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DIRECTORY PREVIEW



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Girls' Soccer Has High Expectations for Coming Season

Written by Ernie Quatrani, Correspondent
Wednesday, 01 September 2010 11:13



Upper Perk's Lauren Licata heads a ball during last Thursday's home scrimmage against Quakertown. The team opens the season Friday at 3 p.m. with a non-league game at Mount St. Joseph.

A new era is dawning for Upper Perkiomen girls' soccer under second-year coach Mike Freed as the Tribe prepares for its first season on a home turf field and in a new PIAA classification.

Freed welcomed 42 players to preseason camp in August, including eight returning starters from a team that went 8-6 in the PAC-10 last fall (9-9-1 overall). A big difference from last year is that the coach knows his players this season, and they know him.

"I wasn't hired until May of last year," Freed said, "so last preseason was difficult for me. This year we've done a lot of activities in the off-season, including various indoor tournaments. As a result, we hit the ground running this year."

Senior tri-captain Marissa Dardozzi also sees a difference from 2009. "When we got here the first day of preseason everyone knew each other. We knew how to play with each other already."

Becca Burkhart, another senior captain, agreed with that assessment. "I feel like we know [coach Freed] now. We can focus on being a team and not learning a new coach's style."

Burkhart also feels like she has a new lease on soccer life after off-season ankle surgery corrected a chronic problem that hampered her all of last year.

Other players expected to be in the starting lineup include keeper Liz Keegan, who played in all 19 games last season, midfielders Myrisa Kates, Gabie Lent and Jacinto Fresco, defender Julie Lavin, and forward Kaylin Umstead, who was second on the team with seven goals last year.

In addition to the graduation losses of defender Jenny Pierson and midfielder Kacie Cisarik, 16 goal scorer Deanna Mayza transferred to the Hill School.

The team hopes to compensate for the loss of Mayza's goal scoring prowess with a more balanced attack and, with the help of the new turf, speed.

Kates, the third of the senior captains, is upbeat about what she has seen so far. "We have a lot more people getting into the play. The two forwards we have starting right now (Umstead and freshman Kayla Smith) work really well together."

Dardozzi noted, "We have speed up top and in the back."

"Playing on the turf will be great for the players," said coach Freed. "Turf rewards skill and speed. Psychologically, I think it's a great advantage for the players to have such a fantastic facility."

Freed is ecstatic about the large turnout that included ten freshmen. He expects Smith to contribute right away, and the coach feels that players such as Lauren Licata (senior), Lauren Bonar (junior), Jordan Rowles (junior), and Stacey Auckland (sophomore) are valuable parts of the whole.

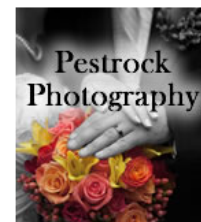
"We can go quite a few players off the bench and still maintain a strong level of play, which is a great luxury to have as you get injuries throughout the season."

The Tribe's goals include improving on last year's record, winning the Frontier Division of the PAC-10, and advancing to the championship game, at least. Freed views Phoenixville and Pottsgrove as the top competition in the Frontier.

The team also has an improved chance of reaching districts. Because

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Suburban I moved soccer to the fall, Upper Perk was one of 13 schools moved into a new AA classification in District 1. The Indians had been in the AAA bracket with much larger schools.

"The experience we gained last year will play a key role in how many of these goals we achieve," said Freed.

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