A Lincoln Southwest High School product, Shaddick has

collected 17 goals in his collegiate career. These were the first three for him in 2022, but that's not to say he hasn't had a significant impact in relation to the team's achievements.

Said Weides, "Izzy's been one of those guys who's played well for us this year. He's just been a little bit unlucky not finding the back of the net until now. He's shown consistently he's capable of doing this. To cap it off with a hat trick and play so well was really fun to see. He's had great performances this year, it just hasn't always equated to goals."

Concordia outshot Presentation, 22-3. In goal, Callum Goldsmith played all 90 minutes and made two saves as the Bulldogs earned their seventh clean sheet this season. Goldsmith spent most of his afternoon watching his teammates score on the attacking end. The nine goals were the most for the program since producing that same number in a 9-0 win at Presentation in 2019.

The Saints (2-12-1, 0-10 GPAC) are winless within GPAC play. Meanwhile, the Bulldogs are enjoying one of the best seasons in program history. Their 12 wins are tied for the second most in a season in school history. The program record remains 16 wins by the 2017 team.

The Bulldogs will aim to wrap up the league's No. 2 seed on Wednesday when they conclude the regular season by hosting rival Doane (2-11-2, 2-4-2 GPAC). Kickoff from Bulldog Stadium is set for 8 p.m. CT. Prior to the game, Concordia will honor its senior class. The Bulldogs and Tigers played to a 1-1 draw last season in Crete.



DAWGS HOLD OFF DOANE, CLINCH GPAC'S NO. 2 SEED

Oct. 26, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 2, Doane 1

GOALS

15' - (D) Cesar Gonzalez

18' - (C) Max Bisinger (4)

60' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (11)

SEWARD, Neb. – It's rarely been an easy task when the Concordia University Men's Soccer program has met up with rival Doane. In the latest installment of the series, the visiting Tigers struck first before the Bulldogs responded and gritted it out, 2-1, inside Bulldog Stadium. The win on Wednesday (Oct. 27) capped the regular season for Concordia, which is enjoying one of the finest seasons in program history. Prior to kickoff, six Bulldog seniors were honored.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad can relax in the clubhouse this weekend with a 13-2-2 overall record (8-1-2 GPAC). Concordia will be the No. 2 seed in the GPAC tournament that begins next week.

"We knew what opportunity was in our hands and we didn't want to waste it," Weides said. "We could win and lock up second, so that was pretty important for us. Not many teams

here have a chance to remain undefeated at home throughout the regular season. That was something we wanted to accomplish and give our seniors a chance to ring the bell for the last regular season game.

"We talked at halftime just about giving full efforts. We weren't quite there. I don't think we were lazy in the first half, we just didn't give the full effort as a complete unit this game needed ... I don't know what it is about Doane – they do seem to have our number."

It seems the records just don't matter when these sides get together. While the Bulldogs sought to lock up second place, the Tigers (2-13-2, 2-6-2 GPAC) sorely needed the victory for their hopes of reaching the postseason. They played like it was the postseason in taking Concordia wire-to-wire for 90 minutes. Doane held a 1-0 lead in the 15th minute when Cesar Gonzalez found the back of the net.

That advantage lasted for less than two-and-a-half minutes as Max Bisinger headed in a corner from Carlos Orquiz at the 17-minute mark. The Chihuahua, Mexico, native Orquiz continues to place the ball in dangerous spots off set pieces and leads the GPAC with 10 assists this season. The 1-1 stalemate lasted until Dominic Abdel-Ahad polished off a well-executed through ball from Isiaha Shaddick in the 60th minute. Abdel-Ahad ran his team high season goal count to 11.





For the most part, the Bulldogs had control of the match. They ruled the shot count, 15-5. Credit goes to Doane keeper Hunter Pitt for making a diving save that prevented Concordia from extending the lead to 3-1 in the second half. The Bulldogs used a goalkeeper duo of Gabriel Mendoza and Federico Simonetti to get the job done.

It wasn't always pretty on Wednesday, but Concordia just finds ways to win. Said senior Isaiah Shaddick, "It meant the world to us (to seal the No. 2 seed). Back in August, we came together and set team goals, and this is the goal we set. Now it's onto the next game. We've got to focus up. It's do-or-die from here on out. Our motto has been 'family' all year and I feel like we've kept to that."

The 13 overall wins for the 2022 Bulldogs represent the second most in a season in program history (behind only the 16-win '17 squad). Concordia also now owns a nine-game unbeaten streak (7-0-2) and is 7-0-1 at home this season. That unblemished home mark will be put to the test at least one more time this fall. The six seniors recognized on Wednesday were Max Bisinger, Victor Meneses, Eduardo Rojas, Matt Schultz, Isaiah Shaddick and Federico Simonetti.

As the No. 2 seed in the GPAC tournament, the Bulldogs will host the seventh seed (to be determined) at 7 p.m. CT

on Thursday, Nov. 3 in the quarterfinal round. With a win, Concordia would also earn the right host in the semifinals on Tuesday, Nov. 8. Complete pairings will be announced on Saturday after all GPAC regular season games have been played.



CAMPBELL, ABDEL-AHAD FIND GOALS AS BULLDOGS EARN POSTSEASON SHUTOUT

Nov. 3, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 2, Briar Cliff 0
(GPAC Quarterfinals)

GOALS

41' - (C) Daniel Campbell (2)
58' - (C) Dominic Abdel-Ahad (12)

SEWARD, Neb. – The postseason mission to secure a national tournament bid began on Thursday (Nov. 3) as the Concordia University Men's Soccer team hosted a GPAC playoff game for the fourth time since 2016. A goal apiece from Daniel "Boom" Campbell and Dominic Abdel-Ahad helped lift the second-seeded Bulldogs to a 2-0 win over seventh-seeded Briar Cliff on a breezy evening inside Bulldog Stadium. Concordia is back in the conference semifinals for the first time since 2018.

Head Coach Jason Weides' squad improved to 14-2-2 overall and pushed the unbeaten streak to 10 while eliminating a Charger side that shared the GPAC regular season title in 2021.

"Our guys have had a good mentality all season," Weides said. "We kind of challenged them a little bit yesterday to make sure we're approaching this game and this postseason well because it looked in training like we had already arrived at our destination. We told them our destination wasn't to host a playoff game – it's much beyond that. I think our guys did a really good job of taking that in and having a good mentality. I'm really proud of the team because Briar Cliff is a good team."

