

FIRST ROUND OF NAIA SOCCER TOURNAMENT

Cumberland will face Martin Methodist this Saturday in Pulaski, in the opening round pairings of the 2012 NAIA Women's Soccer National Championship, as announced Monday afternoon by the national office. The match will be the first-ever for the Bulldogs in the NAIA Championships.

The Bulldogs (18-2-0) and RedHawks (15-3-0) met once already this season, with MMC claiming a 2-1 decision in Lebanon on September 6. In that match Lauren Graham's rebound in the 81st minute was the game-winner and all three goals were scored in the second half.

The RedHawks pulled out the victory despite CU holding possession for the majority of the game, but the Bulldogs were unable to find players in a scoring position for most of the match and were unlucky at other times, including Shauna Gilpin hitting the crossbar in the 75th minute with the match tied.

On the winning goal, MMC played a short corner to Mor Efraim, whose shot from 20 yards was saved by CU keeper Lindsay Kitson, but the ball bounced some five yards from Kitson and Graham pounced, beating two CU defenders to the ball for the score.

The RedHawks struck first in the second half after the teams were scoreless at the break. In the 47th minute Yalu Barbolla lofted a cross to the top of the six-yard box, where Efraim controlled it, turned to her right and had an easy shot into the net after Kitson found herself out of position.

But the Bulldogs knotted the match in the 63rd minute when Gilpin won a scramble in front of the net off a corner, her fifth goal of the season. Gilpin's shot off the crossbar was the next best scoring chance for CU, with the sophomore beating MMC goalie Meaghan Storie to a ball near the penalty spot, touching it to her left and then lofting a shot over two defenders off the bar.

Match time will be announced sometime in the next 24 hours. Check the women's soccer schedule page at www.GoCumberlandAthletics.com for match time and more information.