

Young Lions team hopes to match last year's success

SACHIE HOPKINS

Staff Reporter

The Lions have their minds set on advancing deep into the playoffs, but the question is: Do they have the depth and skill to repeat the success they had last year? Last year West Linn reached the quarterfinals of the State playoffs, and this year's more inexperienced group hopes to exceed that performance.

The main difference will be the loss of Jamie Abrahamson, an All-State forward who graduated last June. The Lions will have to rely upon their depth and speed to make it to the playoffs.

In the season opener, a 1-0 win, the Lions played well, despite the close score, controlling the ball most of the game. Grant's Pass focused on their defense, preventing more goals from the Lion's forwards. Even so, 15 minutes into the second half Liz Sloop, senior, scored from close range, on a well placed pass from Jazmine Whitlock, sophomore.

"It was our first game so we were still learning how to play together, overall though, we did really well," Becca Hoiland, sophomore, said.

In the second non-league game, the Lions

were unable to keep up with the Grant Generals, eventually losing the game by a score of 1-0. Grant has won its first five games in convincing fashion; with the match against West Linn recording the closest margin.

West Linn faced Lakeridge in the first league game, and although Lakeridge seemed to be in control, West Linn put up a good fight, settling for a 2-2 tie. Although the Lions would have appreciated a win, the tie prevented them from dropping several spots in the standings. Both Whitlock and Sami DeMars, junior, scored, and though the Lions had several other good looks at the goal, they were unable to convert.

The Lions won their second game in a 1-0 win over a competitive Oregon City team. Hoiland scored the game's lone goal. To top it off, West Linn won again five days later, 3-2 over Clackamas.

West Linn suffered their second loss of the season to Lake Oswego on Sept. 21, 5-0. Although it was a tough game for the Lions, it was their first league loss, leaving them with a record of 2-1-1. Lake Oswego is off to a good start with a 3-0-0 record in league play.

"We're not very big,

so we're going to have to rely on our speed and ball handling to win," Hoiland said.

Despite their two losses, this year's young but very talented team will likely be able to fill the holes left by last year's seniors. Veteran leadership will come from Sloop, as well as Megan Foster and Susan Schrank, seniors. There is also a

strong core of sophomores including, Taylor Brooke who was last year's number two scorer, Whitlock, Haelee Staskiewicz, Hoiland and Ali Vogt.

There are still many question marks left for the Lions, but the one of most important is: will the Lions have the poise and maturity to make another run into the State playoffs?

"We have a young team, but one that has good chemistry and a lot of talent...we'll do well this year," Hoiland said.

West Linn has several competitive games coming up including a game against Oregon City at home on Oct. 9 at 6:30 p.m. and a match at Clackamas on Oct. 11 at 7 p.m.

Young boys soccer team needs to gel; can achieve big things this season

LOGAN KELLY

Staff Reporter

Varsity Boys Soccer Coach Greg Bean is enthusiastic about this season. He aims to bring a playoff game to Lion Stadium.

"We need to put together two halves to compete in our league," Bean said.

West Linn opened its season with a 3-0 win against Grants Pass on the first day of school but was defeated by Lincoln and Lakeridge in their next two league games. The Lions managed to snap their losing streak in style with a 6-0 win over Oregon City.

The West Linn boys soccer program is young, losing 12 players last season. That means little though, according to Bean, as the boys currently on the team are fast, strong and tall: perfect for high school soccer. Bean is bringing all he can to the team using his experience in implementing high intensity tactics that he expects will be immensely successful once they learn them.

Until then, the Lions have a lot of work to do. They have a bit of talent, but they are unorganized according to Bean. People who watched them play against the Lakeridge Pacers must have seen a worrying lack of chemistry among the players.

"First half, we played like the young inexperienced team we are. The second half, we played to our ability," Bean said. They had their moments though. With around 25 minutes left, Carter el Habbasi, midfielder, created some magic starting with a Brazilian pass, ending with a beautiful through ball resulting in a goal. The final score was 4-2 with the game going to the Pacers.

Most high schools in the Three Rivers Conference have Varsity soccer teams



Ryan Squires, sophomore, makes a defensive tackle against an Oregon City attacker. The Lions finished with a 6-0 win.

Photo by Aubree White

with almost whole starting lineups of club players. Most have players playing for top clubs such as FC Portland (FC, a common abbreviation for clubs internationally meaning Football Club) and Westside among others. Only five club players make the Lions Varsity squad.

West Linn showed that stats on the paper mean nothing in soccer by bouncing back with the huge win over the Oregon City Pioneers at home.

"Good result, but let's keep it in perspective. In that game, it wasn't whether you won, it was how we won," Bean said.

Following the Oregon City game, the Lions found themselves on the losing side of a 4-1 score against the Clackamas Cavaliers.

