



Laker goalie Doug Palmer dives to make a save as John Griffin (left) and Paul Gierschick wait for a rebound that never comes (Photographed by Art Emanuel)



Head soccer coach Mickey Price talks soccer strategy with his young team after a hard practice (Photographed by Art Emanuel)

Lakers add team

Soccer keeps growing

If sports success can be viewed as a series of progressions, the West Bloomfield soccer team is coming along just nicely.

Two years ago they did not have a team. Last year they didn't have anyone to play. But the third year may be the charm as coach Mickey Price has worked his way into Northern Suburban Soccer League and a 14 game league schedule.

Now all he has to do is find a way for his second year squad to come up with some victories against the more established schools.

"Because we're a new school as far as soccer is concerned, we haven't been able to develop the programs down through all grade levels such as other school systems have. We will have a weakness in ball handling and overall game knowledge for just that reason," Price said.

The outlook isn't all that bleak for Price's squad however. Most of last year's team, which finished 1-2-4 is back, and there are other schools in the league, such as Southfield Christian, that also have soccer programs which were recently established.

"It should be much improved over last year and very competitive. We've got some pretty good players," he said.

Leading the list of returners from last year are senior forward co-captain's Ken Soave and Chris Reynolds. Both are rated as outstanding offensive players by Price. Fullback Paul Gierschick, rated "aggressive, fast and rough" by Price should be an asset also.

Price runs his teams through practice three hours a day, five days a week, a schedule not that unusual for area soccer teams but nevertheless grueling.

"They show no evidence of tiring, but I'm certain they want to get on with the season," Price said.

The season will get under way this week for the Lakers when they take on Livonia Stevenson at Livonia before returning home for a game against a tough Cranbrook contingent.

"We're going to have to be aggressive and use a lot of hustle if we are going to be successful," Price said. The game plan according to Price is to concentrate on defense and score goals on breakaways and opponents' mistakes.

Price realizes that prolonged success in a program such as soccer is

dependant only to an extent on coaching at the high school level. Equally, if not more important is a district wide program to serve as a "feeder system" for players such as farm systems serve major league baseball teams.

"Some districts have programs from the first grade up. We don't have that yet but I'm optimistic that we will eventually," said Price.

Price said that one of the reasons that this kind of a system might one day be a reality in West Bloomfield is based on economics.

"It simply takes less money to outfit a soccer team than it does in other sports. All you need is uniforms, a ball and some goals," he said.

Price neglected to mention that a team also needs a coach such as himself who is willing to go out and practice his team 15 hours a week in a sport which is as foreign to most school children as baccini ball.

"It can be done. I coached a group from Orchard Middle School last spring. They weren't affiliated with the school district but the interest was obviously there," he said.

"That team went undefeated," Price said almost as an afterthought.

If Mickey Price can say that about the inexperienced group which he will lead into the tough Northern Suburban Soccer League when their season is done, he will be ready to take a crack at turning water into wine.

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Soccer squad ready

The Oakland University varsity soccer team tuned up for its season opener Saturday (Sept. 14) against Calvin College by soundly defeating a strong alumni team 4-0.

Oakland and Calvin, perennial rivals with excellent records from last season, will pair off on Oakland's soccer field behind the Sports and Recreation Building on Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

The varsity squad opened the scoring at the 40 minute mark of the first half when junior Saleh Khalif scored on a rebound. The goals came quick in the second half when Ken Whiteside sent a perfect pass to brother Barry, who booted the ball in the top corner of the net.

Two minutes later, Barry returned the favor with a pass to Ken who converted for the third goal of the game. Sophomore Mohammed Sedegi was given credit for the last goal as the ball changed direction off an alumni defender.

The varsity squad with many of last year's standouts back for another season hopes to improve on the excellent 11-1-1 mark recorded last season.

Back from last year's team are All-American candidate Ken Whiteside, who scored a school record 20 goals last season, goalie Dennis Mascilak, fullback Andris Richters and halfbacks John Clark and Bashar Nahawi.

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