

Nazareth Academy, Mercy battle for respect on soccer field

Hendrick hopes players' maturity has Nazareth sectional-bound

By Richard A. Kiley

The Nazareth Academy girls' soccer team finally has come of age under third-year coach Dick Hendrick. The crop of freshman and sophomores Hendrick coached in his inaugural season at the all girls' school on Lake Avenue are now juniors and seniors, and the coach hopes their maturity and familiarity with his coaching philosophy will pay off this season.

"I'm hoping they'll come into their own this year," Hendrick said. His cautious optimism may not just be wishful thinking either. Seventeen of the 20 players gunning for starting positions on this year's varsity are upperclassmen, and that means one thing — experience.

Leading the abundance of juniors is netminder Lesley Sallidin, a starter for Hendrick since her freshman year.

Sallidin has come so far, Hendrick said that he wonders if there is any room for improvement.

"She (Sallidin) has improved every year," said Hendrick, a graduate of Spencerport High School and Geneseo College. "It's difficult for me to take her (goalie) skills any higher. She's just working on fine points now. She's very quick, understands how to cover her angles, and her punting skills have really improved."

Also returning from last year's 7-6 team is Margaret Sewkyo, a junior midfielder who recently had a bone implanted in her hand after a freak injury during a Nazareth basketball game last year.

"We just got approval for her (Sewkyo) to play," Hendrick said. "She has the best all-around skills on the team."

Christmas came in late August for Hendrick when he discovered a talented exchange student from Spain was looking to play varsity for him this year. Adding to his pleasant surprise was the fact that Perez played for a boys' club team in Spain.

"She (Perez) is really developing and gaining confidence as she plays more and more," said Hendrick, who is also a physics and biology teacher at Nazareth. "They don't have school teams over there, just club teams, so she's used to playing with people with different nationalities."

According to Hendrick, Perez has recently completed the "feeling out" process toward her new teammates, and she is now "involving her self more and more into the game."

"She's trying people out, learning who they are and seeing how they handle the ball."

In order for Nazareth to win this year, center-forward Samantha Schramm needs to score consistently, Hendrick said. "She needs to have a big year; she's been developing steadily." He added that Schramm's participation in soccer camp this past summer at Monroe Community College will only help her this fall.

For the first time in his coaching tenure at Nazareth, Hendrick will have the luxury of a deep bench. The wealth of players will allow him to substitute whenever he wishes to, eliminating players' exhaustion late in the second half.

"Overall the team is very strong. I don't have to worry about conditioning as much as in the past," said Hendrick, who did plenty of running himself for cross-country at Spencerport. "I will definitely be able to sub more this year."

Hendrick said he will continue to stress the opportunistic style of years past, with an emphasis on defense.

"We look for the (opposing) defense to make a mistake so we can create one-on-one opportunities for our front-line people," said Hendrick, who plays in an organized men's soccer league in his off hours. "We start from the defense and work up from there."

He added that he will most likely have his players take gambles on corner kicks this season, hoping to "keep the ball on their (opponent's) part of the field."

Hendrick added, however, that "because the league is so balanced, you have to be solid defensively."

"If you don't have a strong defense, there are teams capable of scoring 15 goals on you. But the games have been getting tighter and tighter."

And although he tabs Scott Morrison's Cardinal Mooney squad as the front-runner in this year's quest for the Private-Parochial title, Hendrick said nothing was definite.

"We just had a coaches meeting, and every single team in our league had a winning record outside the league (last year)," Hendrick said. "And inside the league, every team had at least one or two losses. The league is tight, so you can't make many mistakes."

Hendrick cited Mooney as the favorite because of its traditionally strong program, and that "they just have a lot of players that can do a lot of different things." Combine those factors with the Cardinals' post-season experience, and you can see why Hendrick thinks Mooney is the team to beat.