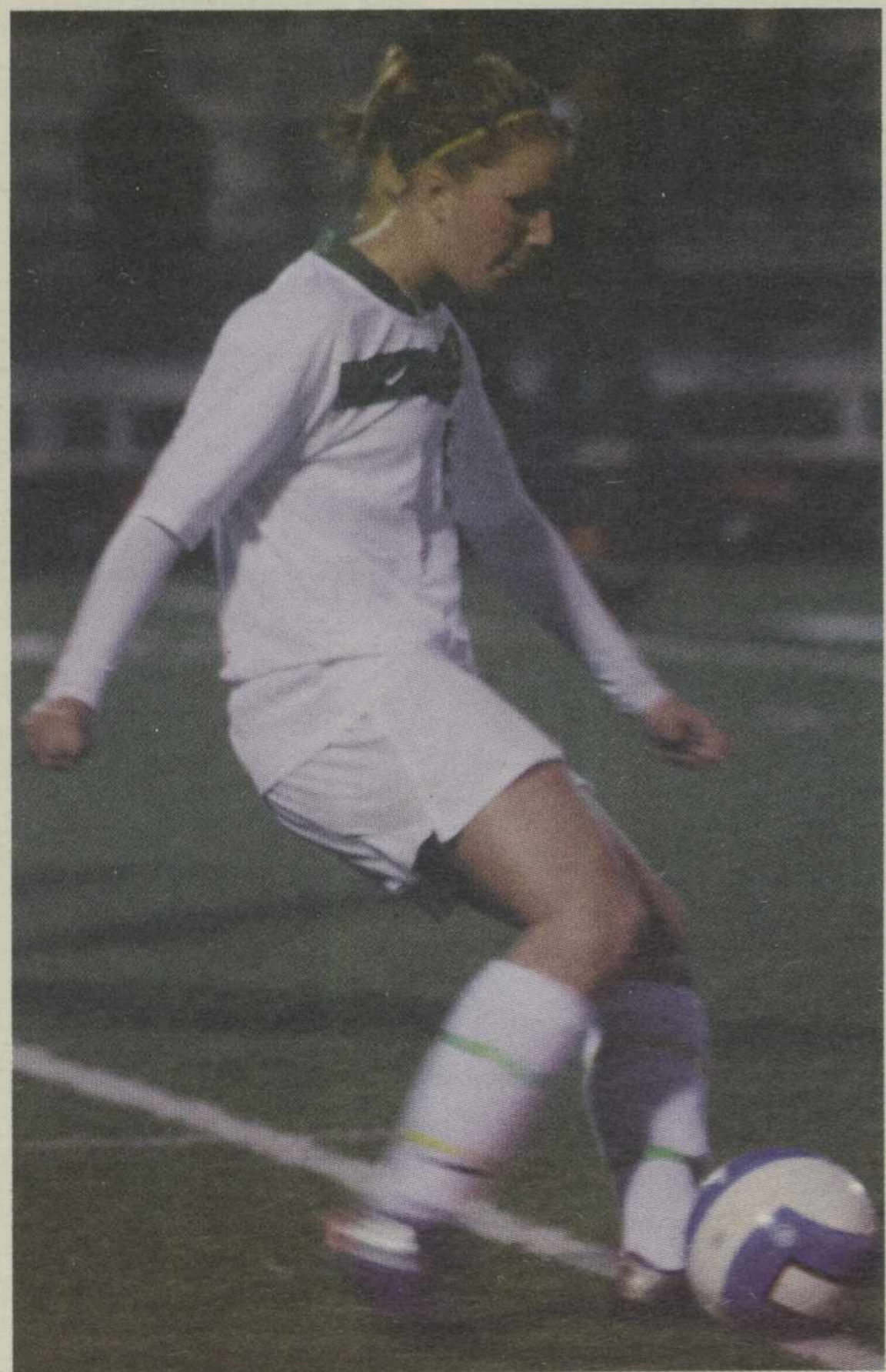
The Lions came back and proved to their fans what they were capable of against Lake Oswego. The first half of the game drew comments from the crowd such as "boring, flat, no intensity." The second half was a far different story. After going down 3-1 midway through the

second half, the Lions started playing more direct, quick soccer.

Joe Offer, goalkeeper, came up with some big saves after the break. El Habbasi took a beating at midfield. Drawing yellow card after yellow card, he lifted the team to create two penalty kicks, which resulted in two goals. The goal to tie came after a controversial El Habbasi penalty kick, just 40 seconds remained in the game. "I don't even know what to say," a bewildered fan said. The final score was 3-3.

Coming off the LO tie, and their next three games against the Milwaukie Mustangs, Putnam Kingsmen and the Lakeridge Pacers, West Linn has a chance to put their early season stumble behind them.

"One of the most impressive things about this year's team is the high level of their character," Wind Lothamer, Boys JVII coach, said. "These guys have worked hard to turn this program around and it really shows."



Alison Vogt, sophomore, kicks the ball in a home game against the Clackamas Cavaliers on Sept 19. The team went on to win 2-3.

Photo by Colton Reyes