

Melissa Muse

Keeper Will Fisher makes a save in the Demons' district tournament game against Simon Kenton.

Williamstown soccer season ends

After having only notched a couple of victories during regular season play, the Williamstown Demons had the misfortune of facing Simon Kenton in the first game of post season play.

The Demons fell to Simon Kenton earlier in the season, losing 8-0 at home Sept. 22.

On Oct. 13, the result was no different as the the first round of the 32nd District Boys Soccer Tournament for the Demons ended by mercy rule, 8-0.



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Jacob Monson breaks away from his Simon Kenton pursuers in the first round of the 32nd District Boys Soccer Tournament.

LADY

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Sierra Spahr and Cali Sanford both turned back Bearcat drives within their own box.

Grant's defense remained intact despite Walton's probes as Payten Rodgers also made several saves.

Shortly after another scramble in the Lady Braves' box, Connors cleared the ball onto Walton's half. Kaydence Brown then attempted to return the favor but was halted by the keeper.

Minutes later, the Lady Braves' lines were once again being tested as crosses rained into the box. While Regan Kenner and Rodgers both stopped drives, Grant struggled to build out of the back. Eventually, this constant pressure forced cracks as Walton found open space. After persisting through 19 minutes of Walton attacks, the Lady Braves finally yielded a goal.

Moments afterwards, Grant nearly settled the score as Brown dribbled through the Bearcats' center. Tearing past four defenders, the drive was only ended thanks to a tackle from Walton's keeper. Having closed within three yards of a goal, Grant's offense rallied behind Brown's push. Building on deep passes from Spahr and Bella Kaffenberger, Grant tried to break their opponent's defense.



Melissa Muse

Goalie Payten Rodgers makes a save in the Lady Braves game against Walton Verona in the first round of the district tournament.

With Pailyn Gambrell, Alyssa Brown and Sanford pushing high, Grant fought to even the score. Despite several through-ball attempts, the Bearcats' defense wouldn't back down. As Walton's keeper repeatedly cleared out the Lady Braves' passes, the rally lost steam.

In the ensuing counterattack, Grant's backline tried to halt the Bearcats' speedy strikers. After Isabella Wagner prevented two shots on goal, Walton maneuvered the ball into the midfield. Utilizing a deep shot from 30 yards out, the Bearcats then clawed out their second goal to close out the half.

Returning from the break, Walton started with the ball and soon went back on the offensive. Within the first minute of the second half, the Bearcats had a shot attempt bounce off the inside of a goalpost.

The Lady Braves continued to fight, with Rodgers earning three quick saves.

A brief exchange in the midfield between Gambrell, Sphar, Brown and the Bearcats' offense bought Grant some time, but just after nine minutes of play, Walton secured their third and final goal on a cross from left field.

Over the next several minutes, the Lady Braves once more tried to rally the offense onward. Riley Wittich, Brown and Gambrell earned shots on goal, yet Grant couldn't breach their foes' defenses as Walton's keeper made three straight saves.

Behind by three goals, the Braves' counterattack eventually tapered off. During the final minutes of the game, the Bearcats had additional shots stopped by Brown, Regan, Sphar, Kaffenberger and Rodgers. The game's outcome was decided, with Grant suffering a 3-0 loss.



Jackson Utter

Rylee Akers goes for the kills while Jayden Kelly (#22), Moriah Wills (#21), Addyson Cummins (#32) and Lillian Phillips (#4) wait for the return.

TEAM

FROM **PAGE B1**



Jackson Utter

Maci Fox executes a dig. On her right in the wings are, from left, Addyson Cummins, Moriah Wills and Lillian Phillips.

15-13 before the Bearcats rallied to retake the lead.

Grant remained close over the next several rallies, trailing by just one or two points. Following a block by Lillian Phillips, the Bearcats began to cover ground. Due to an ace and three kills, the score sat at 22-17 in Walton's favor.

In a last-ditch effort in the final points of the set, Grant began to claw back. Thanks to two hits from Fox and another block by Hammons, they closed the gap. Sadly, this comeback was cut short as errors closed the set at 25-21.

Tied at one set apiece, the Lady Braves' position weakened in the third set. The initial rallies saw Grant scrape out a tidy lead at 8-3. Trailing points by Akers, Wills, and Fox, the Bearcat slowly recovered. Regardless of a block from Cummins and an ace by Hammons, Walton gradually encroached on the lead.

Halfway through the set, Grant's previous five-point advantage had eroded to a score of 15-15; with the Bearcats finding gaps in the Lady Braves' center, they soon pulled ahead.

Stalling in the back end of the set, Grant was unable to keep pace offensively. Though Fox, Kelly, and Akers all scored, Walton won their second straight set at 25-19.

Rebounding from this loss, Grant then went into the fourth set bent on revenge. Whereas the Bearcats relied on their offense, the Lady Braves' defense fought them to a standstill. Doubling down on their front line and thanks to some determined digs, Grant hedged out Walton in the fourth set.

While Kelly, Hammons, and Cummins limited the Bearcats' hitters, Fox, Wills and Akers proved more than capable offensive threats. In a hard-fought set, the Lady Braves tied the meet once again with their 25-23 win.

Heading into the fifth and final set, the meet would be decided by the first to 15, with a two-point advantage.

Starting the final set, the Lady Braves built upon the momentum from their previous win. Seizing the initiative, they took the lead at 8-5.

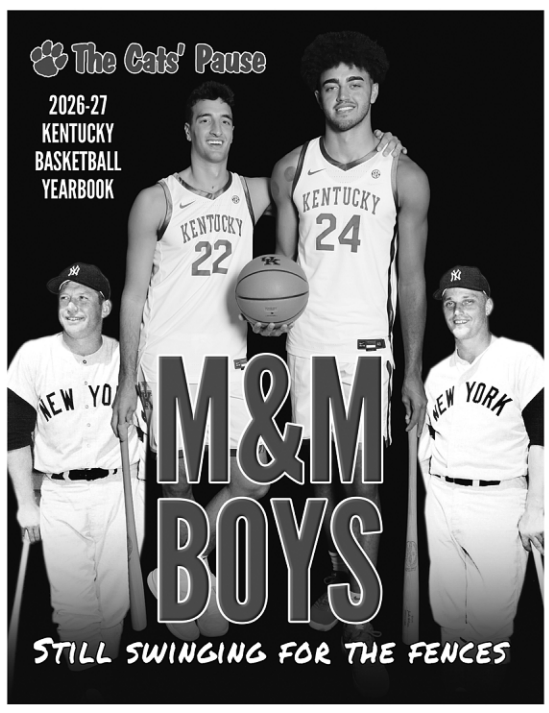
Determined Bearcats' resistance, though, slowly wore down the Lady Braves, and they slowly began to bleed points.

As Walton's hitting found weak spots in the tight matchup, Grant's defenses gave way. The prolonged battle of endurance ultimately sided with the Bearcats as Walton etched out a close 15-12 win. This sealed the meet in the Bearcats' favor and handed the Braves a harsh loss in an all-around great matchup. Despite losing in the final stretch, Grant proved a more than formidable foe with postseason fast approaching.

With one week left in the regular season, the Lady Braves are now 10-12. After facing Boone and Bracken during the week, Grant will kick off the 32nd district tournament. In a rematch against Simon Kenton, the Braves will travel to Williamstown on Oct. 19.

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