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East girls soccer ranked 18th in nation

by PATRICK J. NAGY
Reporter

Williamsville East varsity girls soccer has an even bigger target on itself heading into this fall's Section VI Championships.

East, 14-0 overall and ranked No. 1 in Western New York large schools all season, is ranked 18th in the country in the latest National Soccer Coaches Association of America poll.

It is the first time in school history East girls soccer has had a national ranking. Lady Flames coach Chris Durr said the boys were nationally ranked about six years ago.

"It's obviously quite an honor to be nationally ranked," said Durr, who is also the Section VI girls soccer chairman. "A large tribute goes to the girls and how they've played over the last few years. It kind of puts more pressure on us to live up to that type of billing."

East is also third in the NSCAA Region II poll, which covers New York teams.

By the time East plays its Section VI Class A quarterfinal game on Monday, Oct. 30 against either Cheektowaga or Maryvale, they will not have played in 20 days and practiced only seven times. This stems from a 2-foot snowstorm which downed power lines and trees across Erie County and closed most school districts for the entire week, disabling teams from playing games or practicing.

The lack of practicing or playing worries Durr. "It's almost like starting a season over again," said Durr. "Not playing a game in 20 days is difficult enough and it's never happened before. To have a week and a half of not practicing is also not a very positive thing. I just hope we - schools that lost time in ECICs - can catch the (NFL) Niagara-Frontier League, Niagara-Orleans and Southern Tier - to get back to work and not miss a beat."

North prepared for playoffs

The Williamsville North varsity girls soccer team is looking forward to the Section VI Class AA playoffs.

With an abrupt end to the regular season due to a 2-foot snowstorm which closed schools throughout Erie County, the Lady Spartans moved into a tie for second place with Jamestown in ECIC Division I. North tied Jamestown, 1-1, and had impressive wins over Orchard Park, 4-2, and Frontier, 6-1.

"The storm hit and soccer became an afterthought, but now that the storm is over, it is frustrating to know that the team was playing its best soccer of the season," said North coach Dan Greiner. "Scoring, which has been a problem most of the season, really took off before the unexpected break."

North's leading scorer is Suzanne Jacobs with eight goals. Shannon Algae, Jillian Piaggione, and Hillary Jacobson all have five.

The Lady Spartans have been plagued with injuries and illnesses all season, so the break has also given them a chance to get healthy, Greiner said.

"We missed players like Kelsey Mulvihill, who was out with an illness for four games," said Greiner. "Hillary Jacobson and Kirby Kinda were out with injuries for five games and other key players were out for two or three games. This season, with the weather and not having a full team, has made for one of the strangest seasons I can remember."

Greiner said on the bright side, players pulled up from the junior varsity have contributed greatly

to the team's success. Jenny Piaggione and Kristin Boreanaz have played very well defensively and Kristi Putzig has been a nice addition to the forward line, he said.

"Senior captains Karrie Gurbacski, Leanne Pinski, Jillian Piaggione and Jacobson have done a great job keeping this team together through what has been a very strange season," said Greiner. "To be successful in the playoffs, we will need a great effort from the entire team. Different players have been playing well all season, but it will be nice to go into sectionals with a full complement of healthy players."

North will host West Seneca West at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 30 in the Class AA prequarterfinals. The location of the match is yet to be determined because North's field may be unplayable.

Other Town of Amherst girls soccer teams playing in Class A on Oct. 30 are Williamsville South (4-4-1), seeded tenth, at seventh seed, Tonawanda (6-3) and ninth-seed Hamburg (4-4-1) at eighth-seed Amherst (5-4). In Class AA, ninth-seed Niagara-Wheatfield (4-5-3) is at fifth-seed and defending champion Williamsville North (4-2-3) and tenth-ranked Sweet Home (4-5) is at seventh-seed Kenmore West (5-4-1).

In boys soccer, North (7-1), ranked No. 1 in Class AA, hosts Frontier or North Tonawanda on Oct. 31. Sweet Home (2-7), seeded 11th, plays a prequarterfinal game at sixth-seed West Seneca West (3-3-1) on Saturday.

In Class A action on Saturday, Amherst (5-1-2), seeded ninth, travels to Starpoint (5-1-2), South (2-3-3), ranked 13th, plays at fourth-seed Grand Island (8-2-2) and Dunkirk or Lew-Port plays at third-seed Williamsville East (7-0-1).

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Christ the King Girls cross country continues its lead

Running at full strength, Christ The King's girls' cross country team finished Week Three in first with 21 points.

CTK picked up six more points for a season record of 17-1 to lead the Catholic Cross Country Association's Elementary League. SS. Peter and Paul, Hamburg is in second place at 16-2 after finishing second with 51.

CTK's Annie Pyrak led the field again, winning the race in 9:33. Chloe Wingerter continues to dominate second place as she was ahead of over 100 other girls. Wingerter (second, 10:17) and Kate Edwards (sixth, 11:03) each matched personal bests on the course. Tori Kreuz returned, finishing 12th in 11:28. Also running were Alise Jarmusz (49th, 13:46) and fourth grade's Tia Piotrowski (51st, 13:54).

Week Two

For the second time this season, Anne Pyrak continued to set the pace for nearly 200 runners in the Catholic Cross Country Association's elementary school cross country meet at Cazenovia Park on Monday, Oct. 2.

Pyrak, again running the fastest time of the day, finished first in 9:33 with team members Chloe Wingerter (second, 10:18), Kate Edwards (sixth, 11:04), and Alise Jarmusz (51st, 14:05) combining for 60 points to finish second team behind SS. Peter and Paul, who had 48 points.

CTK was missing a key runner, Tori Kreuz as well as Tia Piotrowski.

CTK boys

Christ the King's boys team of 12 was reduced to the league minimum of four in Week Three of the Catholic

Cross Country Association's Elementary League. CTK, as well as other teams, had its rosters shortened because of baseball playoff scheduling conflicts. CTK (9-9) finished eighth.

Race entrants numbered only 72, down from the usual 95 to 100 runners. Henry Edwards (20th, 11:03) was CTK's lead runner. Ben Yee (28th, 11:36) ran a new personal record, taking 1:09 off his previous best. Pat Hurtubise (29th, 11:38) skipped hockey practice to run for the team. CTK's fourth runner was third grade's Joe Foster (53rd, 13:51).

The meet on Monday, Oct. 16 was cancelled. An alternate location for the a race combining meet four and the championship, which should have been held this past Monday, may be held Monday, Oct. 30 at the West Seneca Soccer Complex. The course at Cazenovia Park was impassable for use to finish the season.

Week Two

In week two, Christ The King's boys' team had a score of 53 to place second behind St. Greg's 49 points. Both teams benefited when two runners from SSPP and Notre Dame (ND) were disqualified for going off course.

Scoring for CTK were Chris Walter, running a new personal record time (sixth, 9:53), Kevin Schmitt (10th, 10:26), Gordon Lyons (13th, 10:33), and Henry Edwards (24th, 11:07). Also running for CTK were Pat Hurtubise (30th, 11:22, personal record), Ben Yee (33rd, 11:28, personal record), Zach Zenger (42nd, 12:01), Ben Georger (44th, 12:12, personal record), Jack Murray (48th, 12:24, personal record) and young Joe Foster (70th, 13:45) out of a field of 98 runners.