

Nov. 4 CJ IV Boys Soccer: Steinert continues to amaze



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*Zach Gates, part of an ever-improving defensive unit, dribbles ahead of a South Brunswick player during today's CJ IV tournament game (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing [jbsportsphoto@aol.com](mailto:jbsportsphoto@aol.com)).*

## Stunning Steinert reaches semifinals and gets home game in the process

By Rich Fisher  
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**Nov. 4:** The way Derek Shearer looks at it, Steinert's boys' soccer team is doing exactly what it planned on this season.

It's just happening a little later than expected.

But it's happening at the right time, as 14<sup>th</sup>-seeded Steinert continued to make a shambles of the Central Jersey Group IV bracket by defeating third-seeded South Brunswick, 2-0, in Monmouth Junction today. That comes on the heels of beating third-seeded Monroe in the opener after the Spartans (7-8-2) won just five games in the regular season.

As an added bonus, the Spartans get a home game in Tuesday's semifinals as 15<sup>th</sup>-seeded Rancocas Valley beat Freehold Township on penalty kicks.

"We thought we were gonna be dominant the whole season," said Shearer, the senior leader of an outstanding defensive unit. "But, things happen. We just all clicked at the right time and are starting to really understand how everyone plays and we're molding into a great team."

"Our team is starting to finally gel at the right time," added midfielder Connor Moffat, who gave Steinert a 1-0 lead just 13 seconds into the match. "The coaches have us making better connections and we're just getting after it more."

Moffat said the Spartans were riding a positive vibe after upsetting Monroe on Tuesday. That confidence grew even stronger when Steinert struck so quickly against the Vikings (11-8-2).

Mike Fornaro gained immediate possession and took the ball down the left side.

"He served a great ball over, it got headed to the top of the 18 and I one-timed it," Moffat said. "For the most part of the game, we were in possession of the ball and I think the key to this victory was the first goal that happened so early."



*Joe Paragone (3) goes airborne to celebrate his goal at the end of the first half in today's CJ IV upset win for the Spartans (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing [jbsportsphoto@aol.com](mailto:jbsportsphoto@aol.com)).*

Steinert continued to attack and got what coach Todd Jacobs called "the all important second goal" with a minute remaining in the half. Steven Kerns sent a cross into the box that headed on goal. Keeper Jimmy Quilter got a hand on it, only to have Joe Paragone convert on the rebound to make it 2-0.

Steinert then put it in the hands of their defenders and goalie Devon Downs, who was impressive again with 12 saves. He got help from the usual suspects, such as Shearer, Zach Gates, CJ Harvell, Ryan Lamarca, Xavier Ceballos, Pat Remboski, John Powers and Zach Castaldo.

"They all played with tremendous confidence and intensity," Jacobs said. "This team is believing in one another, and coming together at a great time of year. Derek Shearer and Zach Gates have been working well together. They controlled a lot of the game. They never gave up on any ball."

"Our defense might not be the biggest, but we have the most heart and determination to win every ball we can," Shearer said. "With that we can become unstoppable and that's what has been happening lately."



*Connor Moffat, who had Steinert's first goal and assisted on the second, gets ahead of a South Brunswick defender during today's CJ IV game (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing [jbsportphoto@aol.com](mailto:jbsportphoto@aol.com)).*

And as it happens, the momentum continues to grow as Steinert is feeling it more each game.

"We are believing in each other now," Moffat said, echoing his coach. "We believe we belong. Our confidence is really high right now coming off these two state wins. With our next game at home, I imagine the confidence will just get greater."

Shearer is in agreement, although Rancocas Valley (5-13-3) probably feels just as confident after beating second-seeded Colts Neck and seventh-seeded Freehold Township.

"I know they won some tough games like us but I have no doubt in my mind we'll come out victorious," Shearer said. "It's very wild to have a home game. I'm sure we're gonna get a lot of fans, which is great for the support and we have the advantage because it's our home field."

"This team is fighting for each other," Jacobs said. "And they are being rewarded for it."

The Spartans run is conjuring images of past glory days, which Jacobs knows all about, as does Moffat's dad, Tom. Both played on Spartan state championship teams and Jacobs was on the school's last state champ in 1988.

"The coaches are always telling us how much it means to have one of the banners hanging in the gym," Moffat said. "My dad coaches at Princeton University but he has yet to miss one of my

games and is a huge help in my success.”

Success that Shearer feels is going to continue.

“This is our year,” he said. “We’re going to have another banner put up in our gym after the season is over.”

Whether they do or not remains to be seen.

But up to this point, they sure have taken us on one heck of a ride.