

Dallas soccer's on top again

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Writer

It was the Summer of 1988 and Ron Moran was taking a leisurely stroll through Kirby Park in Kingston. The Keystone State Games were in town and Moran had just completed coaching in a girls' soccer game.

"It's coming and it's coming soon," said Moran to the sports-writer who accompanied him on his walk through the park. "In the next two or three years, there will be a high school girls' soccer conference in the Wyoming Valley. I can't wait. It's going to be exciting, very exciting."

Ron Moran the coach, Ron Moran the father, Ron Moran the husband. And nearly six years following that prognostication, look for Ron Moran to join Dionne Warwick as co-host of the "Psychic Friends Network".

Two years after Moran uttered those words, the Wyoming Valley Girls' Soccer Conference was born. And for Moran and the Dallas High School soccer team it's been exciting, very exciting.

The Lady Mounts captured their fifth consecutive WVC Division I soccer championship last week with a 2-1 win over Crestwood. The win raised Dallas' record to 11-1-1 and they remain the only team to ever wear the WVC Division I regular season crown.

"We talked all year about the tradition of our program and that the regular season championship would be something to shoot for," said Moran, who has been ably assisted by Ron Loeffler during

the past five seasons. "The league championship is the hardest thing to get. You have to be successful and consistent over a long period of time. It gets tougher every year. The talent in the league is getting better and better and when you're winning, everyone is out to get you."

The Lady Mounts now advance to the District 2 playoffs where they will be the number one seed. But having that seed could prove to be a hindrance. The playoffs are tentatively set to begin this Saturday, but Dallas will receive a bye in the first round. If the start of the playoffs is pushed back to next week, the Lady Mounts could be idle for more than a week between games.

"We may have to wait up to 10 days before we can play," said Moran, whose team lost to Bishop Hoban by one goal in last year's inaugural district playoffs. "We'll have to work on our conditioning and maintaining our focus. It's an especially hard time for the seniors who have so much going on at this time of the year."

Offensively, the Lady Mounts have been led by senior Carrie Miller. The senior forward leads the division in scoring with 37 points, including 16 goals and five assists. Fellow senior Colby Gauntlett is tied for third in scoring with 23 points (10 goals and three assists). Melanie Love, whose third-period goal tied the contest at 1-1 in the Crestwood game, has 10 points for Dallas.

On defense, freshman Adrienne Camp has been splendid in goal



COACHING SUCCESS - Ron Moran, left, and Ron Loeffler have led the Dallas girls' soccer team to five straight league titles.

for the Lady Mounts this season. Camp took over for senior Amy Smith who suffered a shoulder injury in the pre-season, and she has been outstanding. Smith returned later in the season but is currently sidelined with a knee injury.

Before the season, Moran expected strong leadership from an experienced group of seniors. He hasn't been disappointed.

"The seniors have done everything we've asked them to do," said Moran of his seniors, including Colby and Courtney Gauntlett, Smith, Miller, Jessica Kerr, Tara Killeen, Cindy Maier, Jeanenne Fagan and Lynn Murphy. "They gave us the consistency the other teams in the past have had. They

helped the younger people and that's the role for the seniors on any successful team. They've given us 100 percent all the time and provided the leadership this team needed."

Now, Moran is hoping to parlay that leadership with a talent-laden group of underclassmen into a possible District 2 title.

"We won the league championship, that was step one," said Moran. "Our second goal was to win the district championship. We're going to have to work hard and stay focused. The talent in the league keeps getting better each year. This time of the year (playoff time) is fun. It's going to be exciting."

Didn't he say that once before?

Lady Mounts in key week on diamond

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Writer

It's the beginning of the biggest week of the season for the Dallas High School softball team, and if Jay Pope is nervous, he certainly isn't showing it.

Even though the anxiety is probably mounting with each passing hour and the butterflies in his stomach are now more like pterodactyls, the head coach remains calm and his philosophy remains simple.

"The girls know what is on the line," said Pope, less than 24 hours before his team would play the first of three crucial games this week. "If they produce, it can lead to a great season for us. If they don't we could be among the also-rans. But if the kids stay focused on what they have to do, I'm sure the kids are going to play very, very well."

The Lady Mounts vaulted into first place in their division by beating Wyoming Valley West 10-6 Monday, while former leader Tunkhannock lost 7-6 to Lehman.

With a record of 8-3, they hold just a half game lead over the Tigers (8-4) and Lehman (8-4). Dallas will play Berwick on Wednesday before hosting Tunkhannock in a key game on Friday afternoon at the W.W. Kubis Memorial Field.

Tunkhannock handed Dallas a heartbreaking 2-1 setback nearly 10 days ago, but don't think the Dallas coach will allow his players to look ahead to the next meeting.

"We just don't have to take one game at a time, we need to take one inning at a time, one out at a time and one pitch at a time," said Pope who is assisted by Yvonne Mould. "These girls know how many hours they've put into becoming successful. Now, it's time to go out there and play well. The girls have an upbeat and positive attitude, but they have to realize that if we're going to win this (championship), we're going to have to earn it."