The sixth advancement to at least the GPAC semifinals during Weides' tenure is a result of solid all-around play in Thursday's affair. Concordia owned an advantage of 14-8 in the shot count and held the majority of possession. Two weeks ago, it took the Bulldogs more than 80 minutes to find a goal in the 1-0 regular season victory over Briar Cliff. This time, Campbell put away a goal in the 41st minute and the lightning quick reaction in the box by Abdel-Ahad (12 goals this season) provided breathing room in the 58th minute. Campbell's goal was set up by a perfect left-to-right cross from Victor Meneses.

In goal, Gabriel Mendoza made four of his five saves in the second half while preserving the advantage. The majority of his saves were routine, although his final one came when a free kick forced him to dive to his right. In one sequence in the first half, Concordia defended three corner kicks that

came one right after the other. The back line of Max Bisinger, Iker Casanova, Matt Schultz and Adrian Wambua did the job. Hurting matters for the Chargers, they played the final 75 minutes down a man due to a red card.

A fifth-year player like Campbell, Carlos Orquiz picked up his 11th assist and broke the school single season record (also the career record holder with 20 assists). Both Campbell and Orquiz want to keep their careers going as long as possible. Said Campbell, "Yes we finished second (during the regular season), but the job's not done. We have a lot to do and we're going to do it as a family. We came out today and got the job done."

Abdel-Ahad wasn't far from turning in a hat trick. He had a header go off the crossbar and had another goal that was disallowed due to an offside call. Briar Cliff keeper Coy Leytham made three saves in giving his team a fighting chance. Bernardino Torres put two shots on goal for the Chargers (5-8-6).

Weides and company are hoping for a postseason run like his 2015, 2016 and 2017 squads enjoyed in reaching the GPAC final. Said Weides, "It's about surviving and advancing. Every day is a gift and you have to survive and advance to get another gift."

The Bulldogs will be at home again on Tuesday for the GPAC semifinals. Concordia will take on third-seeded Dordt (9-3-6) at 5 p.m. CT. Concordia will be out to avenge the 4-3 loss it suffered in Sioux Center, Iowa, back on Sept. 21. The Bulldogs have not tasted defeat since then. Concordia is also now 8-0-1 at home in 2022.



BULLDOGS CONTINUE UNBEATEN RUN, REACH GPAC FINAL FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2017

Nov. 8, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 1, Dordt 0
(GPAC semifinals)

GOALS

34' - (C) Victor Meneses (3)

SEWARD, Neb. – On its home turf, up against the only team that beat it during the GPAC regular season, the Concordia University Men's Soccer team would not be denied. The Bulldogs are headed to the GPAC tournament championship game for the first time since 2017 thanks to a 1-0 semifinal victory over Dordt on Tuesday (Nov. 8). It wasn't always pretty, and there were some missed opportunities, but Victor Meneses' goal in the first half held up.

Fifteenth-year Head Coach Jason Weides has led the program back to the conference final for a fourth time during his tenure. The victory marked the 15th this season for Concordia and No. 150 in the coaching career of Weides. In addition, the Bulldogs extended their unbeaten streak to 11 (9-0-2), stayed undefeated at home (9-0-1) and clinched the program's second all-time trip to the national tournament.

"It means everything to this group," Weides said of returning to the GPAC final. "It means everything to players who wore Bulldog blue and white before and to so many guys who worked to get to this moment. Some of them were successful and some fell short of that. It feels good for this group and everything they have earned but also for the guys who helped us get here through all the years."

Dordt (9-4-6) made a statement back on Sept. 21 when it defeated the Bulldogs, 4-3, in a sloppily played 90 minutes. The four goals allowed were uncharacteristic of a Concordia team that has tightened things up and has put together back-to-back shutout wins in postseason play. On Tuesday, the Defenders were limited to a precious few promising scoring chances. There was a tense moment around the 72-minute mark when Ethan Knott missed just right of the goal on a clean look in the box.

For the most part, Concordia had its way in terms of possession. The Bulldogs finished with advantages of 20-9 in shots

and 9-3 in shots on goal. Like Johnny on the spot, Meneses found himself in position to capitalize in the 34th minute. In an attempt to clear the ball out of the box, a Dordt defender ricocheted it off a teammate, setting Meneses up to strike a rope into the back of the net. It was the second time this season that Meneses has scored the game winner in a 1-0 match.

Weides would have liked to have seen more clinical finishes throughout the night, but no one complains about wins in the postseason. Most impressively, the Bulldogs were able to limit star Dordt striker Blake Hansen (14 goals this season) to just one shot.

Said Weides, "Dordt really capitalized (on our mistakes) the first game. We knew we could clean up those mistakes, but we knew ultimately it wasn't going to be easy. I have a lot of respect for Dordt, for (Coach) Ryan (Grasse) and the way they run the program. They're a good team. They're here for a reason – I knew we could play better the second time around and the guys definitely did."

At center back, Max Bisinger has been at the heart of many of Concordia's shutout wins this season. Said Bisinger, "It means a lot. I think the process started in the spring after last season – it was not a good season. We analyzed our mistakes and knew we couldn't do the same ones again. We took them and learned from them really well. We applied things that we didn't do before. One of the things is the (improved) mentality."

Reigning GPAC Defensive Player of the Week Gabriel Mendoza made three saves while covering all 90 minutes. Mendoza has been part of a veteran starting 11 that includes a sixth-year player in Joao Pedro Verissimo, a fifth-year player in Carlos Orquiz and a graduate transfer in top goal scorer Dominic Abdel-Ahad. This is the type of moment they have been working for.

As a reward, the Bulldogs will take on perennial conference power Hastings (15-1-1) in Friday's GPAC tournament championship game. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. CT from Lloyd Wilson Field in Hastings. Concordia also met the Broncos in the conference tournament finals played in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The Bulldogs won the '15 game before enduring defeats in '16 and '17. The two sides drew during the 2022 regular season, 1-1, in Seward.



BULLDOGS STORM BACK FROM 2-0 DEFICIT, CLAIM GPAC TITLE AT HASTINGS

Nov. 11, 2022

FINAL: Concordia 2, (23) Hastings 2
(GPAC championship)

Concordia advances on PK's, 4-2

GOALS

31' - (H) Ryan Lewis
39' - (H) Lukas Goetz
52' - (C) Adrian Wambua (2)
(84' - (C) Carlos Orquiz (6)

HASTINGS, Neb. – There may not be a finer moment in the history of the Concordia University Men's Soccer program. Down but not out, the Bulldogs fought back from a 2-0 deficit and ended Friday (Nov. 11) night celebrating the program's second all-time GPAC tournament championship. Following a 2-2 tie through 110 minutes of action, Concordia got the best of arch nemesis and 23rd-ranked Hastings in a penalty kick shootout, 4-2. Ultimately, Federico Simonetti's save clinched the title for the visitors on a wintry cold night at Lloyd Wilson Field.

