



Strength on all fronts

Lack of glaring weakness, excellent play all season have propelled Troy soccer

By Mike Moore
C & G Sports Writer

TROY — If there's one great thing about the Troy High soccer team, it just may be the fact there isn't one great thing that defines it.

The Colts field an offense that scores plenty of goals.

They've instituted a defense that can be suffocating.

There's a solid group of veteran core players.

There's also a perfect mix of first-time varsity guys contributing.

Most of all, and most importantly, they're winning — a lot.

"It's like it's a combination of everything that's helped us this year," coach Dave Hicklin said. "It's cliché, but this is a complete team effort. We're pretty strong in all facets of the game."

At press time, Troy was 11-1-1 overall and sitting atop the Oakland Activities Association Red Division standings at 7-0. The Colts began the year with 10 wins in their first 11 games and didn't suffer their first loss until Sept. 26.

"We're getting out of this exactly what we're putting in," senior defender Todd Yanick said. "We've worked hard at practice on a daily basis, and that has paid off on game days."

Troy graduated 13 players from last year's team, which reached the regional semifinals. The effect of that mass exodus was offset set by the core of veterans back in the mix, coupled with a number of former junior varsity players who have wasted little time stepping into their varsity roles.

As is the case with most sports, defense wins games, and the Colts boast a stingy one.

"We've got some great players back there and a goalie who has played excellent," Hicklin said of his defense and freshman goalie Matt Smolinski.

In their 13 games so far, the Colts had allowed a total of 12 goals — five coming in the Sept. 26 loss to Rochester Adams — and pitched nine shutouts. In league play, only four goals have been surrendered.

Conversely, the offense has scored 37 goals, 22 in league play.

"I figured coming into the season we'd be pretty good," Hicklin said. "But you never know what other teams have or how other teams have improved. To expect us to be



Photo by Tracy Dreslinski
Freshman goalie Matt Smolinski, pictured clearing the ball from the defensive zone earlier this season, has played an integral role in the Troy's success. At press time, the Colts had allowed just 12 goals in 13 games.

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doing this well was tough. It's been an excellent year so far.”

And with the season winding down and the importance of each game intensifying, Hicklin hopes things don't change.

“I'd love to go further than we did last year,” the coach said regarding the approaching playoff tournament. “The ultimate is a state title, but you know how difficult that is. We're going to be in a very solid district with some very good teams. If we keep getting better as the (regular season) winds down, I like our chances (come) playoff time.”

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