Nazareth opted to pass on last year's invitation to the sectionals, after Paula Short sustained a serious leg injury in the final league game against Aquinas.

"We satisfied all our goals last year, so we opted not to accept the bid," Hendrick said. "And we expect to get better this year. We've got a solid team this year with the capability to score a lot of goals. It'll be interesting to see how the players handle themselves. Physically we will be more mature and mentally more poised."

Nazareth kicks off its new season when it visits the Lady Monarchs of Mercy on Thursday, September 11, at 4 p.m.

Monarchs must rebound from early injuries

By Richard A. Kiley

Kathleen Boughton's first year as head coach of the varsity girls' soccer team at Our Lady of Mercy High School is barely a week old, and she is already dealing with adversity.

Monarch striker Beth Wambach and sweeper Rita LaForce are out for the season as a result of leg injuries they sustained in last week's Penfield Tournament.

One would think that Boughton might be flustered by such misfortune. But she doesn't panic easily.

Mercy fans watched the 1979 graduate of Cardinal Mooney High School keeping her cool in heated battles during last year's Section 5 AA tournament, in which the Lady Monarchs crushed Rochester-area teams in rudi- cious fashion, capturing the sectional crown.

So Boughton is saddened but not shaken by the recent double dosage of bad luck. In fact, she is somewhat matter-of-fact about the whole thing.

"I've never had so many injuries occurring so early in the season," said Boughton, who also cited numerous knee and ankle ailments. "But I just tell them (her players) not to get discouraged. It'll take us awhile, but we'll get going after the (minor) injuries come back."

Boughton has an added interest in Wambach and LaForce, who both played major roles in Mercy's accomplishments on the basketball court last season. According to Boughton, both should recover in time for this winter's hoop campaign.

"I don't think they will ever get on a soccer field again," Boughton said.

Mercy dropped two during the annual tournament, which in addition to Mercy, consists of Gates-Chili, Penfield and Greece-Olympia. Boughton said, however, that she saw marked improvement by Greece-Olympia, 4-2.

"We played much better than we did on Friday," said Boughton, referring to her squad's dismal 2-0 loss to Gates-Chili. "We came back from 0-2 and had 39 shots on goal to their 27. We also had 12 corners (corner kicks) to their three."

Boughton said she used the tournament as a learning tool for her players, so they would know where they stood at the beginning of the season.

"It was good to be in the tournament; it showed we have lots to improve," said Boughton, who graduated from Eastern Kentucky University. "I don't think we did bad at all. The better the competition we play now, the better we'll do in the sectionals."

Boughton has a fair number of players returning from last year's 8-7 squad, which bowed in the first round of the sectionals to Churchillville-Chili.

Center Laura Wambach will be depended on offensively, while Andrea Colaruotolo will tend goal.

"She (Colaruotolo) is probably one of the best goalies in the section," Boughton said. "She made 22 saves in the Chili game. She did an excellent job."

Colaruotolo started as a sophomore on the varsity last year, and also played for Boughton at the junior varsity level.

Senior Carol Boos, a stopper, has played varsity for three years, acquiring lots of game experience. Up front, Boughton said she will look for offensive production from Katie Doyle.

"She (Doyle) will probably be one of our leading scorers," Boughton said. Doyle registered one of Mercy's two goals over the weekend.

Boughton put her team through double sessions when she began holding practices August 20, and hopes the emphasis on conditioning will pay off late in the season.

"I thought some of the girls weren't really in top condition, so we went to double sessions," Boughton said. "I wanted to make a lot of changes. We worked a lot on basic skills."

Boughton hopes the back-to-basics philosophy will enable the Lady Monarchs to achieve their goals this year.

"We'll be very competitive. We're hoping for a .500 season, and we want to make it to the second round of the sectionals," Boughton said.

In order for Boughton to achieve these goals, her squad must beat such teams as Mooney, Williamson and Mendon. Not an enviable task, but history shows the Monarchs will be up for it.



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