

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

With cold winds gusting throughout the game, only penalty kicks could separate Flowing Wells and Phoenix Mountain Pointe in Wednesday's second round of the state Class 4A girls playoffs.

After finishing regulation knotted at 1-1, Mountain Pointe defeated Flowing Wells 4-1 in a penalty shootout to eliminate the Southern Region's top seed from the postseason.

"It just kills me to lose like that," Flowing Wells coach Terri Swaney said.

"As hard as we worked and the talent we had, we really felt we could win state this year. We accomplished four of our five team goals this season, but it shows we needed to stick those balls away tonight."

Flowing Wells (18-5) did a better job at managing the conditions and not letting them disrupt their play, but had nothing to show for it at halftime.

The Caballeros kept the Pride on their heels in the first half as Mountain Pointe had major difficulties going into the wind, but were unable to capitalize. With Mountain Pointe forced to clear many balls out of bounds, Flowing Wells was unable to capitalize on midfielder Lexi Vallery's dangerous long throw-ins into the box.

"Those were just gut-wrenching for me," Mountain Pointe head coach Mitch Helfrich said. "They did a better job at playing with the wind, but it definitely played a big role for both teams."



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In the second half, Flowing Wells showed little sign of having the same problems Mountain Pointe had in the first half, but the Pride were able to force most of the action and kept possession in the Caballeros' half of the field for large chunks at a time. Their patience was rewarded in the 56th minute, when Mountain Pointe midfielder Alexandra Elston curled a left-footed shot from outside the penalty box past Flowing Wells goalkeeper Katie Schlink.

Flowing Wells equalized in the 65th minute, when midfielder Tara Erdmann latched onto a cross from the left flank and scored into an open net.

With the game heading for overtime, Schlink made a point-blank save on Mountain Pointe's Chris Hughes with just 10 seconds left on the game clock.

Schlink would be forced to make a similar save in the same situation in the dying seconds of the first overtime, this time on Elston's shot.

In the penalty shootout, Erica Long, Elston, Hughes and Allie Perez converted for the Pride, with Schlink getting a hand on Long and Hughes' shots. Alex Davis converted the first kick of the shootout for Flowing Wells, but Erdmann had her shot saved by Lynlea Marino and Aleigha Delaney missed wide, giving Mountain Pointe the victory.

● **Mesa Dobson 5, Sahuaro 1:** At Dobson, Sahuaro arrived late and fell behind early, ending its run at a 5A state title.

The Southern Region's No. 2 seed arrived at Dobson's field 20 minutes before the game was supposed to start, and promptly gave up two early goals.

"We had a bus fiasco," Sahuaro coach Dave Kruszewski said. "We were given time to warm up but still started cold and flat."

After Kelcee Newell cut the lead to 2-1, the Mustangs responded again and held a 4-1 lead at halftime. Sahuaro (17-8-1) kept the contest much closer in the second half.

● **Rincon/University 1, Flagstaff Coconino 0:** At Coconino, the Rangers played a day late, but it was worth it.

A day after bus problems postponed the team's first round matchup against Coconino, Rincon scored in the first half and held on for a thrilling first-round win in the 4A state playoffs. Rincon's lone goal came when Heather Burke snuck a ball past Coconino's keeper in the 21st minute.

Rincon (11-9) will travel to Cave Creek Cactus Shadows tonight for a 6 p.m. game.

"They're excited," coach Bridget Betterton said. "We're ready to do it again tomorrow."