



## **Meramec Emerges With Bizarre 2-1 Win In Season Opener**

Battling all odds, the STLCC-Meramec men's soccer team walked away from Lincoln, IL with a 2-1 overtime victory in their season opener against Lincoln College Friday, Aug. 28. The Magic had to overcome a shallow bench with just three subs due to injuries, an officiating crew that did not know two major, common rules, and rapidly falling daylight at the end of the game.

"It had a little bit of everything," said fifth year head coach **Brian Smugala**, "players on the other team cursing at me, cursing our players, spitting on our players, referees didn't handle it real well, and didn't know the rules. So, we overcame a lot and I'm real excited for the boys."

The 5:30 start was played under ominously dark skies on an unseasonably cool evening. Meramec started the night with scoring being its number one question - the Magic had not scored a goal through three pre-season exhibition scrimmages. But, that hex was shattered midway through the second half when sophomore captain **Almin Sabotic** (Mehlville) converted a penalty kick to give Meramec a 1-0 advantage. The PK was triggered by sophomore forward **Steve McMahan** (Lafayette) being taken down hard in the box with the ball.

"I got a ball hit through from the midfield," said McMahan. "One of their defenders came; he was a real quick guy. He got me in the box. He got me pretty good."

However, the match would be far from over. With eight minutes remaining, Lincoln's Stiven Salinas scored on a breakaway and shocked the solid Meramec defense, knotting the score at one each. The already highly physical game then took a bizarre turn two minutes later in Meramec's favor. After Magic goalie **Chris Eason** (Lindbergh) had made a routine save, Salinas confronted him.

"I was simply trying to clear out the ball and the guy (Salinas) was cutting back and forth, not letting me kick it," said Eason. "Then he ran at me and spit on my shirt. He just looked at me and spit on me."

Salinas received a red card and was ejected from the game. With six minutes left and daylight falling, Meramec feverishly tried to convert with the one man advantage and regain the lead. However, regulation ended. The Magic started to prep for the first overtime period as Lincoln players started to promptly exit the field.

"The other team conveniently didn't know you play overtime in a junior college match," said Smugala. "The refs acted like they didn't know the rule so it was pretty frustrating. With Lincoln

being short a man because of their red card obviously that's why they didn't want to play in overtime."

The overtime rule, a universal one in college soccer, was the second miscue by the officiating crew. Throughout the game, when a yellow card was issued to either team's player, none of the three officials mandated the player to leave the game, another common rule of college soccer.

Lincoln reluctantly returned to the field for an overtime period when warned they would forfeit the match if they refused to continue. The delay by the officials in immediately beginning an overtime period contributed to rapidly deteriorating daylight. In overtime, Meramec came out fast and vigorously attacked Lincoln's defense, narrowly missing on two close shots. Finally, midway through the first extra period, the offense clicked in the person of freshman forward **Clint Carder** (DeSoto).

"McMahon won the ball at the corner which gave us the corner kick," said Carder, "then a great cross by **Jake Macker** (Kirkwood). It came into **Joe Reidel** (St. Mary's), he hit it across to center and I just put it in. The goalie was at near post and I just had to tap it in."

The goal put an ecstatic cap on a frustrating evening, catapulting the Magic to a 2-1 win to start the season. Salinas' unsportsmanlike actions played right into Meramec's hands.

"It was probably the most physical game I've ever been a part of," said Sabotic. "The refs should have called a couple of red cards but they didn't. They got us fired up!"

The Magic hope to stay fired up throughout the season facing a tough schedule of some of the nation's toughest teams. However, the win over Lincoln erased any scoring doubts that the pre season may have created.

"It sets the tone for the season, now that we have a couple goals under our belt we'll be good to go for the season," said sophomore defender **Justin Billmeyer** (Columbia, IL).

## **Sour Economy Gives Sweet Boost To Women's Soccer Squad**

The bad economy is finally paying dividends, at least for the STLCC-Meramec women's soccer squad. The team, which has struggled for several years with low numbers, has a robust 22 players this season, the most since 1995.

"I worked pretty hard with recruiting but I think the economy's part of it too," said twenty seventh year head coach **Jeff Karl**. "I have three or four kids who are transferring from four year schools. They're here going to school on the A Plus program for free. I think the parents and the students see the advantage of that money-wise."