Head Coach Jason Weides led the Bulldogs back to the conference final for the fourth time in his tenure. He's now a two-time GPAC championship winning coach who has steered the 2022 team to arguably the most successful campaign in Concordia Men's Soccer history.

"We talked at halftime that our gameplan was working, right, we're down 2-0 – it's exactly what we wanted," Weides joked afterwards. "No, of course it was not the position we wanted. Hastings is a good team and they're going to challenge you. Our guys were ready for the challenge, we just weren't great in a couple moments where they scored. When we talked it halftime, we said it was only us in this room that believe we can come back – and our supporters too. You could see it in the faces of every single guy on the team. We had the opportunity if we just believed in it, and we did. I'm just so proud of these guys. Not everybody can come back from a 2-0 deficit at halftime and win."

The Bulldogs made themselves comfortable throughout this season in games of the heart stopping, nail-biting variety. This one was on a different level. A PK goal from Carlos Orquiz in the 84th minute enacted the new overtime rules that require 20 minutes played to completion. Gabriel Mendoza made a nifty save (one of nine saves) to prevent what





looked like an almost certain goal and keep things at 2-2 during the extra time. It took just the right amount of grit to get to a PK shootout.

It immediately went in Concordia's favor when Victor Meneses converted the first PK and Hastings' Ross Murphy proceeded to hit the crossbar. All the pressure was on the Broncos, who watched as Joao Pedro Verissimo, Carlos Orquiz and Matt Schultz were each successful on their PK tries. The GPAC banner was clinched when Bulldog keeper Federico Simonetti lunged to his left and denied a PK by Tyler Mase (on Hastings' fourth attempt). The celebration was on. Simonetti made a beeline for the Concordia cheering section and was then engulfed by his teammates.

"It's just pure joy," Simonetti said of that snapshot in time. "The team is counting on you - and it's just beautiful. It repays us for all the sacrifices we've made starting in August

and arriving to today. I'm just so happy. It's so far from home for a lot of us and so far from our families. It's just beautiful finishing like this."

It's that type of jubilation that fifth-year players like Orquiz came back to savor and soak in with his teammates. The resilience to come back from 2-0 down on the home turf of perennial conference power Hastings will live on as the stuff of legend. Said Orquiz, "We knew there was plenty of time. Yeah, it was two goals, but there was still a second half to go. We set out to get that first goal and keep moving forward from there. That's what we did ... It's something we put in as a goal for this season. I'm so proud of everyone, I'm speechless right now."

GPAC regular season champion Hastings (15-1-2) appeared well on its way to victory when it led 2-0 at halftime thanks to a goal apiece from Ryan Lewis (on a breakaway) and Lukas Goetz (via a through ball). But Concordia's hopes were reinvigorated with Adrian Wambua's header goal off the Orquiz corner in the 52nd minute. Then in the 84th minute, the Bulldogs caught a break when a foul was called in the box. Orquiz (school record 12 assists in 2022) capitalized with a PK goal.

Somehow Concordia (15-2-3) had gutted its way to overtime despite winding up with a 35-8 disadvantage in the shot column. For much of the night, the Broncos were a cleaner and more organized side. They simply failed to slam the door on a Bulldog squad that seems to always believe it has a chance. Concordia proved the moment was not too big. The joy of victory warmed their hearts on a night that became bone-chilling cold by match's end. There were some parallels to 2015 when the Bulldogs also celebrated a conference title in Hastings, however, this team was less of an underdog.



There were hugs all around for seniors (and some super seniors) like Max Bisinger, Daniel Campbell, Victor Meneses, Carlos Orquiz, Joao Pedro Verissimo, Isaiah Shaddick, Matt Schultz and Federico Simonetti. The team remained on the field at Lloyd Wilson for an extended period. Said Orquiz, "That's exactly why I stayed a fifth year. I couldn't be more proud of my family. I'm really, really happy right now." As Weides put it, "These moments are everything."

The Bulldogs will learn of their draw for the first round of the national tournament during the NAIA's live selection show scheduled to begin at 12 p.m. CT on Monday. The show will be streamed live via the NAIA's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/PlayNAIA>). Concordia last appeared on the national stage in 2015 when it traveled to Bartlesville, Okla.



Coach Weides: "Above wins and losses, this team really cares for each other. It's a really fun group and we're excited to continue to celebrate this team tomorrow, a year from now, 20 years from now and all the years to come. Had we won this game or lost it, it doesn't change this Bulldog family."



ORQUIZ'S FIFTH SEASON DEFINED BY CAMARADERIE, CHAMPIONSHIP MOMENTS



After hearing the thud of the ball hitting the right-handed mitt of keeper Federico Simonetti on the penalty kick save that clinched the 2022 GPAC tournament title, Carlos Orquiz found himself in the middle of a celebratory dogpile. Orquiz knelt to the ground with his hands covering his face as the emotion of that instant hit him like the chill of that mid-November night. It's one of those moments you never forget. It's why Orquiz returned to Concordia for a fifth season in 2022.

The boy who grew up loving the sport of soccer in Chihuahua, Mexico, was realizing the dreams he had dared to hold when he took a chance on coming to Seward, Neb. As one might expect of someone who lived in warmer climates, Orquiz wasn't keen on the cold. But the temperature made no difference on the night he became a GPAC champion, along with his teammates.

"From day one, that was our goal to win GPAC," Orquiz said.

"The way we accomplished it adds an important piece to it with how we came back from a 2-0 score. We kept fighting through that challenge as a team. In the end, it was a perfect ending. I don't think if someone would have written it the way it came out to be, it wouldn't be as perfect as it was. The whole night was a special moment for us, and we enjoyed it as a family."

In the eyes of Orquiz, his teammates are an extended family, his family away from home. A May 2022 graduate, Orquiz had already earned his degree in Business Administration from Concordia. He could have packed up his things and left behind the school that has helped him grow as a man. Orquiz wasn't ready yet and, thanks to the extra 'COVID year' of eligibility, there opened a door for his return. The 2021 season (8-7-3 overall record) had been characterized by close defeats and left a sour taste in the minds of the players who knew they were capable of something more.



