

Girls Soccer

East fields trio of sisters, five sets in program

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Williamsville East's varsity girls soccer team has another unique distinction besides its No. 1 Western New York ranking.

They are the only varsity girls soccer squad in the Town of Amherst to currently field three sets of sisters — Jessica and Jordan Kowalski, Pooja and Neha Bakhai and Jessica and Jordan Kowalski. Jessica Kowalski (forward) and Jenny Griffin (midfield) are juniors, Jordan Kowalski (defense) and Katie Griffin (midfield) are freshmen. Pooja Bakhai (midfield) is a senior; Neha (defense) is a sophomore.

In addition, senior Aleks Quenneville and sophomore Kendra Durden have younger siblings, Olivia Quenneville, and Shayla and Rayna Durden, respectively, on JV. The Durdens have a brother, Rashawn, who plays for the East varsity boys soccer team.

Having sets of sisters in the program has only helped the success of East girls soccer. Jessica Kowalski and Jenny Griffin have played since seventh grade; Pooja Bakhai since eighth grade. Neha Bakhai, Jordan Kowalski and Katie Griffin have played since seventh grade.

"You never know if they would have started that early had their older sister not been in the pro-



Jordan Kowalski, far left, Jessica Kowalski, Jenny Griffin, Katie Griffin, Neha Bakhai, and Pooja Bakhai comprise three sets of sisters on the Williamsville East varsity girls soccer team. Photo by Joe Eberle

gram," said East coach Chris Durr of Neha Bakhai, Jordan Kowalski and Katie Griffin.

"I think it helps because all of the older kids played when they were younger and they can import that experience on their younger sisters," he added. "I think it helps the younger sisters because they know they have someone there (they can) look up to and talk to."

The younger siblings agree, say-

ing their older sisters help them get over added pressure from playing on varsity.

"Sometimes it's hard for me so she does the best she can to give me advice," said Jordan Kowalski of older sister Jessica.

"There's (pressure) kind of," added Katie Griffin. "Everyone knows who she is and they just know me as 'little Griffin'."

The older siblings do their best to aid their younger sisters.

"You always try to help your teammates but especially your sister," said Jessica Kowalski. "I played when I was a freshman too so I kind of know what it's like."

"I tell her (Neha) not to be scared," said Pooja Bakhai, who played JV with Neha when she was a sophomore and Neha was in eighth grade. "We've all been in that position once. Everyone has that first year."

"I say the same things I tell everyone else," added Jenny Griffin. "I basically treat her the same."

Because each sister plays a different position from one another, there's no natural rivalry on the field but Jessica Kowalski still finds a way.

"We get along pretty well but there's always some rivalries," she said. "She (Jordan) can never beat me. I just won't let it happen."

Pooja Bakhai is more humble of her sister.

"She's better than me (when I was a sophomore)," she said. "When I was that age, I certainly wasn't that good."

Sometimes having an older sister on the team can create problems for Durr when yelling their names on the sidelines during practice or in a game.

"We've always called Jenny Griffin, 'Griff', and so I get in the habit of calling her younger sister, 'Griff' and the kids started calling her 'little Griff'," said Durr. "Jenny's actually mad that I call her 'Griff' because they don't know who I'm talking to on the field. I'm trying to call her Katie so I don't get confused when both are on the field... Some of them call Jordan little Kowalski but Jordan's bigger."

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East wins league games, remain unbeaten

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Williamsville East's varsity girls soccer team improved to 6-0 in ECIC Division II and 10-0 overall with shutout wins last week over Hamburg, 3-0, and Sweet Home, 5-0, last Wednesday and Friday, respectively.

Jenny Griffin scored two goals against Hamburg and another two versus Sweet Home to give her seven for the season.

Her first goal against Hamburg came at the 18-minute mark of the first half from Kendra Durden. Her second goal was at the 21-minute mark of the second half from Tara Kiernan. Sand-

wiched in between was a tally from Jessica Kowalski at the 30-minute mark from Christa Morgante and Aleks Quenneville.

Goalie Molly Bojanek only had to make four saves.

"I thought we played a pretty good game," said East coach Chris Durr.

"Defensively, we really didn't let Hamburg get anywhere close to the goal with Molly only having four saves. It was a good opportunity to get back in the league schedule and score three really nice goals."