Leading the way on the field for the Lady Mounts is arguably the best one-two combination in the Wyoming Valley Conference in Kelly Janosky and Theresa Paxton. Going into this week Paxton was leading the WVC in hitting with a .667 average along with a league-leading four triples and two home runs.

Meanwhile, Janosky is among the tops in every offensive cate-

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Jay Pope
Dallas softball coach

gory in the WVC. She's hitting .515 (4th in the conference) with three doubles (tied for 2nd), two triples (tied for 3rd) and she leads the league with three home runs. Add to those numbers her outstanding defense and her unmatched leadership and you can see why Pope can't find enough words to describe his senior captain.

"She's just the epitome of the all-around athlete," said Pope of Janosky, a three-sport all-star. "She's outstanding. Every adjective that can be used to describe the perfect athlete has been used to describe her. A player of her ability comes around only once every five or 10 years."

Pope also had flattering words for Paxton, a player coming into her own and making a name for herself.

"She's having a monumental year," said Pope of the junior. "I think she's reaching the level of play she's capable of. Therese was hitting the ball very well at the end of last season and that success has carried over into this year."

Katie Sallitt has done a yeoman's job on the mound for the Lady Mounts, establishing herself among the division's top pitchers in nearly every statistical category. She's also having a banner year at the plate, third on the team in average and among the league's top 10 hitters with a .413 average.

In fact, it's been quite a team effort for the Lady Mounts this season, with a different player stepping up and getting the job done in every game.

Pope knows that will have to continue, especially this week.

"This week is the biggest week of the season for us," Pope said. "The kids know what is at stake. We have our destiny in our own hands and we believe the road to the championship this year goes right through Dallas."

Knights' spurt has Finn wishing she could jump for joy

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Writer

At a time when her thoughts should have been filled nothing but sheer excitement, a feeling of mixed emotions entered the mind of Flossie Finn.

After all, the Lake-Lehman High School softball head coach had just witnessed her team rally to a gut-wrenching eight-inning 7-6 victory over first-place Tunkhannock in the biggest game of the season for the Lady Knights.

And when Heather Gray crossed home plate with the winning run in the bottom of the eighth inning, Finn wanted nothing more than to run on the field and celebrate with her team by jumping up and down on the field.

But Finn knows that's not possible - at least not yet.

The likeable Lehman coach, who returned to the sidelines this season following a brief absence, has been battling serious back problems for the past 18 months. So jumping up and down with an enthusiastic group of 16, 17 and 18-year olds during post-game celebrations isn't quite the physical therapy she needs on the road to recovery.

But don't think for a second she wasn't out there in spirit.

"I can't stand that, not being able to jump with joy following a win like that," said Finn, who saw her team keep their hopes alive for a third consecutive Wyoming Valley Conference Class AAA title. "I can't do that and, sometimes, it's frustrating. Sometimes I feel like a bottle just waiting for the lid to pop off with excitement. It's frustrating, but winning takes all that frustration away."

But what Flossie Finn has done for this team could never be measured in one simple show of emotion. She's done more than just teach this team the game of softball. She's taught them about overcoming adversity. She's taught them never to quit. And she's given character to a team which had very little in the beginning of the season.

And in typical Flossie Finn fashion, she quickly passes the praise on to others.

"Bob Gray has been just outstanding," said Finn, of her assistant coach, who does most of the

physical duties with the team. "And we also have an outstanding group of supportive parents. We have fathers who come and help get the field ready and carry equipment. I'm so lucky to be coaching where I am."

The win over Tunkhannock last Monday afternoon raised the Lady Knights record to 8-4. That win, coupled with a Dallas win over Valley West on the same day, left a logjam at the top of the standings. Dallas raised its record to 8-3, just one-half game ahead of Lehman and Tunkhannock, both at 8-4. But Dallas still has to play league powers Berwick and Tunkhannock (see related story) this week and powerful Crestwood next week.

Meanwhile, it would appear the Lady Knights would have an easier road with games against Coughlin, Wyoming Area, Nanticoke and Pittston Area remaining. Coughlin, which has forfeited the remainder of its contests, is already a guaranteed win for the Knights.

"We helped our neighbors a little bit," joked Finn, of the win which helped place Dallas atop the standings at least for now. "They've beaten us twice this season but if we play them again, we won't be such nice neighbors."

After a slow start this season, the Lady Knights are now playing with confidence and conviction - something they lacked earlier in the year.

"Early in the season, Bob and I characterized this team as having no guts," said Finn. "But we talked a lot with the team about confidence and having a positive attitude. After the win tonight, (against Tunkhannock) we told them they had a lot of character and a lot of guts."

Lehman can win the remainder of its games and still fail to make the playoffs if Dallas wins the rest of its games. But even though they don't control their own destiny, Finn and Gray are telling their players to relax, play hard, and have fun.

"The girls already know the pressure that's on them. They know they have to keep winning," explained Finn. "But we just keep telling them to go out and have a good time. If they do that, then whatever happens will happen."



