

Northwest's Run in Soccer Ends in Quarterfinals

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Though the soccer season is over at Northwest High, and with it the 16-year coaching career of Azim Anwary, life is good for the Lions and Anwary.

Francis Howell North defeated Northwest 4-0 in the quarterfinals of the Class 4A state playoffs Saturday, blowing out the lights on the team's incredible postseason run. But not before the Lions got their wish, the school's first district championship.

Two weeks ago, Northwest rallied for a 2-1 victory over Eureka in overtime on Matt Andersen's 26th goal of the season. The Lions won the tournament as the No. 5 seed.

"It's a great feeling to go out and win the district championship," Anwary said. "When we did that, that was the biggest satisfaction I ever had in my career."

Northwest's overtime triumph over Eureka in the title game advanced the team to a sectional game against McCluer North. Northwest won that game 1-0.

"They had a taste of victory (against Eureka), and they wanted more," Anwary said. "Practicing in the cold in November, we weren't used to that. But everybody was having so much fun. That's why we played outstanding against McCluer North."

In Saturday's quarterfinals, Francis Howell North, a program strong in tradition, brushed Northwest aside. Northwest played better in the second half but never recovered after allowing three first-half goals.

"If we could have played the first half a little better, we would have been OK," Anwary said.

Anwary's career is now finished, but he has plenty to keep him busy. He was married three weeks ago in his native country, Afghanistan.

"Her name is Faozia," Anwary said. "She is a great person, and this is a big thing in my life. It seems like everything is happening at once."

"This is a great way to go out," he added. "When we kept winning at the end of the year, the guys told me, 'This is your wedding gift.'"
