

Soccer Tigers begin preparations for 2017 season

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
August 10 2017 6:36 AM





EDWARDSVILLE – Edwardsville's boys soccer team opened their preseason training Wednesday with plenty of optimism for the coming season.

Last year's Tigers finished 14-2-5 (4-0-2 in the Southwestern Conference) and were eliminated by Collinsville 2-1 in the IHSA Class 3A Granite City Regional final.

The Tigers lost a strong senior class to graduation from last year's team, but have plenty of replacements ready to step up this season.

“I think, if you look preseason and if you assess things from the summer and what we have back from what we had last year,” said Tiger coach Mark Heiderscheid, “and just what we are right now, it's really probably the most talented team since 2013 – which I know kind of sets up a statement since that team won a state title. But having said all that, it's really a talented and deep group.

“You've got certain players here like (junior) Ethan Miracle, who will be with us this year who is showing really, really well. This year, I'm really, really excited; I think we've got three really solid (goal)keepers – we have a really good back line; we've got a really decent set back there. I think we've got a bit of depth there, in fact, and really, our front six – while we've had years that are comparable, I think we've got really good midfielders and some good attackers.”

Heiderschied does think the Tigers have some players who can find ways to score and finish plays. “There are players that we have, as far as numbers, that can finish; I think there's probably six or seven or eight that are capable of getting several goals. That sometimes can be as important, but there's no question, if you got a Sam Fink, if you've got a Landon Paul, if you've got a Brent Heinline (from the 2013 state champions), those are enormous when it comes to playoffs, guys that can finish – guys like that can lead you very far in the playoffs.”

As far as standout players on this year's edition of the Tigers, Heiderscheid is counting on several players. “If you look out there, Daniel Hentz – a starter for three straight years, he's awful good, so is Tyler Tepen – everything in the back line's good; Kyle Wright has really improved tremendously (in the midfield). He's going to be a player you reckon with; Austin Wong is just an absolute exceptional player as a midfielder.”

The Tigers open the season at home Aug. 25 against traditional St. Louis-area power Chaminade. “They've been one of the top programs in the country for years,” Heiderschied said.

EHS opens their SWC campaign two nights later against Granite City at home and also has teams like Waterloo Gibault, Normal West, Normal Community, DeSmet,

Marquette Catholic, St. Mary's and CBC dotting the schedule this year as well. This year's IHSA Class 3A state finals are set for Nov. 3-4 at Hoffman Estates High School in suburban Chicago; regionals will be played the week of Oct. 16 and sectionals the week of Oct. 23.

