

Sports Week

FIELD HOCKEY PLAYOFFS

Black Knights taking confidence into state playoffs

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

LEHMAN TWP. — Jean Lipski isn't worried about the effort. The Lake-Lehman field hockey head coach knows her players will play hard. They've been playing that way all season.

Lipski isn't worried about the skill. The Black Knights have been outstanding offensively and defensively this year as a member of the Wyoming Valley Conference.

In fact, the veteran coach is only asking one thing from her team as it attempts to bounce back from a tough loss against Wyoming Seminary in the District 2 Class 2A championship game.

Believe.
"The only thing I want from these girls to believe in themselves," said Lipski, whose team will play either Pen Argyl or Lehigh in the first round of the state playoffs Tuesday afternoon at a site and time to be determined. The contest will most likely be played at Emmaus High School near Allentown.

"Wyoming Seminary is a great opponent. They have great sticks skills and young players who are solid. A loss in our district championship game doesn't mean we're not a good team. We just have to regroup and correct a few things."

Despite having many years of experience in the state playoffs, Lipski won't be too familiar with her team's first-round opponent, which will be champion from District 11. Pen Argyl hasn't advanced to the state playoffs in more than a decade and it's been a few years since Lake-Lehman played against Lehigh.

Ironically, Wyoming Seminary appears to be in the tougher half of the Class 2A bracket. That half also includes Palmyra and Selinsgrove. Palmyra boasts seven starters who are expected to play on the Division I college level next season and Selinsgrove is one of the best teams in the state.

Lake-Lehman (16-3) tied Palmyra during its annual "play day" and defeated Selinsgrove, 1-0, in a game in which junior Jamie Lipski lost several teeth.

The Black Knights should be



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTOS/FRED ADAMS

Lake-Lehman's Traci Ragukas attempts to get past Crestwood defender Jordan Petchel.

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Jean Lipski
Lake-Lehman field hockey coach

"That was a terrific game," said Lipski. "Our girls went in fired up. They refused to lose. We played a beautiful game in high gear. I never thought one goal would win the game. It's a great credit to our girls."

With only four returning starters from last season and while playing in the same classification as Crestwood, Wyoming Seminary and an upstart Meyers squad, a berth in the state playoffs might not have appeared big on Lipski's radar before the season.

"I didn't know how our younger kids were going to play. You never know," said Lipski, who has led the Black Knights to state championships in the past. "But I knew our attitude would be terrific. These girls work so well together. As a coach, it's so nice to see."

playing with new confidence after defeating two-time defending state champion Crestwood, 1-0, in the semifinals. The win put Lake-Lehman in the district title game and gave it a spot in the state playoffs.



Wyoming Seminary's Aime Sgarlat is surrounded by Lake-Lehman players as she attempts to take a shot on goal.

SOCCER PLAYOFFS

Disappointing District 2 championship loss ends otherwise great year for Dallas soccer team

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

Another fantastic regular season. Another solid playoff run.

And, unfortunately for the Dallas boys soccer team, another year of falling painfully close to winning a district championship.

The Mountaineers suffered a heartbreaking 2-1 overtime loss against North Pocono in the District 2 Class 2A championship game played earlier this week at Scranton Memorial Stadium. Dallas ends the season with a 15-3-1 record under head coach Chris Scharff.

"It was a great season for us," said Scharff, whose team came within eight seconds of beating North Pocono in the championship game three years ago. The Mountaineers followed up that season with tough losses in the semifinals and quarterfinals, respectively.

"We're thrilled and would have liked to have won, but it was a good experience because our plans are to get here every single year. It's good experience for the young kids and we have a good team coming back again next year."

The Mountaineers made their playoff run without the services of standout junior Billy DeAngelo. The Olympic Development Program performer suffered a broken foot during an indoor practice in preparation of the



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTO/PETE G. WILCOX

Michael Miller (25) of Dallas tries to gain control of the ball while being pursued by Crestwood's Kevin Moulton (10) and Mountaineer teammate Ed Daris (27).

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Chris Scharff
Dallas soccer coach

playoffs.

"The way these guys picked it up without him was phenomenal," said Scharff. "He's a great player and it was a huge loss. If we had him, that doesn't mean it would have been a different score, but it might have been. He's probably the best player in the Wyoming Valley Conference.

But he has been very supportive the whole time he was hurt by showing up to games and cheering from the sidelines."

The Mountaineers got an outstanding effort from stopper Ben Thomas in their semifinal win against Crestwood. Thomas was given the task of playing defense against Crestwood's Arthur Jan-

kowski, one of the better players in the Wyoming Valley Conference.

Thomas did a tremendous job, holding Jankowski without a shot on goal until the final four minutes of the second overtime period. Dallas eventually won the game on penalty kicks.

"When we had the ball, Ben (Thomas) attacked," said Scharff. "But as soon as Crestwood got the ball, his job was to find (Jankowski). We felt coming in that if Arthur didn't score a goal or have an assist, we'd win the game. We gave the role of stopping him to Ben."

It's a role Thomas relished throughout the night.

"(Jankowski) is a great player," said the Dallas senior. "I knew it was going to be tough to stop him. But our entire defense have been playing great. I also like getting the ball and passing it to my teammates. I'll do whatever I have to do if it helps us win."

DeAngelo was the lone player from a Back Mountain high school to be a first-team selection as the WVC Soccer Coaches Association recently selected its Division I and Division II all-star teams. DeAngelo was chosen as a midfielder.

Making the second team were juniors David Luksh and Thomas, as well as the sophomore goalkeeper Peter Steve. No players from Lake-Lehman were chosen.



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTO/DON CAREY

Michael Wyberski (35) of Dallas gets ready to head the ball as North Pocono's Cody Glassman (28) defends during a district semifinal game.