

Veteran soccer talent has Rockets set to soar

Written by MITCH MAERSCH
Wednesday, 03 April 2013 16:27

Senior-led girls' team has skill, depth as it prepares for Central Lakeshore title chase

There is no shortage of skill and high expectations for the Cedar Grove-Belgium girls' soccer team this spring.

Coming off of a 19-5-1 overall record and a 12-2, second-place finish in the Central Lakeshore Conference, the Rockets have plenty of veteran talent in their bid for another title shot.



Leading the pack are seven seniors, including three who received all-conference first-team honors last year: forward Halie Schieffer, midfielder Briana Weyker and goalkeeper Alyssa Schmitt.

Schieffer scored 25 goals and had 19 assists for the Rockets, who trailed only Howards Grove in the CLC standings.

Weyker had 16 goals and five assists and helped spark her team's transition game.

Schmitt anchored a defense that posted 12 shutouts.

Cedar Grove-Belgium's other top players include seniors Alex Buechler, Caitlin Hausner, Brooke Koepsell and Alyssa Sauer, junior Abby Vrublely and sophomore Ashli von Heimburg.

Vrublely received All-CLC second-team honors as a defender. Von Heimburg excelled as a forward and was second on the Rockets in scoring (14 goals, 12 assists) on her way to honorable mention in all-league voting.

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While pleased with his team's success last season, second-year coach Elias Garza said the Rockets will have to respond to serious challenges to finish at or near the top again.

"Our team knows that regardless of our victories, individual honors and returning personnel from a year ago, none of it guarantees victories this spring," he said.

"What remains constant are the challenging opportunities that lie ahead and the preparation that is required by all to be competitive in the CLC."

Garza said all 19 players on the Rockets' roster will have to jell for the team to be successful.

"With the addition of new players each year, it is critical that we encourage, respect and support one another," he said.

Garza said he was pleased that many of his players worked hard in the off-season and have maintained their focus in preseason practices.

"Although Mother Nature has not been cooperative and blessed us with warm temperatures, we were able to weather the elements on multiple occasions," he said.

"Nonetheless, the girls are eager to spend even more time outdoors and not having to face each other each day."

Weather permitting, the Rockets are scheduled to open the season Thursday, April 4, with a 4:30 p.m. nonconference game at Manitowoc Roncalli.

Cedar Grove-Belgium will then begin conference play April 11 with a 6 p.m. home match against Sheboygan Christian.

"Finding balance in every third of the pitch and the depth on this team will be vital," Garza said.

"The team's work ethic, willingness to learn and multifaceted players will hopefully prove beneficial as the season progresses."

Image Information: SENIOR FORWARD Halie Schieffer had 25 goals and 19 assists for the Cedar Grove-Belgium girls' soccer team last season, helping the Rockets to a 19-5-1 record. Photo by Sam Arendt