The way Orquiz talks, it's quite evident that this decision was not a difficult one. There was unfinished business to tend to – and how could he say 'no' to another year of doing what he loved with teammates that have become like brothers?

Says Orquiz, "There's something positive out of bad things that happen. For me it was a fifth year and having that blessing to keep playing the sport that I love and keep representing this great program. It was an opportunity that I needed to take. It also gave me the opportunity to pursue my MBA and continue to grow personally off the field."

Perhaps no one was quite prepared for what would become of 2022. The Bulldogs were picked fifth in the GPAC preseason poll and were completely off the national radar coming into the season. As for Orquiz himself, his first four years were solid by any standard, but he wasn't necessarily a major offensive threat. Concordia struggled with its finishing touch on the attack in 2021 and needed help in that area. Orquiz was ready to answer the call.

Calm and collected, Orquiz is the man for the job whenever a penalty kick opportunity comes about, and he's absolutely deadly when it comes to set-piece situations. The work Orquiz has put in has clearly paid off as he's produced six goals and a school record 12 assists while starting all 20 games as a First Team All-GPAC midfielder this fall. Orquiz played an instrumental role in allowing Concordia to rally back at Hastings. He assisted Adrian Wambua's goal on a beautifully executed corner kick and then drilled the PK that tied it. He also converted his PK during the shootout.

"It's important to set personal goals before the season," Orquiz said. "I had high expectations for myself. I wasn't focusing on the records but as the season went along, I thought, 'whoa, that's attainable.' The more assists I get, the more goals we score and the more we win."

Prior to college, Orquiz took a year off from school and lived in San Diego while playing against high level competition in an amateur league. It gave him a chance to connect with potential colleges. One of the recruiting connections that came about happened to be with former Concordia graduate assistant coach Nico Luque (now an assistant at UMass Lowell), who recommended Orquiz take a look at Concordia. Orquiz signed to play at Concordia without visiting the school. He put his trust in Luque's recommendation and in Head Coach Jason Weides. Orquiz saw Concordia as a place grow not just as a soccer player, but also as a person.

Fast forward to the present and you see a more mature version of Orquiz, who is clearly someone his teammates look up to. He even has set a standard of composure on the field as someone who did not get carded during the entire 2022 regular season. He can also lay claim to having played in more games (89) than anyone in the history of the Concordia Men's Soccer program. Weides referred to Orquiz as someone who "really cares for the people in his life."

Unselfishly, Orquiz even agreed to play outside back his

sophomore year when Weides felt like the team needed him in that spot. It took a bit of time for Orquiz to accept his role, and he even considered leaving Concordia at one point. He's glad he stayed. When the personnel allowed for it, Weides moved Orquiz back to his more comfortable role in the midfield. This fall, everything fell into place for Orquiz.

"The past couple years he has clearly been one of our top players," Weides said. "His game has evolved over the years, especially recently. A couple key areas he has grown and is excelling this season is his positioning in the attack and movement off the ball, along with his service on set plays. His defensive positioning, communication and transition have been great this season too. It's been fun to see him really put it all together this year. He was great for us in previous years, but I feel he is twice the player this year."

Orquiz is the right person to hold individual school records because he cherishes them in the context of what they mean to team success. Even when there were times of struggle, Orquiz always believed that the Bulldogs were destined for the mountaintop moment they achieved on Nov. 11. That evening, Orquiz had difficulty putting it into words.

Said Orquiz in the postgame, "That's exactly why I stayed a fifth year. I couldn't be prouder of all my family here and I'm really, really happy right now ... I'm just speechless. To be here with this family fighting together for our goal, I'm so proud of everyone."

The reward for Orquiz's patience and persistence is the chance to end his career at the national tournament. No matter the result, Orquiz will always have the relationships he's formed, that special someone he met on the women's soccer team and the memory of that GPAC championship night in Hastings. Orquiz is also known within the team as an enthusiastic karaoke singer. As Weides put it, "These moments are everything."

It didn't matter that it was 1 a.m. when the team returned to campus – they were going to ring that bell. Orquiz was one of the veteran leaders that did the honor of letting the neighborhood know of the unforgettable victory. That celebration is over. Now it's time to refocus on the next obstacle that awaits Orquiz and his "family."

"It will be a great challenge for us," Orquiz said. "We're just trying to enjoy the journey at this moment. We already put this team in the record book. It's the second time the program has qualified for nationals. We know it's going to be a tough challenge and we're up for it. We know that if we stay together, anything can happen."

Weides feels better about entering this week's challenge knowing he has someone like Orquiz in his starting 11. Said Weides, "He's always been a fierce competitor, someone you want on your side when the going gets tough. He competes everyday whether it be a game, training or a fun activity. Orquiz plays to win."

GPAC TOURNEY CHAMPS SENT TO WINONA LAKE, INDIANA, FOR NAIA FIRST ROUND



SEWARD, Neb. – The GPAC tournament champions will be attempting to make history this week as they head to Winona Lake, Ind., for the first round of the NAIA Men's Soccer National Championship. As announced on Monday (Nov. 14), the Bulldogs have been placed in the Winona Lake Bracket hosted by Grace College (Ind.). In the first round of the national tournament, the third-seeded Concordia Men's Soccer team will take on second-seeded Keiser University (Fla.). In the other matchup of the bracket, host and top seed Grace will take on fourth-seeded Lindsey Wilson University (Ky.).

All games at the Winona Lake Bracket will be held at 1st Source Bank Field in Winona Lake, Ind. The field is a natural grass surface. For a look at the venue, click [HERE](#).

Winona Lake Bracket – Nov. 17/19

--Location: 1st Source Bank Field | Winona Lake, Indiana

First Round – Thursday, Nov. 17

(1) Grace vs. (4) Lindsey Wilson, 3 p.m. CT/4 p.m. ET

(2) Keiser vs. (3) Concordia, 6 p.m. CT/7 p.m. ET

Second Round – Saturday, Nov. 19

First-round winners, 12 p.m. CT/1 p.m. ET

The Winona Lake Field

(1) Grace College (Ind.)

Head Coach: Arron Patrick, 4th season

Record: 11-2-6, 5-1-3 Crossroads League

NAIA National Ranking: 13th

Goals Scored/Allowed: 39 / 13

Top goal scorer: Martim Sequiera – 17

Goalkeeper: Matteo Conci – 0.72 GAA, 64 saves (18 starts)

All-time nationals appearances: 3

(2) Keiser University (Fla.)