The added bodies will give Karl, the program's only coach since its inception in 1983, a luxury he has not had in a few years in strategic substitutions and allow for more leg power on the field.

“I’m hoping that we will present a lot of energy and consistent energy,” said Karl. “I’m telling the girls that when we have 11 people out there I want those legs to be fresh and when they’re tired, we’re bringing in fresh legs.”

Much of that energy will come from the likes of forward **Casey Caldwell** (Lindbergh) who came on strong late in the season with three goals and five assists.

“Casey last year in playoffs really started to shine,” said Karl. “She scored some goals; her offense production was good going right into playoffs. She’s going to be one of our principal strikers. We’re looking for some big things.”

Caldwell, likewise, has high expectations for herself. “With the six returners we have I think I play a big role,” said Caldwell. “I am there to show everyone the ropes of college soccer. I lead by example and try and put 100% out every day, game or practice.”

Another key returning player is midfielder **Rachel Aubuchon** (Parkway North). Aubuchon was a reserve stopper last year and will likely be a starter for the ‘09 team. Karl says she has special skills that make her an asset.

“She’s really intelligent about the game, she sees things and how they develop quicker than other players,” said Karl. “You’re not going to find too many people who work harder. That can really be contagious when you have a player who shows leadership qualities like she has.”

However, Aubuchon feels her success comes more from her vocal cords than her feet. “Personally my leadership comes from my mouth, everyone can hear me probably 95% of the time talking and trying to let people know what they can do with the ball,” said Aubuchon.

Despite just six returning players, Aubuchon feels the large influx of freshmen will not be detrimental this year. “It is nice to have a team as hardworking as we are this year,” said Aubuchon. “Some of our strengths are having a strong defensive line and also having several players with speed and strikers with solid hard shots.”

Another experienced sophomore is defender **Kelsey Consiglio** (Rosati Kain). “This year she’s really off to a good start,” said Karl of Consiglio. “She’s doing a lot of good things and being her sophomore year she’ll really present some good leadership qualities, she’ll be in our backfield, probably starting for us at the right wingback.”

One interesting position will be the goalie spot, where **Amber Standfill** (Parkway South) and **Katie Jolliff** (Northwest) will initially platoon. Both might have a lot of trouble touching the top cross bar - Jolliff is 5’4” while Standfill is a diminutive 5’1”. However, Karl is quick to point out that the Magic once took third in the nation with a 5’0” goalie.

However, the squad will stand tall in their defense of the Region XVI championship they captured last fall, their first in five years. It’s a special point of pride for the sophomores.

“We are extremely excited to be defending the Region XVI championship, we have every intention of being the champions again this year,” said Aubuchon. “I think the sophomores would accept nothing less than another championship this year.”

Coach Karl agrees, and he knows what it’s like to be on top of the soccer world, having won national titles in 1991 and 1992. “It’s nice to know that for right now we’re the top squad in Missouri,” said Karl. “There’ll be people come hunting for us, that’s for sure.”

## **Volleyball Magic Open With 4-2 Mark At McKendree Tourney**

Coming off a successful opening night of the season at the McKendree Tournament, the STLCC-Meramec volleyball team swept all three matches, defeating Rend Lake, host McKendree JV, and Lewis and Clark.

The next day, Meramec fell to Southwestern Illinois College before beating Oakton. In their final match of the tourney, the Magic were defeated by Mineral Area in consecutive games.

The team has been working hard under second year coach **Jenell Franken** and is starting to show the efforts paying off. They’ll continue the season Wednesday, Sept. 2 with their first home match facing East Central at 6:30. Later in the week, they’ll travel to the Lincoln Land Tournament in Springfield, IL.

One key to the team will be **Alyssa Blinzler** (Pierce City, MO). Blinzler, a defensive specialist, transferred in from State Fair College where she won Scholar-Athlete honors. As a high school senior she was an All-Conference first team selection as well as Academic All-State.

Another defensive specialist will also be looked to for strong play. **Heather Gamblin** (Bismark, MO) swept all post season honors last fall as prep senior with first team berths on the All-Conference, All-Region, and All-District teams.