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## Putting it together

### Troy combines veteran core with new class

By Sue Teggart  
 C & G Sports Writer

TROY — Like most top-notch soccer programs, Troy High's boys team knows how to graduate talent and then reload, not rebuild.

In 2007, the Colts tangled with Birmingham Brother Rice in the Division 1 district final, falling 1-0 in double overtime.

But when the team lost 13 players to graduation that year, it didn't sit back on its heels. Instead, it came back to win a district title the following season and made a run at the regional title.

This year, the Colts find themselves in a familiar position.

After losing a great deal of talent from last year's team — namely their top scorer in Joe Beshara, who netted 24 goals his senior year — Troy High is hungry for more.

After the Colts' heartbreaking shootout loss to Grand Blanc High in regional final last season, coach Dave Hicklin said expectations are high.

"It's Troy High, so you always expect a lot," Hicklin said. "We put a lot of pressure on the kids, and they put a lot on themselves. I'm looking for a good run."

"We've got the heart to win it," said senior Jim Hallahan about making a run at the state title. "Since all of us knew what it felt like to lose it last year in the regional final, we want to make it to states and win it all."

While the squad returned 11 letterwinners, just four were starters — Hallahan, seniors Nate Hicklin and Steven Daws, and junior Sean Cunningham — so many of the players are stepping into new varsity roles.

"It's still early in the season," Hicklin said. "They're learning to play with new players, and the system that we're playing is different for a lot of them."

"We have some good spells, and we have some not-so-good spells."

Losing so much talent last year hasn't stopped the Colts early on, as they beat Warren De La Salle 1-0 and Dearborn High 3-1 in scrimmages, and then opened the season with wins against Dearborn Fordson 4-0 Aug. 24 and Rochester High 2-0 Aug. 26.

"I think we're really strong in the midfield," Hicklin said. "Our back four has been great, too. We've had two games in a row now with no goals against."



Photo by Tracy Dreslinski  
 Troy High senior captain Nate Hicklin prepares to take a free kick during an Aug. 27 game against Rochester High. Hicklin is one of four returning starters.

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Although the squad is still working out some kinks, Hicklin said the handful of veterans that are back have made a big impact.

“It’s huge having my son Nate, Hallahan, Cunningham and Daws. It’s a big-time influence on the younger kids,” Hicklin said. “It helps the younger kids come through and takes a lot of pressure off the underclassmen. They just lead by example.”

Cunningham said although the veterans are looked to for leadership on the field, it’s always a team effort.

“We have a lot of seniors and a lot of hard workers,” Cunningham said. “We’ve got a lot of guys who can come off the bench and fill in. Somebody is always ready to go in and do the job to get us the wins.”

Fans can catch Troy High in action next at 7 p.m. Sept. 8 at Rochester Adams.

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