The Titans impressive playoff run came to an end on Thursday night at Paradise Valley High School when Arcadia fell to Catalina Foothills 3-1 in a Division II state semifinal match up.

(Photo by Craig Richardson).

The Falcons, last year's 4A-I state champions, took advantage of Titan mistakes in order to jump out to a quick 3-0 first half lead.

"When you give a great team a three-goal lead, it is tough to come back," said Arcadia coach Daniel Polan.

Despite playing a strong second half, Arcadia could not muster a comeback, but not for lack of effort.

“I have to give it up for our girls, though,” said Polan. “They played all 40 minutes in the second half and did not let them play the possession game.”

In the first 10 minutes of the second half, Arcadia sent a constant barrage of shots on the goal.

With 36:40 left in the game, Missy Dominick tossed the ball in from the left sideline using an acrobatic flip. The pass landed right in front of the goal and nearly resulted in a score, but the shot sailed high.

Over the next several minutes, Arcadia continued to attack and kept the ball on the Catalina half of the field. This aggressiveness stopped Catalina from playing the possession game that allowed it to jump ahead earlier in the game.

Catalina finally responded to the barrage with just under 30:00 left on the clock when Andriana LaMantia cleared the ball out from midfield. Aleah Strength received the kick on the Arcadia half with just one defender to beat and sprinted towards the goal. Strength took a shot a few feet in front of the goal, but Titan goalkeeper Abby Schneider got her hands on the ball and pulled in the save.

Catalina had another breakaway a few minutes later, but Titan midfielder Tess Dewulf broke up the play with a slide tackle.

Arcadia then put its goal on the board with 23:31 left in the game. Forward Tianna Stewart received a pass from the left sideline right in front of the goal and tapped the ball in past the diving goalkeeper to make it a 3-1 game.

“That goal gave us life and energy,” said Polan. “It gave the girls the belief that we can play with this team.”

Catalina nearly reversed the momentum immediately, however, when Jenna Glad received a long pass downfield and sprinted past everyone. Schneider then made a nice kick save on Glad's shot attempt to keep the score at 3-1.

Arcadia could not muster any more goals in the final minutes of the game, however. The Catalina defense stifled the few shot attempts the team had from that point and kept the ball away from the Falcon goal.

Catalina Foothills took advantage of an early Arcadia error that led to a penalty shot right in front of the goal. Falcon Mandy Horrigan put the shot in the net to give her team a 1-0 lead with

36:00 left in the first half.

Stewart nearly tied the game a few minutes later when she took a high looping pass close to the goal and attempted to head it in. Her shot flew just wide right.

Catalina then moved the ball around and did not let Arcadia push the ball deep into Falcon territory. With 25:23 left in the half, Falcon Savanna Schmidt took a pass at midfield and worked her way past three Titan defenders before putting her team up 2-0. After moving the ball close to the goal, Schmidt shot across her body and put the ball in the right corner.

About five minutes later, Schmidt made a heads up play to score her second goal of the game. After receiving a pass just past midfield on the left side, Schmidt noticed the Titan goalie out of position because of an earlier clear-out kick and powered in a goal from about 40 yards out to give the Falcons a 3-0 lead.

With 17:20 left, Stewart and Sofie Dewulf worked together to move the ball past Falcon defenders on the right side of the field. After taking a pass from Stewart, Dewulf took the ball to the corner and made a pass across the middle, but a swarm of Falcon defenders interrupted the play.

A minute later, Titan Annie Sherman stepped in front of a Falcon pass and headed it to Dewulf, who took a shot from 25 yards out that sailed wide right.

Arcadia sent a few more long kicks near the Catalina goal prior to the end of the half, but could not gain control of the ball near the goal before defenders pounced.

The loss marks the end a season in which Arcadia entered the playoffs as a 10-seed and made it into a semifinal match.

“From the beginning of the season to the end, our team grew closer and closer,” said Polan.

“They went from being a bunch of individuals to being a team.”