



Photo by Alex Kozlowski

W.Va.'s Issam Sawtarie pushes to ball upfield around Ohio goalkeeper John Ross during action of the 2006 Boys' OVAC All-Star Game Thursday at Wheeling Island Stadium. W.Va. won the game, 3-0.

# Sawtarie Keys W.Va.

## Linsly star scores two goals in 3-0 victory

By **JOSH STROPE**  
Staff Writer

The OVAC All-Star game at Wheeling Island Stadium was a showcase of the best senior soccer players in the Ohio Valley, and Thursday, the biggest star showed his stuff.

Linsly's Issam Sawtarie scored two goals en route to W.Va Offensive Player of the Game honors, as he led the Mountain state to a 3-0 victory over the Ohio Senior All-Stars.

Sawtarie had the game's first scoring chance just one minute in, racing down the left sideline on a breakaway.

Sawtarie was robbed by the Ohio goalie, Steubenville's John Ross, to keep the game scoreless.

The OVAC Player of the Year wouldn't be denied on his second opportunity.

On a second through-ball from the exact same spot, Sawtarie raced down the sideline toward the goal in a mirror image of the previous attempt. Ross came out to challenge the shot, but Sawtarie lifted the ball over his hands for the 1-0 lead at the 30-minute mark.

"It took us a while to get going, get used to each other," said Linsly's Randy Shah, the West Virginia head coach. "Once everybody started to

calm down and get focused, we played with a lot more intensity."

The W.Va. goalie, Linsly's Thomas Reihner, had five saves in the first half, but all came from outside the penalty box.

Ohio came away with a great chance just minutes before halftime when Steubenville Catholic Central's Bryan Yasho fired a shot from the top of the box.

Reihner made a leaping attempt and punched the ball over the net to keep Ohio off the scoreboard.

The half ended with West Virginia up 1-0, but on its heels.

Ohio made a furious charge at the end of the half, and began the second with similar intensity.

Ohio's best chance to tie came at the 55-minute mark when Yasho beat every West Virginia defender, including Reihner, who came to challenge the play.

With the Linsly netminder on the ground and out of the play, Yasho had nothing but a wide open net in front of him, but the Crusader forward missed wide of the goal.

"We had come good chances that didn't go our way," said Steubenville's Greg Bowers, the Ohio head coach. "Sometimes the toughest thing in soccer is to finish and tonight, if we could have done that, maybe things could have went our way."

"Still, those kids played hard and I'm proud of them."

After the scare, it was just a

matter of minutes before W.Va.'s future Providence College player extended the lead.

A cross through the penalty box from Wheeling Central's John Cornforth made it all the way to Sawtarie, despite Ross getting a hand on the ball.

Sawtarie gained possession and Ross made a gallant effort to get back in front of the net, but Sawtarie, from an awkward angle found the corner of the goal to give West Virginia a 2-0 lead.

"Sawtarie got his two goals and that put us in a hole we couldn't get out of," Bowers said.

The game was sealed at the 77-minute mark as Wheeling Park's Chris O'Konski scored on an own goal that was accidentally kicked in by Steubenville Central's P.J. Grantonic.

Reihner made eight saves in the game, while Ross collected six and backup Eric Neuenschwander of St. Clairsville tallied one.

"When you have so many top scorers from each team playing together, sometimes you get a low-scoring game," Shah said.

"Luckily we had one of the best goalies in the state to keep us close."

Along with Sawtarie, Wheeling Park's Will Voeglin was the West Virginia defensive player, making two key stops on breakaways by Yasho.

The Ohio Offensive Player of the Game was Zanesville's Larry Nolan, while Ross claimed the defensive award.

# W.Va.

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Included among the West Virginia All-Stars were John Marshall's Erica Baker and Jenny Beth Wysocki, who will both play soccer at Wheeling Jesuit next year, Wheeling Central's Megan Cook, who will go on to play at Bethany, future Fairmont State basketball players Jaimie Merinar of John Marshall and Melissa Henry of Weir, and Jenny Aderholt, who will go on to play tennis at Malone.

"This year I think the West Virginia players were very talented," said John Marshall head coach Cindy Lawther, who coached the W.Va. team. "It really wasn't the best year for this experiment.

