

THE NEW JERSEY SOCCER GROUP

Press Release



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Magic Concede Late Goal in Tie

After a tough game against Long Island earlier in the week, Millburn bounced back with a fine performance this Saturday – only a last minute goal from the Philadelphia Liberty preventing them from a deserved away victory.

Millburn poured forward from the opening whistle, with Rachel Fell in electrifying form on their right wing, and Kat McKenna causing problems on the left. With lone striker Kim Malecki working hard, the triple threat immediately had Philadelphia on the back foot, and McKenna almost scored in the 6th minute, shooting over from a low dangerous Fell cross. With Tara Ricciardi and Lara Kaminski driving the team on from midfield, the first goal was only a matter of time, and indeed it came after a foul on Kaminski in the 9th minute. Fell stepped up to take the free kick, and from 25 yards bent an unstoppable shot past the goalkeepers left hand. The goal inspired Philadelphia into life, and only wasteful finishing plus two smart saves from Millburn keeper Lia Fierro kept the Magic team ahead, but the New Jersey team remained the more threatening on the counter-attack. On such a break, Fell continued her single-handed destruction of the left side of the Liberty defense, beating three players before being taken down for a penalty so clear that in a stadium containing over 500 people, only the referee managed to be “unsighted”.

The second half started with the Magic tightening their defense – debutant Biz Shenk enjoying a fine first game alongside the established central defensive partnership of Katelin Baline, and Donnique Sinclair-Chambers, enjoying one of her best games of the season. With McKenna now back on the left side of defense, and Lina Starapoli enjoying a fine game in front of her on the left of midfield, Millburn dominated possession, and dealt comfortably with the long-ball game of the home team, Kaminski and Ricciardi stifling any threat in midfield. As the Philadelphia frustration bubbled over, Brianna Tyson was cautioned for a bad foul on Starapoli, and was then fortunate to remain on the field after a late lunge on Malecki only moments later – before being withdrawn for the remainder of the game. Indeed, Malecki was enjoying one of her best games of the season, threatening at every opportunity, closing down defenders throughout the game, while linking play up with the midfield enabling Millburn to provide a cohesive and consistent attacking threat.

As the game became stretched, substitute keeper Suzy Baldissard made a fine save to her right with 10 minutes remaining, from which Millburn went straight up the field and almost killed the game off. A flowing move through midfield ended with Steph Zalewski beating her defender and delivering a teasing cross from the right that beat the Liberty goalkeeper and just eluded Roisin O'Toole, another player making her first Magic appearance. In a game in which Philadelphia had lost their own discipline, it was ironically a free-kick for them in the 91st minute that led to the equalizer, a seemingly harmless ball somehow finding its way over Baldissard and into the net to deny Millburn all three points in a highly entertaining game. As tough as the result was, it did in some ways reflect the 1-1 tie and late Millburn equalizer that shared the spoils in New Jersey earlier in the season – two fiercely contested games between highly competitive teams with no love lost between them, a fine advertisement for the league.

Magic Line-Up: Lia Fierro, Donnique Sinclair-Chambers, Kaitlen Blaine, Tara Ricciardi, Rachel Fell, Lina Starapoli, Kat McKenna, Kim Malecki, Chrissie Sidie, Denise Gosling, Lara Kaminsky. **Subs:** Steph Zalewski (17), Jen Vroman (35), Suzy Baldissard (70), Roisin O'Toole (38).

The result was a serious blow to Philadelphia's play-off hopes, as they move to 4-1-4 and can now qualify only with other results going their way. Millburn move to 3-4-2, with Northampton Laurels to come this Friday. While probably out of the play-off hunt, the Magic face the remaining contenders in the Diablos (Sunday July 20th) and Lancaster (tbc), and can play the role of spoiler, making a significant impact in their first season. The next Millburn home game is on July 22nd 7pm @ Millburn High School against the Maryland Pride. The Magic represent Northern NJ in the Women's Premier Soccer League, an independent national league representing the highest level of women's soccer in the United States. The Magic are part of The New Jersey Soccer Group, a management company representing a family of soccer based organizations offering a full range of soccer services in northern New Jersey.

More about the Millburn Magic at

www.millburnmagic.com

More about the New Jersey Soccer Group at

www.njsoccergroup.com

More about the WPSL at

www.womenspremiersoccerleague.com

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