Irem Spring Classic winners

Paul Mugford and Tom Crossin won the Irem Temple Country Club's Annual Spring Classic, edging out Carlyle and Dr. Newton Mullins. Winners are Paul Roman, Irem Golf Pro, Dr. Newton Mullins, Tom Crossin, Bob Mugford Carlyle Robinson.

Lehman spikers surprised coach

By DAVE KONOPKI
Sports Writer

Long after the final ball has been served, long after the final point has been scored and long after the season is nothing more than a distant memory to others, the 1994 Lake-Lehman High School boys' volleyball team will still have a special place in the heart of head coach John Baranowski.

Sure, the Black Knights excelled on the court, completing their 12th season in 19 years under Baranowski with an unbeaten record. But it won't be the fact that this year's team won the school's 12th Wyoming Valley Conference championship; or their 10th District 2 title; or even the fact that this year's edition of the tradition-rich Black Knight program went the entire regular season and district playoff without even losing a game that will stick out in the mind of the highly successful veteran mentor.

No, it will be the team's heart, desire and incredible work ethic which will stay forever etched in the mind of Baranowski.

"Talent-wise, this is not one of the top teams we've had here at Lehman," admitted the head coach whose teams have posted a com-

bined 209-16 record during his 19 seasons at the Back Mountain school. "We've had teams with much more talent than this one, but this is a very hard-working bunch of guys. They exceeded every expectation I had coming into the season."

The Black Knights won the District 2 title last week with a convincing win over Tunkhannock in the finals. Lehman won the best-of-five series in three matches, 15-7, 15-5 and 15-13. The Knights advanced to the finals with hard-fought 15-13 and 15-11 wins over the Pittston Area in the semi-finals.

Lehman will play in the state finals this weekend in State College, beginning on Friday at 4 p.m. against the top seed from powerful District 3. They will then play the second seed from District 10 and then the top seed from District 12.

"We're going there with the attitude that we can compete with any team in the state," said the Lehman coach. "We need to go in with a lot of confidence and a belief in ourselves. We want to make it to the quarterfinals (top eight) and then see what happens. Once you get into the quarterfinals, anything can happen."

Major League Girls' Softball

Standings	League Overall Record	Record
Red Sox	4-0	6-0
Dodgers	3-1	5-1
Phillies	3-1	4-1
Cardinals	1-2	3-2
A's	0-3	1-5
White Sox	0-4	0-6

Games played the Week of May 8:

RED SOX 20 - A'S 8

Amanda Stolarick had three hits including a Grand Slam homerun to lead the Red Sox in a victory over the A's. Sarah Stolarick and Maria Wright each had three hits and Jen Noon and Sarah Armand had two hits apiece. Karen Hann, Colleen Murphy, Annette Marino, Jillison Bryant, Janelle Opello and Erin Madigan all had hits for the A's.

DODGERS 12 - HORLACHER YANKEES 9

Kourtney Koslosky tripled and Megan Daneey and Christy Hiller each doubled to lift the Dodgers to a victory over the Yankees. Christy Hiller and Monica Latosek shared the pitching duties for the Dodgers. Denise Kovaleski tripled and L. Miller doubled for the Yankees.

PHILLIES 14 - WHITE SOX 10

Amy Bendy and Scooter Perlis each had two hits to gain the win for the Phillies over the White Sox. Jennifer Yurkon also had two hits including a triple. Top hitters for the White Sox were Lori Carter and Katie Guntli, each had two hits.

DODGERS 10 - HARVEYS LAKE 9

Jeannie Dreier, Kristen Nelson

and Kourtney Koslosky all doubled to help the Dodgers squeeze past Harveys Lake. Kourtney Koslosky was the inning pitcher for the Dodgers. Tara Birt doubled and J. Britt had two hits for Harveys Lake.

RED SOX 20 - WHITE SOX 1

Courtney Bouthot led the Red Sox with three hits in a win over the White Sox. Jennifer Noon had two hits including a triple. Maria Wright, Amanda and Sarah Stolarick each doubled. April Naugle was the winning pitcher for the Red Sox. Top hitter for the White Sox was Carrie Strasser.

CARDINALS 23 - HORLACHER A'S 22

Sarah Nichols tripled, doubled and stole home to score the winning run to lift the Cardinals to a 23-22 win over the A's. Courtney Beardsworth and Jamie Organek each had doubles and Melissa Decesaris scored four runs for the Cardinals. Megan Peeler got the win for the Cardinals.

PHILLIES 18 - A'S 9

Jennifer Yurkon's Grand Slam homerun highlighted the Phillies win over the A's. Scooter Perlis tripled and Jolen Mintzer added two hits for the Phillies. Janelle Opello, Colleen Murphy and Megan Hardeman each had two hits apiece for the A's.

CARDINALS 11 - HORLACHER WHITE SOX 7

Katie Natitus had seven strikeouts to help the Cardinals to a win over the White Sox. Michelle Pryor with a triple and Stacey Rosenbaum were the top hitters for the Cardinals. Roxanne Mahle had three hits for the White Sox.