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Article published Oct 17, 2015

## **Durango boys soccer slips past Montrose 1-0 in overtime on Fenton goal**

Fenton's goal breaks deadlock; keeps league title hopes alive

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Photo by: Steve Lewis/Durango Herald  
Durango sophomore Elijah Fenton was defended tightly all day. Here, he is sent to the ground by Montrose's Liam Singh.

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**By Joe Fries**  
**Herald Sports Writer**

The Demons needed a win Saturday morning. They couldn't lose. They couldn't settle for a draw. They had to win to keep league title hopes alive.

The Durango and Montrose boys soccer teams are no strangers, and the rivalry hit a fevered pitch Saturday with Class 4A/5A Southwestern League supremacy on the line. The Indians needed a tie or a win to likely lock up the title. The Demons (10-3-1, 5-1-1 SWL) needed to repay Montrose for the 3-0 loss the Indians dealt them earlier this year.

After 80 minutes of scoreless, evenly-matched action, and through 16 minutes of overtime, the ball was lost in a mad scramble in front of the Montrose goalkeeper. Durango sophomore Elijah Fenton waited by the pile, hoping for the ball to squirt free in his direction.

It did.

A quick, left-footed strike into the top-left corner sent Durango to a 1-0 overtime win and the homecoming crowd into a frenzy. The players piled onto each other at midfield, as the Demons fastened their seatbelts in the league driver's seat with one match left to clinch the league championship.

"There were a lot of people battling for that ball, just battling for the win," said Fenton, son of Mike and Wendy Fenton. "I was just trying to get a little bit of space and hopefully end up wherever the ball popped out. Eventually it did and I got a shot on frame, and it was a good one. This feels amazing."

Shots were hard to come by on both sides. In the 96 minutes played, the teams combined for only 22 shots, and the further the game went on the more comfortable the Indians (9-4, 5-2 SWL) were with the idea of a draw.

After ending regulation time scoreless, Indians' head coach Jim Pavlich stressed to his team that they were in full control and were just fine settling for a draw.

"This is how you want these games to go, and this one was the one to decide the league title," Pavlich said. "It was a nailbiter, and I was pleased with our defensive effort. We wanted it to be a win, but in the back of our minds we knew whatever happened couldn't be a loss."

It was clear the Indians were playing not to lose. They tried to stall here and there and did a fantastic job of limiting Durango's chances throughout the game.

Other than Fenton's golden goal, Durango didn't have more than two or three decent chances to score. On the other side, Durango goalkeeper Trey Furnas was rarely challenged. It was exactly the type of game the Indians wanted, with very few quality chances on either side and a lot of midfield traffic.

A crucial moment of the match came in extra time when Montrose's Angel Perez was issued a red card for giving the rowdy Durango homecoming crowd an obscene gesture. The linesman spotted the gesture, and Perez was sent off for good. If that wouldn't have happened, the Indians might have had another body around the melee that produced the game-winner.

"I told my assistant that I really wouldn't be surprised if they came in here and sat back looking for a tie and just took their chances with Grand Junction," Durango head coach Dalon Parker said. "That's what they did, and they did a good job of it until they ended up a man down. That was huge. We've had that happen to us this year, and the kids just have to maintain their discipline. One man's mistake is another man's glory."

And the glory was Fenton's. The star sophomore had two or three guys on him every time he had the ball in space. There were moments when he looked frustrated but kept working and ended up in the right place at the right time.

"I'm so proud of the boys because they just kept fighting and fighting," Parker said. "They

didn't panic, they continued to play our style and it paid off, just like the coaches told them it would."

Durango's final test is a match with Fruita Monument at 4 p.m. Friday at Riverview Park. Fruita beat Montrose earlier this year and will be a formidable foe. A win for Demons would produce back-to-back league championships for Durango.

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Photo by: Steve Lewis/Durango Herald

Demons senior defender Vance Bulen clears the ball out and away from Montrose's Fernando Torrero. Durango's defense didn't allow a goal in Saturday's win.