

Sports Week

Success is their goal

Elite Eight leads Dallas girls soccer

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. — What will they do for an encore?

Despite having eight freshmen in the starting lineup, the Dallas girls soccer team cruised through the 2005 season, winning the Wyoming Valley Conference Division I and District 2 Class 2A championships. The Mountaineers didn't lose a game until the state quarterfinals.

This season, the Elite Eight returns to the field along with several other solid players. But head coach Chris Scharff isn't ready to have his team's name engraved on any championship trophies. At least not yet.

"This sophomore class hasn't lost a (WVC) game yet," said the sixth-year coach. "When you start eight freshmen, win a district championship and not lose until the state quarterfinals, it's a great season. But the other teams are going to come at them even harder this year. We can't overlook or underestimate anyone."

Scharff says his team's biggest opponent might be wearing a blue and white uniform.

"I think our biggest challenge is ourselves," he said. "A bad attitude or being overconfident could hurt us. I'm trying to make sure they're not too overconfident after last year's success."

The returning eight sophomores include midfielders Kiley Williams, Sammi Elston, Michelle Givens and Kelsie Givens; forward Melissa Gorski; defenders Lindsey Ellis and Alyssa Pyros; and goalkeeper Jill Spring. They will be joined in the starting lineup by senior midfielder Celia Pambianco, junior forward Megan McDonald and freshman defender Stephanie Ashley. Senior midfielder Alia Pyros also receives plenty of playing time.

Scharff says his team is very balanced.

"We're really good at everything, but at the same time we're not great or bad at anything," he said. "The girls have a combination of intelligence, skill and quickness. Even though they're young, they're smart for their age. Soccer smart. They're veterans when it comes to the amount of soccer they've played over the years. They're very excited and they really want to win."

The Mountaineers are led by Williams, who was an all-state



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTO/FRED ADAMS

Loren Roderick of Lake-Lehman is expected to provide an offensive spark to her team.

selection as a freshman. In addition to playing in high school, the daughter of Judy and the late Walt Williams is a member of the U-16 Player Development Academy of New Jersey. The team is ranked in the top 10 in the nation.

Williams, who is also a member of the Olympic Development Program, travels 2 hours, 20 minutes each way twice a week to practice with the New Jersey team.

"When you consider all of her strengths, I believe she's the best overall player in the conference," said Scharff. "She makes the players around her better. She can be a very special player before she leaves Dallas and plays in college."

Dallas has struggled a little out of the gate this season. The Mountaineers have posted close wins against Coughlin, Lake-Lehman, Crestwood and Wyoming Valley West.

"Sometimes their inexperience shows through," said Scharff. "They're under a lot more pressure this year. The expectations are much higher. Last year, they were freshmen not much expected from them. Things aren't coming as easy as they thought. If they don't play well, they could easily lose. But I think we're a very good soccer team."



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTO/DON CAREY

Dallas soccer player Kiley Williams is one of the best in the WVC.

Head coach looking for heart from Black Knights

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

LEHMAN TWP. — The little things are going to mean a lot. They always do. A good high school soccer team must be able to play defense, effectively pass the ball and put the ball in the net when a scoring opportunity presents itself.

But head coach Kelly Spencer says one thing will most likely determine whether or not the Lake-Lehman girls soccer team will be successful in the Wyoming Valley Conference:

Heart. "I honestly believe it's a matter of them playing with heart," said the first-year coach. "Right now, they're giving up too easily. They have to play the game because they want to. We're not playing with a lot of heart right now."

The Black Knights suffered four losses in their first four games of the season. They jumped out to a 2-0 lead against Crestwood before dropping a 3-2 overtime decision. They battled defending champion Dallas in a 3-1 loss before losing against Abington Heights (4-0)



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTO/FRED ADAMS

Lake-Lehman's Aime Sgarlat is an excellent defender.

and Bishop Hoban (5-1).

"We played well against Dallas, but we kind of gave up against Crestwood," said Spencer. "We need to play well for all of the game."

The Black Knights have only two seniors in forward Lauren Roderick and midfielder Brittney Hillard. The other members of the starting lineup are juniors Caroline Boris (defend-

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Dallas cross country, track standout running to Sunshine State Adams accepts offer from University of North Florida

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. — Eight months ago, Hillary Adams knew nothing about the University of North Florida. Now, she plans on it being her home for the next four years.

The Dallas High School cross country and track standout recently accepted an athletic scholarship to attend the school in Jacksonville, Fla. The daughter of Keith and Marjorie Adams of Dallas announced her decision during a ceremony earlier this week in the high school library.

Last fall, Adams visited the Web sites of several Division I and Division II colleges and filled

out the athletic questionnaires. A few weeks later, 16-year North Florida head coach Mark VanAlstyne responded with a phone call. Adams visited the campus in February and was offered the scholarship a week later.

Although it wasn't a full ride, the 18-year-old said the school offered a "very good" financial aid package.

"To be honest, I never heard of the University of North Florida until my mom pointed it out to me," said Adams, who has earned three varsity letters in cross country and two in track and field going into her senior track season. "I was really happy. That's where I wanted to go. I told myself that if the (financial package) was good, I'd go there. My mom want-

ed me to wait a little bit, but I called back a couple of days later and took the offer."

The Ospreys compete in the Atlantic Sun Conference. Of the 24 women and 17 men on the cross country and track rosters, only one — a freshman from Serbia — is not a product of a Florida high school. Adams, who plans to major in elementary education, says the climate played a big role in making her college decision.

"I like the warm weather. I've always been attracted to the south and I looked for schools in that area," she said. "I think the warmer weather might help me be a better runner. I've always done better when it's warm. I don't run as fast in the cold."

For the past three years,

Adams has been a standout performer in cross country and track for head coach Matt Samuel. She finished in the top 15 all three years at the District 2 Class 2A cross country championships, including a personal-best fourth-place finish as a junior. As a senior, Adams placed sixth in helping to lead the Mountaineers to their third consecutive team championship.

In track and field, she won gold and silver medals at the District 2 Class 2A championships as a member of the 4x800 and 4x400 relay teams, respectively. Adams also won a silver medal as a sophomore in the 800-meter run.

Not too bad for someone who didn't run competitively until the 10th grade.



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

From left, first row are Marjorie Adams, Hillary Adams and Keith Adams. Second row: coach Matt Samuel and Jack Wolensky, AD.

"I was a field hockey and soccer player," she said. "My sister (former Dallas standout Whitney) wanted me to run as freshman, but I didn't. When I was a sophomore, I decided to give it a shot."

"I think I'm better in the relays. I like them better. Track is a team sport, especially the relays. You get a chance to make up time or get out to a big lead. It's a lot of fun."