

# Oak Hill punches ticket to Sectional 21 final, winning over Mississinewa



Oak Hill's Daniel Jackson dribbles the ball up the pitch in their Sectional 21 semifinal win over Mississinewa. Photo by Sean Douglas

By Sean Douglas

Wednesday night's Sectional 21 semifinal contest between Oak Hill and Mississinewa was everything one would expect in a match between two long-time and bitter rivals. It was a hard-fought, physical affair from the opening kick-off until the final horn as the two teams battled tooth and nail across all levels of the pitch.

In the end, however, the Golden Eagles' dominance in ball possession, fluid offensive movement both on and off the ball, and an unrelenting attack proved to be the difference in a 4-2 victory over the Indians.

With the win, Oak Hill punched their ticket to the Sectional 21 Championship,

where they will face off against Western.

"We've been preaching about keeping our cool and playing our game and not letting what other teams do take us out of that," Oak Hill Head Coach Joel Garverick said. "They threw some nice stuff at us and made some nice adjustments from when we played them a week ago, but we made the adjustments as well."

Dalian Leach turned in another fine performance for Oak Hill, collecting a goal and an assist, while Mark Sevier, Clayton Macy, and Evan Pearce also recorded tallies for the Golden Eagles.

Colin Yoder scored for the Indians in his final high school soccer game, while

freshman Ian Davis also found twine for Mississinewa.

Over the course of the first 23 minutes, the play on the pitch was even, but that changed at the 17:40 mark. Off a well-designed rush, Grant Elzinga fired a perfect cross to the front of the net, and a streaking Leach headed the ball past Mississinewa goalkeeper Austin Long to give Oak Hill a 1-0 lead – one they would not relinquish.

Oak Hill's front line created multiple scoring opportunities throughout the match, and Leach, who has flourished throughout his senior campaign, was the key.

"We've tried to make

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he's got such a great future ahead of him in life." Oddiraju, playing against a tremendous tennis player in Tanner Southerland, needed to win a pair of tiebreakers to keep his season alive for the individual tournament. Oddiraju battled back from a 4-3 and 5-4 deficit to win the first set 7-6 (7-2) and withstood a furious rally in the second set to win 7-6 (7-3). Oddiraju will

move on to face Muncie Burris standout Charlie Behrman on Wednesday evening. "Vikram had to work hard to win that one, so congratulations to Vikram for moving on in the single tournament," Porter said. Oddiraju and Fauser have certainly left their mark over their four years, winning a combined 168 matches, and helping the Giants capture

three straight sectional championships and a regional title in 2019. "I'm the luckiest coach alive. It's hard to believe it's coming to an end with those two," Porter said. "I just feel like my relationship this year has been very special, and I am just glad I've had the season with everything that's gone on in the outside world, I'm just lucky to have been able to coach them."



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