

Ramblin' On

Jason Thompson

Girls soccer team begins quest for state title

Of all the sports Gulf Breeze High offers, soccer can be one of the most difficult to cover.

Football, volleyball, basketball, baseball and softball, there's a lot of action - a lot of scoring. In a close game, a soccer story could read 'oooooh, they almost scored here, they almost scored there, Oh! They hit the post here...'

Thank God I don't have that problem here.

When your program's been to the state tournament seven times in 10 years, the Lady Dolphins have earned the nickname of being 'my rock stars' - because every year, I'm almost guaranteed a road trip. This year is no exception - and hopefully, a multi night trip.

With eight returning starters - including five Division I or II players (and a sixth pending) - and a bench that can start anywhere in the Panhandle - coach Sharon Kerby has all the ingredients to do what hasn't been done in eight years - coach a state champion.

But with all that 'rock star' potential, there's the possibility of ego and attitude overriding their ability to make sweet music on the pitch.

That possibility can and should be squashed immediately by the best group of seniors the program's seen since 2003. The Class of 2009 has seen the top of the mountain twice, but have yet to reach the summit.

Let's hope the 2009 version of 'rock stars' sound more like U2 and less like Van Halen or Guns N' Roses.

So far, so good

The Lady Dolphins, along with every other team across the state, began practice last Monday. Conditioning was the name of the game on day one as Kerby had her players running a mile in under seven minutes, 30 seconds.

Junior Maggie Rodgers came across the line first, followed by senior Jessica Majewski - the last two girls you want to see with the ball in open space if you're a GBHS opponent.

The following girls made the varsity roster: seniors Aubrey Curington, Colleen Eastburn, Amanda Green, Majewski, Cayla Platt, Alyssa Smith and Jesse Vickrey; juniors Kristen Barona, Megan Eastburn, Haley Gross, Heather Haney, Brynne Heatley, Carly Loehr, Maggie Rodgers and Bianca Takaacs; sophomores Morgan Floyd, Alison Milam, Breezy Paulus, Casey Platt and Cori Snyder; and freshmen Laura Harpole, Hannah Rodgers and Samantha Welsh.

Their 'symphony' starts Oct. 31 with a preseason tournament at Brosnahan Park. They play Niceville at 7 p.m. Oct. 31 and Fort Walton Nov. 1 at 3 p.m.

Don't miss it.



NEXT UP

■ **Who:** Gulf Breeze (1-6) vs. Panama City Arnold (7-0)
 ■ **When:** Friday, 7 p.m.
 ■ **Where:** Mike Gavlak Sports Complex, Panama City Beach

Joe Culpepper/Gulf Breeze News
 Gulf Breeze defenders Jeff White (left) and Seth Hewardine (rear) combine to bring down Milton receiver Tyler Johnson near the Dolphins' sideline early in the second half.

Dolphin offense sputters in loss

Panther defense holds GBHS to 9 yards in second half of 37-10 win, district game Friday at Arnold

By JASON THOMPSON

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Despite being 1-6 and on a three-game losing streak, the Dolphin football team still controls its own playoff destiny.

Gulf Breeze travels to Panama City to take on the Arnold Marlins Friday at 7 p.m.

The unbeaten Marlins (7-0) enter Friday's game off a 62-0 win over Scottsboro, got 240 yards and four touchdowns (on only five touches) by Jeremy Hester, who now has 1,353 yards and more than 20 touchdowns.

The key for the Dolphins is to not give up the big play. Last year, Hester had 228 yards rushing on 15 carries as the defense gave up a pair of long touchdown runs in the first

half. The special teams gave up several big returns, including one for a touchdown.

The Dolphin offense last year converted only 5-for-15 on third down opportunities, with two of those conversions happening late in the game. One of the others came off an Arnold penalty.

"They execute well on offense. they're solid on defense and they have 19 of 22 starters

back from last year's team," coach Chris Nemith said. "They're some things I feel we can do. We'll just continue with our schemes and our plans, keep working the plan."

"Arnold's 7-0, ranked in the top 10, and we're going to their home field. We're 1-6, so that makes us very dangerous."

"Our kids are good enough and we're on the cusp, we're really close. If we can pull it all

together, we can be their worst nightmare."

The Dolphins will hope to have running back Rhys Rinke (shoulder) back for Friday's game. Kris Matsoukas (bruised collarbone) may play Friday, but Ty Rodewald (shoulder) is doubtful.

Jeff White (shoulder) is, and has been, banged up all season. "He's a tough kid," Nemith said.

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The GBHS girls golf team won their sixth straight district title last week. They are (from left): Coach Jimmy Sanders, Ashleigh Ryals, Alexandria Ryals, Samantha Schachner, Laurin Halstead, Sarah Hicks and Coach Adam Smith

Girls golf district champs again

Boys district runners up; also qualify for this week's regional tourney at Tiger Point

By JASON THOMPSON

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The Gulf Breeze Lady Dolphin golf team won their sixth consecutive District 1-A championship last week at Perdido Bay Golf and Country Club.

Both the girls team and the boys' (who finished runner up at districts) qualified for this week's regional

tournament at Tiger Point. The tournament was on Tuesday (after the News' deadline).

The Lady Dolphins won with a team score of 346, 53 shots better than second place Catholic. West Florida was third (559) and PHS fourth (594).

"The Lady Dolphins have had a stellar year playing together as a team with all the girls putting in the much needed practice time to accomplish their goals," assistant coach Jimmy Sanders said.

Junior Ashleigh Ryals repeated as district champion with a score of 75. Sarah Hicks was second overall with a 78, while Laurin Halstead was tied for fourth with a 96.

Alexandra Ryals shot a 97, while Samantha Schachner shot a 104.

The Dolphins finished second at last week's district meet to Catholic, who won by 20 shots (304-324). Their 324 score was 14 shots lower than their 2007 district meet and 11 better than two years ago.

Jack Sargent birdied the first two holes and led the Dolphins with a 79, good for fifth place overall. Trever Challenor shot an 80 (sixth overall), followed by Tyler Wright (82), Patrick Dorsey (83) and Daniel Chevillet (86).

Catholic's Justin Stills was the low medalist with a 73.

The top two teams from this week's regional meet Tuesday and Wednesday in Lakeland



McGuire leads ULL to come-from-behind win

By JASON THOMPSON

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Brad McGuire (GBHS Class of 2007) made his first career start for Louisiana Lafayette Saturday, rallying the Rajun Cajuns back from a 23-14 deficit to beat Arkansas State 28-23.

McGuire overcame five sacks and two interceptions, including one



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