

Nov. 1 CJ III boys soccer

Fulvio deStasio tricks Wall, Northstars now seek revenge at Allentown

**By Rich Fisher
Fish4Scores.com**

Nov. 1: Looking for a money player?

Fulvio deStasio might be worth a million bucks.

For the second straight year, the Nottingham High junior is showing he can score goals when it counts the most, as he tallied his first career hat trick today to pace the sixth-seeded Northstars to a 5-1 win over 11th-seeded Wall in the Central Jersey Group III tournament's first round.

The win advances Nottingham (11-5-1) to a Friday quarterfinal at third-seeded Allentown, which handed the Northstars their first defeat of the season, 4-1, on Sept. 26.

"Definitely I want to see Allentown," said deStasio before he even knew if the Redbirds won their first round-game.

Allentown may not want to see deStasio at this time of the season. Last year, with his brother Luca out of the lineup, Fulvio picked up the slack with some big post-season goals.

He picked it up again today with three goals, and had a fourth waved off.

"This is two years in a row at the end of the season he's stepped his game up for the big games," coach Mike Braender said. "He's a gamer, to come through like that today is incredible. Especially to get a hat trick and almost have four.



Nottingham's Fulvio deStasio dribbles upfield against Wall Township in today's CJ III game. deStasio had plenty of room to operate as he scored three goals in the Northstars 5-1 win (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing jbsportsphoto@aol.com).

“That’s what you gotta do. Every day he works his butt off. At practice he’s working and in the games too. That’s what we ask for, 80 minutes of work.”

Big brother Luca got things started with an early goal, but the Crimson Knights (7-11-2) responded with one of their own just a minute later.

From there, Nottingham held off Wall’s momentum and with 14:47 left in the half Luca assisted Fulvio to make it 2-1.

“To get the second goal for us was big after they came back down our throats and pretty much shoved it right in a minute later,” Braender said. “They always say that the next couple minutes after a goal is big. We had a little letdown there and we fought through it.”

Fulvio tallied his second goal six minutes later when he finished off a pass from Uzo Iloka to make it 3-1 at halftime.

It remained that way until under five minutes remained, when Gary Rojas scored on a rebound. deStasio completed his trick with time running down, but didn’t feel it was his particular day to shine.

“It wasn’t just my day,” he said. “A lot of people had opportunities, I just seemed to put them away when I had them. Coming from Pennington (in the Mercer County Tournament semifinals) was a tough loss, that kind of fired me up a little bit.”

Nottingham actually had a game after that, beating Ewing 3-0 in a MCT consolation game Friday.

“We wanted to play the game just to keep ourselves in tune with playing against somebody else,” Braender said. “Pennington was a tough loss and I thought that was the best game we played all year. Losing in a shootout is tough. But we wanted to get another game under our belts and kind of forget about it a little bit.”

The result was an outstanding effort by the Northstars, who could have had several more goals were it not for Eric Bumbera’s 11 saves, several of them outstanding. Mike Conte had nine saves for Nottingham.

“We have to bring the intensity, it’s a state game,” Fulvio deStasio said. “We gotta bring it out.”

They did.

“This is one of our top efforts this year no doubt about it,” Braender said. “We kept together as a team, and that’s what I ask, 80 minutes of togetherness. We put the ball in the net, that’s how you win the game.”

They only put one in against Allentown in the last game, which was one the “Stars would rather forget after they began sniping at each other late in the match.

“We gotta put pressure on their back a lot harder,” deStasio said. “Our defense has to clear the ball and we have to play the feet.”

And Braender has no problem playing the revenge card.

“Revenge is always good,” he said. “It’s always tough to beat somebody twice. We know what we’re in for over there and they’re one of the toughest teams we played this year, I’m sure they will be ready to play.”

And with Mr. Money on their side, so will the Northstars.

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The win was Nottingham’s first in the states since 2009, and it was the first home state game Braender ever had. Danielle Wilson has been a Nottingham assistant for 15 years and can not recall playing home game in states.