Griffin opened the Lady Flames' scoring against Sweet Home 14 minutes in from Pooja

Bakhai and Kowalski in the upper corner of the net.

East would score three goals in the last 10 minutes of the first half, the third coming from Jenny Griffin (Morgante, Katie Griffin) to take a commanding 4-0 lead.

Rachel Piemonte had the prior two goals, the first coming on a free kick 30 yards out from Morgante, the second on a through-ball from Jenny Griffin and Jordan Kowalski.

Quenneville made it 5-0 in the second half from Jessica Kowalski and Katie Griffin.

"It was the best goal of her career," said Durr. "She was playing central midfield, got 25-27 yards out and just rocketed a shot into the upper part of the net under the crossbar."

Overall, Durr said his team's goals against Sweet Home were five of the nicest scores all year.

"All five goals were just great goals," said Durr. "No cheap ones. It was our most complete game of the year."

Durr gave credit to Sweet Home goalie Angela Williamson for making some key first half saves.

Bojanek only had to make three saves for her sixth shutout of the year.

"We were pretty overmatched," added Sweet Home coach Scott Martin. "East has some very skilled players with a lot of experience and it showed. We were not able to generate any offense at all. The good news is we are improving each and everyday and I am very hopeful that come sectionals we will be competitive."

Through the Sweet Home game, Piemonte leads East with 15 goals and five assists. Jessica Kowalski (8 goals, 5 assists), Jenny Griffin (7 goals, 12 assists), Quenneville (3 goals, 10 assists) follow.

Bojanek has only allowed four goals through 10 games. She holds the record of 9 in 2004.

East, No. 1 in Western New York and fourth in New York State Class A, played at Iroquois Tuesday but results were unavailable before The Bee went to press. Iroquois' only league loss came to East on Sept. 7. The Lady Flames host West Seneca East at 5 p.m. Thursday and travel to Lake Shore at 4:45 p.m. Friday.

Sweet Home

Sweet Home's other games last

week was a 2-1 league win over West Seneca East on Wednesday, Sept. 27 and a 0-0 tie with rival Amherst on Sept. 25 under the lights on the Lady Tigers' new stadium turf field.

The West Seneca East game was scoreless at halftime but Sarah Williams scored 22 seconds in the second half on a great pass from Laura Nerber. Minutes later, Mariah Mergler scored with the assist going to Rebecca Schnirel.

"We played a much better second half," said Martin. "We had trouble adjusting to the short field for the first 40 minutes. Once we settled down and kept the ball on the ground, we looked much better."

Williamson recorded the shutout against Amherst.

"I felt that we had a few pretty good chances, but Amherst's goalkeeper made some big saves down the stretch," said Sweet Home coach Scott Martin.

Sweet Home hosted Hamburg Tuesday but results were unavailable before The Bee went to press. They play at 4:30 p.m. Thursday at Lake Shore.

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North football

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and couldn't do it," he said.

"We traded field positions a lot," he continued. "We moved the ball pretty well. We could just not punch it in. That's been the story all year."

McDuffie finished with 20 carries for 106 yards. Mammoliti lauded the play of the North offensive line of Max Zimmerman, Jerome Fields, Pat Stasio, Andy Steinhaus and Ben DeSoye.

He also liked the defensive work from Michael Moore, Rob Wilcox and Brad Adkins.

In addition, Mammoliti couldn't say enough of his team's effort.

"I thought they played with enthusiasm right down to the end," said Mammoliti. "(After they scored), most teams after would have thought that was pretty much it. We work two-minute (offense) a lot and Hail Mary for that kind of situation. We fought right to the end."

North (2-3, 1-2) hosts North Tonawanda at 2 p.m. Saturday in the Spartans' homecoming game.

"No. 1 we have to contain (NT quarterback) Scott Gregson," said Mammoliti. "No. 2, we have to control the ball on offense and score points."

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Christian Central Academy Girls soccer plays three solid games

Christian Central Academy's girls soccer team (3-4-1) played strong in all three of its games last week, defeating Roy-Hart, 3-0, and O'Hara, 5-2, and losing a hard fought game against a competitive Medina team, 3-0.

CCA's win against long-time rival Roy-Hart was its first win in many years of competition. Roy-Hart played aggressively but CCA proved up to the challenge.

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