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Rolling right along

With district action approaching, West Bloomfield has hit its stride and not looked back

By Mike Moore
C & G Sports Writer

WEST BLOOMFIELD — Dennis Darnoi has a somewhat interesting, yet welcome, dilemma on his hands right now.

The West Bloomfield High boy soccer coach has a squad playing better than it ever has during his tenure with the school.

The only thing is, he isn't exactly sure why.

"It's been a weird season," he said with a laugh last week. "There isn't one thing I can point to that says exactly why we're doing so well. I've struggled to figure it out."

It's been an enjoyable struggle, though.

At press time, the Lakers were 10-2-4 overall and 5-1-1 in the Oakland Activities Association White Division, three points out of first place. Despite seeing a schedule that has been anything but ordinary — games have been played on almost every day and night of the week aside from Sunday — West Bloomfield has maintained a consistent style of play that has, well, consistently caused its opponents headaches.

"Our goal is to compete at a high level each time we take the field," Darnoi said. "Despite the odd schedule and the quality of teams we've played, we've found a way to do that. I've been pleasantly surprised by these guys."

The Lakers have done it on both sides of the field, as well.

Through their first 16 games, they'd allowed a total of 14 goals, just four coming in league play. Offensively, they've tallied 43.

But Darnoi knows things are only going to get harder as the regular season winds down and the Oct. 19 district opener approaches.

"Nothing is going to be easy from here on out," Darnoi said. "As good as we've played, we're going to have to be even better."

West Bloomfield is scheduled to play Walled Lake Western at home in the district opener.

"There's a couple ways to look at this," Darnoi said. "We're unbeaten at home, and having a home playoff game is a big advantage. At the same time, we scrimmaged them earlier in the season, and they took it to us pretty good. ... It's going to be two good soccer teams battling it out. I just hope we come out on the right end."



Photo by Tracy Dreslinski
West Bloomfield senior Mario Paljusevic dribbles the ball past a Lahser defender during a game earlier this season. At press time, the Lakers were 5-1-1 in the OAA White and just three points out of first place.

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You can reach Sports Writer Mike Moore at mmoore@candgnews.com or at (586) 498-1038.



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