Head Coach: Gavin Oldham, 6th season

Record: 12-1-2, 7-1 Sun Conference

NAIA National Ranking: 9th

Goals Scored/Allowed: 64 / 13

Top goal scorer: Rui Reis – 12

Goalkeeper: Santiago Nebot Oliver – 0.85 GAA, 41 saves (15 starts)

All-time nationals appearances: 8

(3) Concordia University

Head Coach: Jason Weides, 15th season

Record: 15-2-3, 8-1-2 GPAC

NAIA National Ranking: Receiving Votes

Goals Scored/Allowed: 51 / 18

Top goal scorer: Dominic Abdel-Ahad – 12

Goalkeeper: Gabriel Mendoza – 1.03 GAA, 40 saves (10 starts)

All-time nationals appearances: 2

(4) Lindsey Wilson University (Ky.)

Head Coach: Sicelo Buthelezi, 1st season

Record: 10-6-3, 6-3-1 Mid-South Conference

NAIA National Ranking: Not Ranked

Goals Scored/Allowed: 47 / 31

Top goal scorer: Sadam Masereka – 11 goals

Goalkeeper: Pablo Costa – 1.28 GAA, 47 saves (13 starts)

All-time nationals appearances: 29

Game Notes

- A win on Thursday would make the 2022 Bulldogs the first team in program history to claim victory at the national tournament. Concordia's first national tournament appearance came in 2015 thanks to a GPAC tournament championship that included conference postseason wins over each of the league's top three seeds. The '15 team was sent to Bartlesville, Okla., for the NAIA opening round, where the Bulldogs were defeated by second-ranked Oklahoma Wesleyan University, 3-0. The 2015 squad was led by three second team All-GPAC honorees: Julian Amaya, Lewis Rathbone and Justin Lawrie.

- On Monday, all-conference honors were handed out. Eight Concordia players earned some form of All-GPAC recognition. First team accolades went to Dominic Abdel-Ahad, Max Bisinger and Carlos Orquiz while second team honors were grabbed by Martin Herrera, Matt Schultz, Isaiah Shaddick and Ryan Wokutch. In addition, keeper Gabriel Mendoza garnered honorable mention. Abdel-Ahad has led the team with 12 goals while Orquiz has broken program records for assists in a season (12) and in a career (21). Their combined efforts have helped the Bulldogs outscore their opponents, 51-18, over 20 games.

- Weides has led the Bulldogs to the GPAC tournament championship game four times (2015, 2016, 2017 and 2022). In each case, Concordia has played at Hastings. The results in previous championships were a 1-0 win in 2015, a 3-1 loss in 2016 and a 2-1 defeat in 2017. The Bulldogs are back on the mountaintop thanks to last week's gritty effort. Concordia trailed 2-0 at halftime before erasing that deficit with a goal apiece from Adrian Wambua (52') and Carlos Orquiz (84'). The Bulldogs managed to hoist the trophy and banner despite being outshot by the Broncos, 35-8. In the PK shootout, successful Concordia tries came from Victor Meneses, Joao Pedro Verissimo, Carlos Orquiz and Matt Schultz. In round four of PK's, Federico Simonetti made a save to clinch the championship for the Bulldogs.

- The 1-0 victory over Dordt in the GPAC semifinals marked the 150th in the coaching career of Weides, who was hired as the program's head coach prior to the 2008 season. Weides has now led the program to two GPAC tournament titles and to two national tournament berths. Over the years, the Bulldogs have been remarkably consistent in claiming at least 10 wins in 11 of the past 12 seasons. In 15 years as head coach, Weides currently owns an overall record of 150-103-33, making him the winningest soccer coach in school history.

- Concordia has not lost since its 4-3 defeat at Dordt on Sept. 21. Since then, the Bulldogs have gone 9-0-3 with two of the ties coming against fellow national qualifier Hastings. Entering Thursday's first round game, Concordia has played against three 2022 national qualifiers: Bellevue University, Corban University (Ore.) and Hastings. The Bulldogs came away with a 1-0 home victory over Bellevue. In the season opening trip to Oregon, Concordia dropped a 1-0 decision at Corban. Finally, the Bulldogs tied twice with Hastings (officially, the GPAC tournament title game goes down as a draw).

- The Bulldogs have drawn defending national champion Keiser in the first round of the national tournament. The Seahawks defeated the University of Mobile (Ala.), 2-0, in the 2021 NAIA national championship game. Keiser returns two players who were selected to last year's national championship all-tournament team: Lucas Jacobs and Alejandro Varela. In the most recent NAIA coaches' poll, Keiser was ranked ninth. Bracket host Grace landed at No. 13 while Lindsey Wilson is not receiving votes. As for Concordia, it has generated votes in six national polls this season.

The final site

There are 40 teams playing in 10 first/second round sites across the country. The 10 winners that emerge from those brackets will advance to play at the final site of the national championship: Jack Allen Sports Complex in Decatur, Ala. Action from Decatur is slated to begin Nov. 29 and run through Dec. 5.



UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY HALTED AT HANDS OF DEFENDING NATIONAL CHAMPS

Nov. 17, 2022

FINAL: (9) Keiser 3, Concordia 0
(NAIA National Championship First Round)

GOALS

60' - (K) Rui Reis

85' - (K) Rui Reis

89' - (K) Nikolas Cam Orellana

WINONA LAKE, Ind. – Amidst snowy conditions and sub-freezing temperatures in Winona Lake, Ind., the Concordia University Men's Soccer program made its second all-time NAIA National Championship appearance. The Bulldogs were locked in a 0-0 stalemate for 60 minutes before defending national champion Keiser University (Fla.) got loose for the first of its three goals. The ninth-ranked Seahawks are headed to the national tournament's second round by way of their 3-0 victory on Thursday (Nov. 17).

Head Coach Jason Weides' 2022 squad wrapped up arguably the program's greatest season ever with an overall mark of 15-2-3. Just a week earlier, Concordia celebrated a GPAC tournament title at No. 23 Hastings.

"It's a team that approached it like it deserved to be there," Weides said. "We've done so many good things this season, and it's unfortunate to see it come to a close. I felt like it was a team that had the ability to go beyond just getting here. It doesn't always go the way you want. This team has had a great season. It's hard to take that in perspective in this exact moment, but we'll have an opportunity to reflect and cherish everything that happened this season."

