

2023 OAC Men's Soccer Tournament Final – Game Notes

(1) Otterbein vs. (2) Ohio Northern

QUICK SETUP:

- The winner of this six-team bracket earns an automatic bid to compete in the upcoming NCAA Championships. The runner-up will hope for an at-large bid to the national event, with entire field announced Monday at 2 p.m.
- John Carroll was the 5x defending tournament champ, so the OAC will soon crown a new winner today for the first time since Otterbein won back in 2017.

HOW THEY GOT HERE:

- Both teams received a bye through the quarterfinals.
- Ohio Northern (#2 seed) tied Mount Union 0-0 and then won 4-3 on penalty kicks. William Shaffer, Alex Shaffer, Ryan Parker and Brenden Gervers all buried their attempts in the shootout.
- Otterbein (#1 seed) tied John Carroll 0-0 and then also won 4-3 on PK's, thanks to a huge late save from Casey Thompson. (Will Isaac, Mark Wischmeyer, Dominic Antronica and Coby Stover all made their PK's).

OTTERBEIN PROFILE:

- The Cardinals won the OAC regular-season title with an 8-0-1 record, their first outright title since 2017. (Otterbein also shared the 2021 regular-season crown with John Carroll)
- Otterbein is on a 12-match unbeaten streak, having not lost since mid-September at Ohio Wesleyan.
- Otterbein is also on a lengthy streak of 583 consecutive scoreless minutes, not allowing a goal since midway through the second half (October 11) against Wilmington.

- **Will Isaac** – 2021 All-American and 2022 OAC Forward of the Year. He ranks second in the OAC this fall in scoring at 27 points, and has 111 for his career.
- **Casey Thompson** – 2x repeat OAC Defensive Player of the Week to end the regular season... He has 538 consecutive minutes without a goal allowed, leads the OAC in save % and has made 26 stops over the last five matches.
- **Head Coach Jason Griffiths** – 7th year with Otterbein, holding overall record of 82-30-12 and 43-13-7 within the OAC.

OHIO NORTHERN PROFILE:

- 11-5-3 overall record this year, including 7-1-1 against the OAC ... They finished tied with Mount Union for second place but locked the No. 2 seed via head-to-head tiebreaker.
- The Polar Bears have lost just once since the beginning of October, that being a 2-1 setback against John Carroll. Since then, they have outscored opponents 20-3.
- **Ryan Sommerfield** leads the OAC with 11 goals on the year, and is the team's leading scorer at 26 points overall. Will Shaffer is second with 21 points to his credit.
- Junior **Lucas Hickey** has played all but 42 minutes in goal for ONU this year. He made five critical saves in Thursday's OAC Semifinal against Mount Union.
- **Head Coach Chris Matejka** ... A former Ohio Northern player, he is the reigning OAC Coach of the Year (2022) and in his FIFTH season at the helm. He is 54-26-15 overall.

SERIES HISTORY:

- Both sides fought to a 1-1 draw earlier this year (Oct 4) up in Ada... The Polar Bears scored early in second half, but Otterbein answered 12 minutes later on a goal by freshman Andrew Rudesill. ONU held a 15-6 shot margin in that game.
- 3-3-3 over the last nine meetings against one another, including ties in three of last four.
- Most recent contest in Westerville came last fall. ONU led very late but (then) senior Gabe Sharrock scored an equalizing goal with under 90 seconds remaining to salvage a notable deadlock.