

With overcast skies and threatening rain, New Canaan Girls U-10 were ready for Darien. The game began with a group scream of "1-2-3 NC Pride!" Play was aggressive from the start. The offense took control early and kept the Darien goalie sharp. **Ava Pertusiello, Tema Wagner, Chloe Oyekanmi,** and **Nikki Ferraro** were fast and fierce throughout the first half. **Katie Quill** played excellent two way soccer pushing the offense and helping out on defense. **Devon Russell** passed to **Kathryn Norton**, who then made a great pass to **Grace Almeida** putting more pressure on the Darien goalie. The **Russell/Norton** defensive combination shut down the Darien offense in the first half. New Canaan was playing as a team. **Coach Luke** had prepared them well. **Fiona Mueller** remained fierce in the middle protecting the home team and pushing the ball into Darien Territory. **Chloe Oyekanmi** pass to **Katie Quill** led to a sprint down the right side and a shot but the Darien goalie saved the blistering shot. The first half was over; 0-0.

Tension was in the air as the second half started. **Fiona Muller** took the ball from center field and raced forward with three defenders on her. She fought through and kicked the ball into the top right corner. New Canaan took the lead 1-0! A New Canaan "trip in the box" set up for a showdown with **Lila Volpe**, the New Canaan goalie. All watched as Lila shut down the Darien free kick! With the sun peaking through the trees, Darien could feel the pressure to score. **Ceci Patterson** took a great shot and tested the Darien goalie again. The offense continued to buzz the defense at the Darien end of the field and **Chloe Oyekanmi** stole the goal kick from the goalie and blasted a shot past in the lower left corner of the net. 2-0 New Canaan leads.

As the game neared the end, it must be said that **Hadley Walker** led the offense with hustle. The offense did not let up and continued to put pressure on the Darien defense. With four minutes left, the Darien sideline parents started to pack up their chairs, but they continued to watch closely. Defeat was in the air. A ball off the head of a New Canaan player gave Darien a mandatory indirect penalty kick. The ball hit a wall of New Canaan players which led to a hand-ball call against New Canaan. The penalty kick resulted in a goal for Darien, 2-1 with two minutes to play. Never to be boring, Darien gave a final push with an almost breakaway chance but **Katie Quill** sprinted back and swept the ball to the corner and the threat ended. New Canaan wins 2-1!