Though out of its comfort zone in the wintry weather, the Florida institution mostly had the Bulldogs playing on the defensive. Concordia did an admirable job for much of the evening in limiting a Keiser squad that entered the national tournament averaging more than 4.0 goals per game. The underdogs from Seward were geared up to put forth the type of gritty effort that allowed them to come back from a 2-0 deficit in the GPAC championship game. However, the Bulldogs couldn't capitalize on the few attacking chances they created.

Finally, Concordia blinked in the 60th minute when Rui Reis put away a goal while assisted by Charlie Hennen. In what was a 1-0 contest for most of the remainder of the game, the Bulldogs had one more real shot on a set piece that was delivered a little too high into the box. Reis struck again in the 85th minute for a finishing blow. As Concordia brought numbers forward in desperation time, Keiser tacked on one more goal.

Said Weides, "The score line wasn't indicative of the game. It was a really tight game. They were able to get that go-ahead goal. The last 10 minutes we really opened ourselves up. We weren't content with just playing tight and having a one-goal loss to the defending national champ. We went for it. When you do that, sometimes you open yourselves up. This team is fearless, and we wanted to go for it for Bulldog Nation. We fell a little short today, which stings, but it's a really good season."

Keeper Gabriel Mendoza helped keep Concordia close while making seven saves on the night. His first one was on a diving denial in the opening half. On the other end, the Bulldogs put two shots on goal, one apiece by Dominic Abdel-Ahad and Jarrod Henson. Keiser (13-1-2) had the better of possession (and a 17-4 shot advantage) but still found the going tough in the face of a team of believers that landed eight players on the GPAC all-conference team.

By so many measures, the 2022 team set a standard for future editions to attempt to reach. Not only did the Bulldogs win the GPAC tournament title and qualify for nationals, they went nearly two months without a loss during a 12-game unbeaten streak (9-0-3) and put behind a tough-luck 2021 campaign. The 15 overall wins were one shy of the school record for a single season. Concordia outscored its opponents by a combined total of 51-21 over 21 games.

Some seniors will say their goodbyes, and some may consider returning to use an extra year of eligibility (such as the COVID year). No matter where the players locate over the years to come, they'll always consider themselves family. The 2022 team has left a legacy.

"We want to give the outgoing seniors kudos for what they've given to the program," Weides said. "They've made an impact beyond just the soccer field. They have been a big part of what we've accomplished. One of our captains highlighted this in the postgame, and several other guys touched on it, this really is a family. Above wins and losses, this team really cares for each other. It's a really fun group and we're excited to continue to celebrate this team tomorrow, a year from now, 20 years from now and all the years to come. Had we won this game or lost it, it doesn't change this Bulldog family."

Concordia had been placed in the Winona Lake Bracket hosted by Grace College. The top seed in the bracket, the Lancers were upset by fourth-seeded Lindsey Wilson (Ky.) in the first game of the day. Keiser and Lindsey Wilson will play for a chance to advance to the 10-team final site. The Bulldogs will have to wait at least another year to claim the program's first ever win on the national stage. The 2015 squad (also a GPAC tournament champion) dropped a 3-0 decision to No. 2 Oklahoma Wesleyan University in the opening round of the national tournament.



BONDED AS 'WEE' LITTLE KIDS, SCHULTZ AND SHADDICK OPT FOR ONE MORE SEASON AS TEAMMATES



Some day they will no longer be teammates or collegiate soccer players, but that day can wait. Such dynamics have been a fact of life for Matt Schultz and Isaiah Shaddick, friends who grew up in the same Lincoln neighborhood and attended the same preschool, middle school and high school. They've shared in each other's highs and lows and together helped the Concordia University Men's Soccer program win the 2022 GPAC tournament title.

In the afterglow of the championship on an icy cool night in Hastings, Matt and Isaiah embraced one another with a celebratory hug and posed for photos as the Schultz and Shaddick families made their way to the playing surface. For the two seniors, this was quite the way to go out – or not.

Explains Schultz, "I was probably the one who decided first. I'm not really sure what did it for me, but I realized I had the opportunity to come back and I would never get that chance again. After what we did last year, we all became so close with each other that I wasn't ready to let it go yet. I went to Izzy and asked him, and he was like, 'Uh, I don't know.'"

Well here they are, back with their fellow Bulldogs for spring training sessions. And there they were recently taking on

Creighton University in a spring exhibition contest that was much more competitive than some would have anticipated. Both Second Team All-GPAC honorees in 2022, Schultz and Shaddick are high-impact players and leaders within Head Coach Jason Weides' program. Schultz the defender and Shaddick the forward performed their roles superbly during the '22 campaign that finished with a 15-3-3 overall record and a spot in the national tournament.

Schultz and Shaddick will follow the path taken by other recent program starters like Carlos Orquiz and João Pedro Verissimo in extending their collegiate careers (the NAIA did not charge athletes with a season of eligibility during the 2020 'COVID' season). Those who have chosen this option in recent years have had no regrets. Shaddick says he talked to those other senior statesmen when making his own decision. This is what feels right.

"We're ecstatic about having them back for a fifth year," Weides said. "We were hoping they would choose that, but it's ultimately their decision. We didn't put any pressure on them, but we were happy to take them back if they were ready to. They fit our culture and are a piece of our culture. I think they've been influential in creating that over their



time here. They have really fit that Concordia mold and are examples of how there are highs and lows in a career. It's okay to have setbacks once in a while. They've been able to overcome those situations and have really developed."

Just like when they arrived at Concordia in the fall of 2019, the Lincoln Southwest High School alums are a package deal. It's not that they had necessarily planned it that way. Shaddick entertained a number of options after he was named the Nebraska Prep Player of the Year by the Lincoln Journal Star. On the other hand, Schultz had previously believed his soccer playing days were over once high school graduation came. However, Weides saw plenty of potential in both prospective Bulldogs through the recruiting process.

Concordia ultimately made a lot of sense for both. Shaddick was the first to make his commitment and Schultz soon followed once he realized he wasn't ready to give up on athletic competition. Having each other to lean upon allowed for a smoother college transition.

"Matt's been around since I can remember," Shaddick said. "We've always enjoyed being on the same team and hanging out. When I made the decision to come to Concordia, we spoke a little bit. He decided to come play here as well. When I found that out, it made me happy. I was just coming here by myself originally, which I was fine with, but it was nice to have a familiar face here that I had grown up with."