"My guess is we'll go back to (the previous format where the senior all-star teams were drafted and players from the two states were mixed together). There were a lot of high quality West Virginia players who didn't make it to this year's team because I had such a list of quality players."

Furthermore, Ohio was so shorthanded because of commitments ranging from regional track meets to a

recognition assembly at East Liverpool High School that kept the Potters' Lindsay Muscari from playing, they had to borrow two players from West Virginia at all times.

A rotation was created that saw new West Virginia players — identifiable by their navy blue shorts in contrast to their newfound teammates' white — inserted into the lineup every 20 minutes.

"Nobody wanted to go," said Lawther. "But I told them when you play for Ohio, play all out."

So Alexis Arango of Weirton Madonna, named as the "Defensive Player of the Game," actually played for two teams in this outing, as did, among others, Wysocki and Weir's Mia Caccavale.

Taking advantage of this situation, Lawther decided to play only three defenders and they were rarely challenged.

Leah Comis, a teammate of Arango at Madonna who just five days earlier won the Class A state championship in the 300-meter low hurdles at the state track and field championships, scored two goals at 2:44 seconds and 14:44 into the game for her

team's first two goals.

Between these tallies, Ohio had its only serious scoring opportunity of the day. Kelsie Masters of Cambridge broke free but was stopped by W.Va. goalkeeper Kristen DeSantis of Wheeling Central.

After that, playing in the 73-degree sunshine on an artificial surface without any substitutions took its toll on the Buckeye State players.

So Mandy Loy set up Julia McGinley's blast inside the left post made the score 3-0 with 22:39 left. Merinar's goal from Comis with 15:29 remaining made it 4-0, and then Kocher took over.

Henry had the other goal for W.Va., scoring with just over 36 minutes remaining on an assist from Kocher.

Henry also set up two of Kocher's five goals.

## Game Notes

■ Magnolia's Paige DeMarco, who is going to study at the Full Sail Real World Film School in the fall, missed the game as her softball team was battling for a state championship.

■ Kocher was named the Player of the Game on Offense.

# Rosters Set for OVAC All-Star Game

By JOSH STROPE  
Staff Writer

The best senior soccer players in the Ohio Valley meet up for one last go-around Thursday at Wheeling Island Stadium in the 2006 OVAC Soccer Senior All-Star Classic.

The girls will kick off the festivities at 5:30, followed by the boys' contest at approximately 7 p.m.

The boys contest will be new not only to the players in the game, but to the coaches.

First-year coaches Randy Shah of Linsly and Greg Bowers of Steubenville will lead their respective teams, and both will be surrounded by familiar faces.

Linsly's Issam Sawtarie, Thomas

Reihner, and Jack Waddell will give Shah a comfort level for his first game, as well two of the best players in the Ohio Valley.

"Issam Sawtarie scored a bunch of goals this season so he should look to take advantage of a defensive that might not be familiar with each other, Wheeling Park has a couple of good seniors and Mike Oliver of Brooke is a special player," Shah said. "We have a lot of balance, but that still means we have to be a team."

Along with Oliver, Brooke will be represented by Joshua Witt and Neal Ford.

The rest of the West Virginia team is Chris O'Konski (Wheeling Park),

Will Voegelin (Wheeling Park), Seth Miller (Wheeling Park), Ben Kios (John Marshall), Eric Seachrist (John Marshall), John Cornforth (Wheeling Central), Brian DiCola (Wheeling Central), Eddie Vargo (Wheeling Central), John Carlo Rock (Weir), Adam Koontz (Tyler Consolidated), Brad Eider (Oak Glen), and Brian Shirak (Magnolia).

The Steubenville area will dominate the Ohio sideline as both Big Red and Steubenville Catholic Central will each dress five players for the annual game.

Bowers will get one last opportunity to coach Alan D'Anniballe, Nick Krivokiak, Mike Ross, John Ross, and Justin Blanton.

The Crusaders will send John DuBois, Shane Myers, Justin Sofio, Bryan Yasho, and P.J. Grantomic to the Island.

The other Ohio team members are Noah Townsend (Indian Creek), Eric Neuenschwander (St. Clairsville), Ross Breiding (St. Clairsville), Will Lake (St. Clairsville), Larry Nolan (Zanesville), Nick Jorris (Monroe Central), and Justin Ady (Cambridge).

