

Sports

The match
that never ends

Nadal started Saturday, is still playing

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Pirates' rookie gets
first win

Tuesday's MLB roundup

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No ordinary Joe: B.C. native turning heads with Laurentians

The St. Lawrence Laurentians' danger man is quickly becoming the most feared striker in the provincial Challenge Cup soccer and he's just getting warmed up.

With five goals in eight games, Joe Cecchini is in the thick of the Challenge Cup scoring race. The British Columbia native is tied for the lead with Jon Hawco of Holy Cross, a forward who runs miles, but is pretty much on his own with the Crusaders. Last year's scoring champ, Mount Pearl's Justin Pickford, has only two

goals, although that might change tonight when Mount Pearl takes on Feildians at KGV.

A Trail, B.C., native, Cecchini played college soccer in Kamloops and competed in the Vancouver Metro League with a team out of Surrey. And if he can lead the Laurentians to another provincial crown and help the team compete for a medal at the nationals, they may hold a parade for his fiancée.

Because it was love that brought Cecchini and his dangerous feet east.

Press Box
John Browne



Cecchini's girlfriend Trudy Pike, whom he met in Saskatchewan, is a St. Lawrence native and a member of the RCMP stationed in Harbour Grace. Cecchini had never been to this province before following Pike to

the promised land.

"I just wanted to play a game of soccer and St. Lawrence gave me that chance," said Cecchini. "I've tried to play hard for them. I get scoring chances because of the great play they give me."

Cecchini was impressed with the calibre of play locally and the crowds.

"I'm surprised with the fan support for soccer here," he said after a standout game against Holy Cross Sunday. "We didn't have that kind of support back home."

"I didn't know anything about Newfoundland soccer before I came here. I'm very impressed with the play here."

Cecchini was all but invisible in the first 30 minutes of Sunday's match, but then, out of nowhere, he made his presence felt.

To start with, he was robbed of a what looked to be a sure tally on a sensational goal-mouth save by Crusaders' goalkeeper Tyler Putt.

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Old-school striker...Continued from page C1

Cecchini booted what proved to be the winning goal at the end of the first half and helped set up the second goal of the game in the final minute of the contest.

Cecchini is an old-school striker. He doesn't flinch in traffic. He runs at defenders head on and he doesn't

back down.

He keeps his concentration in sticky situations. More workmanlike than fancy, he seems to thrive in a crowd and, at six feet, 190 pounds, he is difficult to mark. He times his runs appropriately and positions himself well off the ball. He has the ability to

set up goals as well as score them.

"I'm an aggressive player," Cecchini admits, but he credits his teammates in making him an effective one.

"My teammates make it look a lot easier for me because they play the ball well to me," he said. "They've adjusted to my runs phenomenally

fast. We're a very strong team. We have a lot of depth."

He doesn't mind admitting he's aiming for a provincial championship and a shot at the nationals. Though it's early in the season, the high-scoring Laurentians are off to an 8-0 start and are leaving the pretenders in the

dust.

Cecchini couldn't get the ball past the Crusader keeper on a clear break-away late in the second half of last Sunday's match, so he isn't perfect.

But he's perfect for St. Lawrence.

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