Their continued companionship sometimes takes them back to the days when they were in the same class at Wee Wisdom Christian Preschool in Lincoln. Schultz and Shaddick hooped it up on the basketball court as youngsters, but soccer was the game that captured more of their attention. Their obsession with the sport paid off in the spring of 2019 when they guided Lincoln Southwest, coached by Derek Scheich, to a district title and state playoff appearance.

Recalled Shaddick, "One of my favorite games I remember was playing Grand Island for the district final. We ended up winning it 3-0. While we were playing, it felt like we were little kids again. We were just enjoying the moment. That one will forever be a memory stuck in my mind."

It's safe to say they'll also never forget the date Nov. 11, 2022, when Concordia rallied back from a 2-0 deficit to force a penalty kick shootout for the GPAC tournament title at Hastings. The scene turned into a pandemonium when Federico Simonetti's save clinched the championship trophy. Once again, they reverted back to childhood. Schultz and Shaddick will forever be linked to one of the most thrilling moments in program history.

"I guess it didn't really hit until afterwards," Schultz said. "After Fedi saved that penalty, we were just like, 'Woah.' I think we had won one tournament in our lives – one big tournament. We hadn't won a state tournament or a league championship. We felt like we were playing for more than just us. We were playing for the university and all the players

who came before us. It felt like they deserved that moment too. We joke about it more than we talk about it."

Added Shaddick, "It still hasn't become real yet for me. It was such a euphoric experience. Guys from the past were reaching out and congratulating us and saying how proud they were. It's incredible seeing how tight of a community it is, even once people go."

Of course, Schultz and Shaddick were surrounded in celebration by their strong support system. Matt is the son of Tim and Jennifer Shultz and Isaiah is the son of Nate and Heidi Shaddick. Those are two parent groups that don't miss many games. Collectively, they have embraced all members of the team as if they are a larger family – the Concordia Men's Soccer family.

Says Weides, "The Shaddicks and the Schultzes are among the best and most supportive families we've had involved in our program over the years. They're at almost every away game, whether it's in Oregon or just a couple hours away. They've been really generous with their time and their financial support. They are the type of people that will host some of our guys over Thanksgiving, Christmas or spring break and provide a meal. I think they've almost adopted some of the guys who are from far away. It's not a surprise that Matt and Izzy are great fits within our team. You see where they come from. Their families are great, and it's been an awesome extension of our program."

Matt can't help but joke when it comes to the familial support of the Bulldogs. Says Schultz, "Our families are crazy sometimes. They're like GPAC fans of the year. They travel to every game. They're the super fans. My parents were even saying, the future can wait."

For Schultz and Shaddick, the immediate future will include graduate classes and another shot at winning a GPAC regular season title and perhaps advancing farther at the national tournament. They both say they have no trouble finding the motivation for another offseason of lifting, conditioning and skill work.

"My competitive juices are still there," Shaddick said. "I want to keep striving for more. It would be a great thing to go out and win a regular season title. That would be fantastic." Schultz understands that the expectations will be as high as ever for the program. "Playing Creighton this spring and Keiser at nationals last year, I think we realize we're not too far behind," Schultz said. "We're going to have a good team that's capable of going way farther."

So be it. Let's run this thing back. Schultz and Shaddick are back for another round. As Shaddick continued, "It's an opportunity that most likely no one else will get after us. I wanted to take advantage of that. Being here for four years and knowing the program and the culture we've built up as a team, I wasn't ready yet to call it quits."

SEASON IN REVIEW: CLOSE-KNIT BULLDOGS RETURN TO GPAC MOUNTAINTOP

The 2021 season didn't sit well with the Concordia Men's Soccer program. The Bulldogs fell short of the 10-win mark for the first time since 2010 while often losing games by the slightest of margins. The talent was there, Head Coach Jason Weides felt confident in that. Something was just a bit off, so Weides and his team went to work on fixing it. The Bulldogs became a grittier team and one determined to come out on the winning side in those tight and physical battles.

The 2022 squad arrived in August and appeared to pinpoint why they failed in certain areas the previous fall. Said senior leader Isaiah Shaddick prior to the start of the 2022 season, "We came together as a team and with Coach Weides and decided there needs to be something culturally within the team that we need to change. We came together and created a set of rules that we have as a team to help lead us to that goal of being successful. We're implementing it and we're holding each other accountable."

The lessons learned from 2021 may have been painful,

but perhaps necessary for the program to reach the highs it experienced on Nov. 11, 2022. As temperatures dipped well below freezing that night in Hastings, Neb., Concordia celebrated long after the sound of the thud that came from Federico Simonetti clinching victory with the penalty kick save. A dawgpile ensued in reaction to a truly gritty GPAC tournament championship winning performance. The Bulldogs had rallied back from a 2-0 deficit to force overtime on the home turf of the archnemesis Broncos.

From 11 different countries, these Bulldogs came together as a group and accomplished their goals. A more intentional focus on team chemistry and togetherness became a factor in pushing Concordia to the national tournament for the first time since 2015. Members of the team keep coming back to this one word – family.

Said Weides at the conclusion of the season, "One of our captains highlighted this, and several other guys touched on it, this really is a family. Above wins and losses, this team





really cares for each other. It's a really fun group and we're excited to continue to celebrate this team tomorrow, a year from now, 20 years from now and all the years to come. Had we won this game or lost it (at the national tournament), it doesn't change this Bulldogs family."

The '22 team finished at 15-3-3 overall as arguably the greatest side in program history. Along the way, Concordia dropped only one conference game, went undefeated at home (9-0-1) and put together a 12-game unbeaten streak (9-0-3) before the NAIA National Championship first round loss to ninth-ranked Keiser University (Fla.). The Bulldogs outscored their opponents by a combined total of 51-21 while getting a major boost from transfer Dominic Abdel-Ahad, who put away a team high 12 goals.

There may not have been a more important player to the team's success than Carlos Orquiz, who returned to the program for a fifth year in 2022. He couldn't have imagined missing out on this run and an extra year of hanging out with the guys. As a cherry on top, Orquiz broke school records for assists in a season (12) and for a career (21).

Said Orquiz, "From day one, that was our goal to win GPAC. The way we accomplished it adds an important piece to it with how we came back from a 2-0 score. We kept fighting through that challenge as a team. In the end, it was a perfect ending. I don't think if someone would have written it the way it came out to be, it wouldn't be as perfect as it was. The whole night was a special moment for us, and we enjoyed it as a family."

