



Crean Lutheran's season ends on a rough note

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DOWNEY – Crean Lutheran's girls soccer team hadn't faced many teams this season with the size and physicality of Viewpoint of Calabasas, the Saints' opponent in the CIF-SS Division 5 championship game Friday at Warren High.

The Patriots used those strengths on both ends of the field and came away with a 2-0 victory over Crean Lutheran, which was playing in the finals for the first time.

The Saints entered the match with a 16-game unbeaten streak.

"They work hard and they don't give up," Crean Lutheran coach **Stephen Jennings** said of his players. "For me, I feel like I can't give my girls enough credit for all the effort they put in."

The Saints (17-6-2) had a hard time containing senior **Sophia Stills**, Viewpoint's tall, physical and speedy forward.

Five minutes into the match, Crean Lutheran had possession around midfield but Viewpoint (18-5-2) wrestled the ball away and kicked it over the Saints' defense and into the hands of goalkeeper **Hillary Beall**.

The ball seemed to get away from Beall, and Stills took control and scored from a few feet away to give the Patriots a 1-0 lead.

"She is obviously very fast and quick," Jennings said of Stills. "She holds the ball very well for them."

The Patriots, who allowed one goal in their three playoff games heading into the final, did a good job jamming the middle of the field, preventing Crean from putting together any kind of attack in the early going.

In the 39th minute, the Saints were hit with what amounted to a knockout punch. Viewpoint's **Sarah Konopaske** won a fight for the ball in front of the goal with Beall and scored to make it 2-0.

Viewpoint's defense was impenetrable in the second half.

On corner kicks and throw-ins on the Patriots' end of the field, the Saints rarely got a touch in front of the net.

"They have a great back line," Stephens said. "We didn't test their keeper very much."

The Saints had never advanced past the first round of the playoffs prior to this season.

"This has been a huge accomplishment for the school and the program and development for the future," Stephens said. "I can't be more proud."

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