

## FIELD HOCKEY



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTO/FRED ADAMS

Lake-Lehman's Vera Garreity moves the ball down the field during a scrimmage against Honesdale.

## Special seniors lead Lake-Lehman

By DAVE KONOPKI  
Post Editor

LEHMAN TWP. — Jean Lipski has nearly seen it all during her two decades on the sidelines at Lake-Lehman, coaching a pair of state champions and some of the best teams in the tradition-rich Wyoming Valley Conference.

So when the Black Knight field hockey coach says this year's squad possesses some intangibles she's never seen, before, it might be wise to pay attention.

Lipski begins her 23rd year at Lake-Lehman, fielding a team with nine seniors in the starting lineup and 17 returning players from last year's team that advanced to the state quarterfinals.

"These seniors are the best role models I've ever seen," said Lipski, whose team finished with a 19-4 record a year ago. "They're terrific. You constantly hear the seniors saying encouraging things to the underclassmen. They're exceedingly positive. They don't miss practices and they play through pain. You couldn't ask for anything more. It's just what you want from your seniors.

"A lot of things have to fall into place for things to work out like you hope, but this group has all of the right tools to have a special season."

Seniors Aime Sgarlat (forward), Joscelyn Mahon (midfield), Alyson Paulauskas (forward), Jamie Lipski, Tina Watkins (midfield) and Caroline Boris (goalkeeper) return from last year's starting lineup, along with sophomore forward Kelsey Amy. The Black Knights suffered a 2-1 overtime

loss against District 1 champion Villa Maria Academy in last year's state playoffs.

Seniors Erin Sutliff (midfield), Emily Deubler (halfback) and Elyse Apaliski (halfback) will join junior forward Sammy Swingle in the starting lineup. Sutliff and Swingle both saw significant playing time last season.

"Our speed is one of our strengths. We're quick," Lipski said. "The players also trust each other, so they'll take chances. They'll go after a ball when someone else might not. When you have a team that will take those kinds of risks, I believe you can have better outcomes."

But — like all good coaches — Lipski says there's room for improvement.

"Our passing is good, but it can get better," she said. "Everything can get sharper, faster, and one step better. With the work ethic and desire of these girls, I think we'll continue to get better. They know there's work to be done."

Lipski doesn't want to start thinking about the state playoffs so early in the season, but she says this year's squad reminds her of a previous team.

"There are a lot of similarities to the 1996 team," said the coach, referring her first state championship team. The Black Knights also won a PIAA

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# Dallas wants return to glory

By DAVE KONOPKI  
Post Editor

The first season was a period of adjustment. The second was marked by great strides. And now in head coach Mary Kate Stauffer's third season, the Dallas field hockey team is ready to return to its place as one of the premier programs in the Wyoming Valley Conference.

The Mountaineers return 10 of 11 starters from last year's team, which finished with an 11-6 record. Dallas lost in the second round of the District 2 Class 2A playoffs to eventual state quarterfinalist Lake-Lehman.

"We finally have some experience," said Stauffer, a New Jersey native who teaches at the Dallas Middle School.

"We've been young the last two years. Our junior class is the backbone of our team and they have been since they've been freshmen. The girls are finally coming into their own."

Under former coaches Robyn Jones and Ron Moran, the Mountaineers were among the elite in the WVC in the 1980s and 90s. At one point, the program won five consecutive District 2 championships and went more than a dozen years without missing the playoffs.

But after having only two coaches for 20 seasons — Jones and Moran combined to coach the team from 1980 through 1999 — Stauffer became program's third head coach in four years when she took over in 2004.

"In the first year, we were all getting used to each other. Everything was new. Last year, the girls started to come around and believe in themselves. This year, I very rarely have to repeat myself. I think there's an overall maturity in the program.

"I think our program gone through a lot of changes. And I mean that in a positive way. We've been on a positive swing forward. The Dallas field hockey program has had a lot of success. We definitely want to get it back to that level."

The Mountaineers will field a starting lineup consisting of all seniors and juniors, said Stauffer. Some of the players to watch are seniors Julianne Pettit (defender), Stephanie Pace (forward) and Amanda Musto (goalkeeper); juniors Paige Selenski (forward), Alyssa Pyros (midfield), Lauren Zimmiski (midfield), Bailey Van Jura (midfield) and Lindsey Davenport (goalkeeper); and sophomore forwards Katie Confer and Nicole Clemson. Sophomore Tara Puffenberger, a transfer from Wyoming Seminary, is also expected to play a big role for the Mountaineers when she

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Alyssa Pyros is one of the leaders at Dallas.