Added Weides, "It definitely was a special season. It was a fun group to work with and a team that was highly motivated to do great things. To get to 15 wins isn't easy. It's certainly one of the best teams in Concordia history. It was a really special and we had some individual and team records. It was really hard to see it end because I think this team had the mindset to get beyond just qualifying for nationals. The first time we made it felt like, 'Hey, we made it. This is awesome.' It was a great experience to be there, but I'm not sure we were that prepared to move on beyond the first round of nationals. This group was prepared and ready. We had plans to move on beyond that first round, but it was a really special group."

An underrated moment in the season came on Sept. 24 when Concordia hosted Northwestern. The Bulldogs were coming off a mistake-riddled 4-3 loss at Dordt and were in danger of falling to 1-2 in conference play. More than 83 minutes passed with the Red Raiders hoping to see out a 1-0 lead. However, Ryan Wokutch emerged as the hero and struck for a goal apiece in the 84th and 87th minutes. The Bulldogs pulled it out and did not suffer another loss for almost two months.

A developing story throughout the fall, Weides put several

goalkeepers to use. The presence of four capable starters at that position made for a "good problem" in the eyes of Weides. Three Bulldogs made at least three starts at the position: Gabriel Mendoza (11), Federico Simonetti (seven) and Callum Goldsmith (three). Mendoza won the job late in the season and went 7-1-2 with a .783 save percentage. Simonetti later basked in the glory of making the biggest save of the campaign.

It truly was a team effort. Eight Concordia players earned All-GPAC awards with first team honors going to Abdel-Ahad, Orquiz and Max Bisinger. In addition, second team accolades were earned by Martin Herrera, Matt Schultz, Isaiah Shaddick and Ryan Wokutch. It was also a fitting sixth and final season for João Pedro Veríssimo, who started 16 games while enjoying one of the healthiest years of his collegiate career. While alongside Bisinger in the backline, freshman Adrian Wambua made an immediate impact. Many others also contributed to a season that won't soon be forgotten.

In the eyes of Weides, this team had the talent and the right mindset to make a run at nationals, but he isn't going to let the first-round defeat overshadow what was a thrilling ride.

Said Weides, "I think we were right there. Out of the 21 games we played, 14 were decided by one goal and we were pretty successful in those games. We know what it's like to grind it out. We were highly successful in those moments. Once you get to nationals, every team is really good. In those moments on the national stage, we have to trust in and believe in who we are. I think we did, but we have to be at our best. We've got to have those special moments. Against those top teams, there has to be some little moment like that. I think we're close to taking that next step. In this upcoming season, it's about taking that next step. This group got a taste of what it's like. Once you have that taste, you're better prepared the next time it comes around."

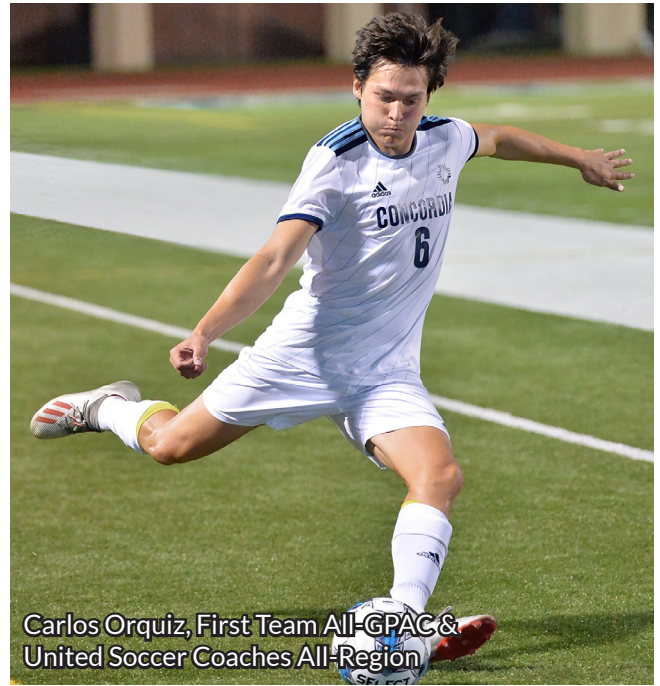
Career win No. 150 came in 2022 for Weides, who is already looking ahead to his 16th season. The 2023 team will be tasked with trying to follow up the championship 2022 season.

"I think we'll have a good group back," Weides said. "We do lose some impactful players, but we have some guys who have shown to develop really well and who took big steps from last year to this year. We have others we expect to take some big steps forward into the next year as well. Some guys are waiting in the wings for their opportunity. We're going to continue to recruit and bring on players who want to help us take that next step. We want to win games not just within the GPAC but games against top teams in the nation. That's where this program aspires to be. I think we have a pretty good nucleus coming back."

2022 HONOR ROLL

ALL-GPAC

- Dominic Abdel-Ahad (First Team)
- Max Bisinger (First Team)
- Carlos Orquiz (First Team)
- Martin Herrera (Second Team)
- Matt Schultz (Second Team)
- Isaiah Shaddick (Second Team)
- Ryan Wokutch (Second Team)
- Gabriel Mendoza (Honorable Mention)

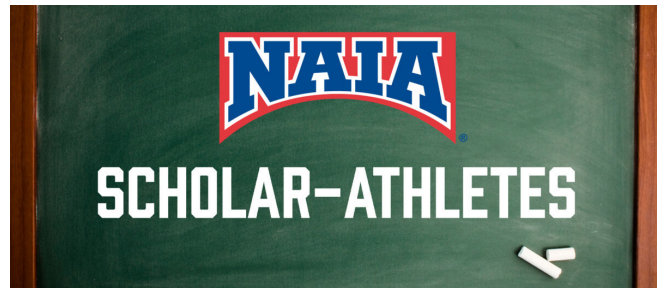


Carlos Orquiz, First Team All-GPAC & United Soccer Coaches All-Region



SCHOLAR-ATHLETES

- Josh Bergt
- Max Bisinger
- Iker Casanova
- Victor Meneses
- Carlos Orquiz
- João Pedro Veríssimo
- Isaiah Shaddick
- Federico Simonetti



HM ALL-AMERICAN

Max Bisinger



ALL-CENTRAL REGION

Carlos Orquiz





With the GPAC semifinal win over Dordt on November 8, 2022, Jason Weides claimed the 150th victory of his head coaching tenure at Concordia. Weides' first season leading the Bulldogs was in 2008. Since then, the program has won at least 10 games in 11 separate seasons with a high-water mark of 16 in 2017. Weides has guided both the 2015 and 2022 teams to GPAC tournament championships and trips to the NAIA National Tournament.





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