"The main thing in an all-star game is to play hard and play with pride," Bowers said. "We want them to have fun, but it's a lot more fun when you are competing at your best level and going for the victory."

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"We have a good midfield and some strong defenders. We just need to get the ball upfield and finish a couple of shots."

Shah will be assisted by Wheeling Park's Mario Julian and John Marshall's Shey McGuire. Bowers will have Zanesville's Ryan Barks and Steubenville Central's Tony Recinella at his side.

The John Marshall girls team enjoyed a tremendous season winning their first OVAC Division III title and this game looks to be Monarch dominated.

The West Virginia team will be coached by the Monarch's Cindy Lawther, making her fifth appearance as a coach, but just first as a head coach.

In 10 years with the Monarchs, Lawther has been able to coach all three of her daughters.

This year, she will get to coach Alexandra's last game. She previously coached daughters Hannah and Maddie.

Lawther will be bring with her six Monarch players - Alexandra, Mandy Loy, Erica Baker, Jaimie Merinar, Jenny Beth Wysocki, and Heather McKinney.

Also suiting up for the West Virginia squad is Jenny Aderholt (Wheeling Park), Katie

Dean (Wheeling Park), Mia Caccavale (Weir), Melissa Henry (Weir), Paige DeMarco (Magnolia), Katie Kelley (Mount de Chantal), Kristen DeSantis (Wheeling Central), Megan Cook (Wheeling Central), Julia McGinley (Wheeling Central), Alexis Arango (Weirton Madonna), Leah Comis (Weirton Madonna), Jamie Kocher (Brooke), and Alicia Andrews (Brooke).

"I have played against most everyone on our team so I know we are talented," Lawther said. "We have the Valley's leading scorer in Comis and Jamie Kocher, the captain of the All-Valley team, so we will have a pretty potent attack."

The Ohio team will be led by Edison's Jeremy Angelo.

Making up the Ohio team is Annie Lesiak (Steubenville), Catherine Moore (Steubenville), Jessie Meadows (Steubenville Central), Natasha Canella (Steubenville Central), Kelsie Masters (Cambridge), Alice Gariety (Cambridge), Danielle Skinner (East Liverpool), Lindsay Muscari (East Liverpool), Kaycee Caldron (Indian Creek), Heather Ross (Indian Creek), Jen Sitarik (Beaver Local), Emily Chaney (Edison), Kerri Scott (Edison), and Cassie Verardi (St. Clairsville).

Assisting Lawther will be Linsly's Jill Regan and Oak Glen's Kelly Ulbright. Helping Angelo will be Steve Kopcha of Steubenville Central and Kevin Marsh of Indian Creek.



## W.Va. Girls Sharp

### Kocher scores five goals in 10-0 win

By **MARKY BILLSON**  
Staff Writer

This year, the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference decided to switch the Girls' Soccer Senior All-Star Game from a format in which the best players

of the area were drafted onto two different teams to one in which the best players from Ohio and West Virginia played each other.

The format has been in place for the Boys' Senior All-Star Game for some time, but for the girls, it is somewhat controversial.

Most area girls soccer all-star teams were comprised of nothing but West Virginians and Ohio brought only nine players

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Most area girls soccer all-star teams were comprised of nothing but West Virginians and Ohio brought only nine players to Thursday evening's game at Wheeling Island Stadium.

So perhaps the Mountaineers' 10-0 triumph wasn't surprising.

Jamie Kocher's five-goal performance, however, was certainly noteworthy.

Such an outburst is nothing new for Kocher, who turned down a full scholarship to West Virginia Wesleyan to be a preferred walk-on at West Virginia University next fall. Kocher once scored six goals as a junior in a game against Indian Creek.

So her performance in Thursday's All-Star Game had to feel like old times, as she scored her first two tallies against Redskins' netminder Heather Ross late in the first half to give W. Va. a 6-0 lead at the half.

Kocher's remaining three goals, including her header with just under 31 minutes left in the second half to give W. Va. an 8-0 lead, were against Indian Creek's Kaycee Caldron, who had been moved from the midfield to play goalkeeper.

"I think because I also play basketball and run track, that may have helped me stay in shape and therefore have an advantage against some players who only play soccer," Kocher theorized after the game. "I also follow a training program given to me from the coaches at WVU. Plus I had a great team behind me."

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