

Girls' soccer: new blood, better game

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After graduating eight seniors, you'd think that a sports team would face a major blow to its success—but not the girls' soccer team.

With half of the starters being underclassmen, the team is confident that the younger members can

personnel, the team's game strategy is relatively similar to last year's. But according to Hendry, "We are much more consistent. Last year, we would have really good games and really bad games; but this year, we're a lot more dependable in terms of level of play and work ethic."

The guidance of the three captains—Hendry, junior Morgan Hendry, and senior Taylor Strype—has also helped rebuild the team.

are bigger than she is through physical and technical training. "I was a little apprehensive about entering high school, but the upperclassmen on the team went out of their way to make sure I had a smooth transition," Schmidt said.

This year, the underclassmen have picked up their pace to match the skills of their older peers. "The fact that we're young really hasn't affected much strategy, because we have excellent leadership. These are very talented players, so youth really hasn't been an issue," Mackenzie said.

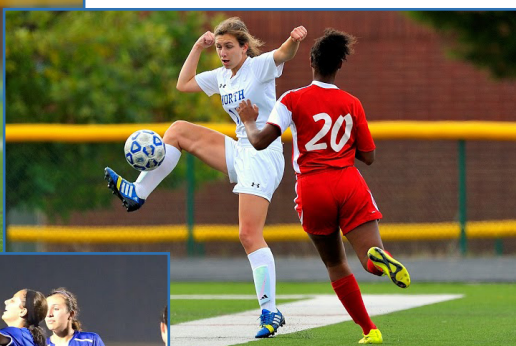
The team is focusing on cohering as a team. "Everyone on the team works really hard on the field, which brings a great level of energy to the game," Hendry said.

Each member has improved in terms of physical strength and in technical skills, and each uses her individual skills to make the team better. Bedi added, "Our team gels well, and there's a sense of cohesiveness."

From freshman to senior, every member is working hard to make this season great. "I am proud to wear the blue or white jersey with the word 'North' printed on the chest," Schmidt said. "It's a great dream that came true."

"The three lead by example," said coach Kevin Mackenzie. "They're all incredibly hard workers, they're very smart, they make good decisions, they practice well, they take the game seriously. So in terms of being role models for the other girls, they're exactly what you would want as a coach."

And the underclassmen certainly agree. Sophomore Emily Schmidt learned how to compensate for playing against girls who



handle the varsity level. Three out of the four freshmen on varsity are

starters, showing just how dedicated they are to the team. Senior captain Alex Hendry said, "when I'm on the field, I don't even notice that I'm playing with freshman and sophomores. I'm excited to come back in a few years and see where the program goes."

"Many players rose to the level of intensity required for varsity soccer," said junior captain Saachi Bedi, to compensate for the loss of a whopping seven starters from last season. Despite the new

Provided by Tommy Loo

Clockwise from top left: Freshman Jillian Wachira dribbles the ball and sophomore Sarah Carulli plays a pass against Rancocas Valley. The team celebrates following a goal against South.



PASS IT AROUND

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Heads rolling off moving bodies with one slash of the sword. Blood seeping out from cavities spotting the body. Horses wailing in pain, brutally forced to continue a painstaking endeavor. Cheers. Whistles. Standing ovations. The Roman gladiator games were some of the most controversial practices of ancient times: many claimed to frown upon the ruthless nature of the sport.

Over two thousand years later, American society has fostered its own "gladiator games." With the recent flurry of football players scrutinized by the media for domestic abuse, the National Football League has fallen into an abyss of negativity. Even with the legal accusations and horrifying discoveries, however, the NFL will likely continue to be one of the biggest media powerhouses in the country.

People apply moral values to personal situations and facets of everyday life. Even if the public feels they would have handled the Ray Rice and Adrian Peterson stories

differently, they need not stop tuning in on Sundays, buying tickets, or purchasing NFL apparel. The NFL does not promote these actions, nor will it take such crimes lightly with the newly-proposed player conduct committee being put in place. The NFL is trying its best to move past these issues, and fans shouldn't be judged for doing the same.

Despite the shocking, gruesome video clips that have surfaced depicting former Ravens running back Ray Rice's attack on his wife, Ravens fans have stuck by their much-maligned football team. Before the suspension was imposed, Ray Rice arrived to training camp and was greeted with cheers and standing ovations. Even after the suspension, a sold-out crowd watched from the stands as

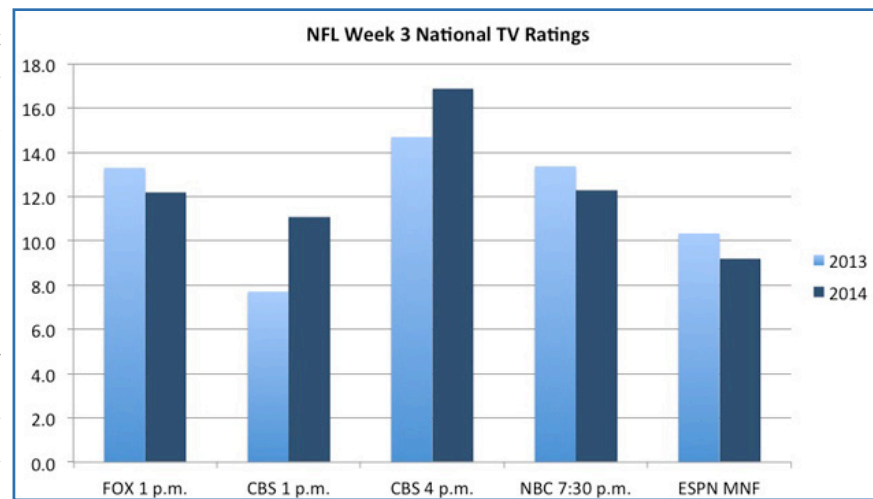
the Ravens routed the Pittsburgh Steelers. CBS announced that television ratings for the Thursday night game were 215 percent higher than the normal primetime numbers. In fact, the first Thursday night game of the year netted a 108

Peterson. No one should be forced to boycott the game he or she loves simply because of moral issues that are now in the past.

Subsequently, sponsorships and endorsers should eventually migrate back to the money-making

machine they recently fled. According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, sponsors have asked that their ads be removed from Baltimore Ravens

and Minnesota Vikings telecasts. However, this breakup may not last long. Having signed a new eight-year, \$1.5 billion deal with DirecTV, the NFL will always hold leverage in corporate partnership deals. Even if sponsors try to avoid Ravens and Vikings games, what will happen when the 4-2 Ravens play their first playoff game this January, an event sure to bring in a colossal TV audience? Advertisers will jump headfirst into the NFL's pool of money. Furthermore, the quality of football has yet to decline for teams affected by these incidents, despite the off-field controversy. The Baltimore Ravens have amassed a 4-2 record over six games, including a three-game win streak. The Ravens have seamlessly found a way to replace an All-Pro running back, highlighting another perfection in the NFL system: in a league where 22 players start for any given team, the loss of one key player will never diminish the quality of play. Thus, teams will continue winning games with or without lost players and will separate the player in question from the team and ultimately the league. The NFL will eject members that could harm the league's image, as they did with Peterson and Rice, shedding dead weight on its path to the top of the media world.



percent rating increase from last year's TNF opener.

Fans are still tuning into America's game, no matter who's playing. The NFL separated itself from the culprits of domestic abuse, indefinitely suspending both Rice and