

INDIAN VALLEY GIRLS SOCCER

Coach brings culture of soccer to local program

By **BRIAN COX***Sentinel sports reporter*

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REEDSVILLE — A change of culture is underway for the Indian Valley girls soccer team.

New coach Anita Valerio, a former player for NCAA Division II Mansfield, is moving the program more toward the teaching of the game and the desire to gain possession of the ball no matter what it takes. Valerio believes her lifetime of playing soccer will help her get her message to hit home with the players.

“My experience with soccer has been playing and I don’t think they (the players) were used to having a coach who had played soccer,” Valerio said. “I think that playing soccer all my life brings a lot to the table. I think a lot of the girls were used to doing a lot of conditioning. I want to teach soccer a lot. I want them to feel the same way I did when I was growing up and soccer was an escape from everything. I want to teach the basics and encourage camaraderie with their teammates.”

The table is already set with a team that will be led by a pair of senior captains, Bree Shugarts and Kelsey Matthews, and returns the team basically intact from last season.

“We have some strong senior leadership,” Valerio said. “The girls are really taking their places as senior captains. They’re showing our younger girls the right way to do things.”

This year, the right way may not be the same way each game. Valerio says that she would like for the team to be flexible to be able to compete against the wide variety of teams in the Mountain League, including some teams that may contend for a District 6 and PIAA title.

“We have a few formations that we run,” she said. “We’ll have our formations but the girls adjust well. I’m pretty open and we’ll change and do what we can to try and beat the good teams and to bring out our best.”

The Warriors, at least early on, seem to be an aggressive squad that likes to attack. But Valerio says that the one thing the team needs to work on is



Sentinel photo by BUFFIE BOYER

Members of the Indian Valley High School girls soccer team are, from left, front, Juliana Mannino, Dani Treaster, Cassie Schaeffer, Kelsey Matthews and Bree Shugarts; row two, Alyssa Phillips, Jillian Byler, Marissa Long, Ashley Shawver and Lindsey Kauffman; back, Leslie Houser, Linzee Ruby, Hillary Clark, Erin Bishop, Korene Lichtenwalner and Sadie Schomaker.

AT A GLANCE**INDIAN VALLEY WARRIORS**

District 6, Class AAA
Mountain League

Coach: Anita Valerio, assisted by Trevor Eckley

finishing scoring chances.

“We just need to get a little better at finishing,” she said. “We seem like we can get the ball into the 18 (-yard penalty box) but then we seem like we get a little confused after that. It’s just a matter of putting the ball into the net.

“From our first two scrimmages, we seem to attack very well. The final touch becomes the issue,” she continued. “The desire to score comes from within. I think that’s something where the seniors are going to have to take the initiative. That’s where the seniors and older girls come in.”

If the team’s work ethic is an indication, it won’t take very long for the Warriors to gain that drive to score. The new coach has been pleased with the effort put forth by the players so far.

“I think quite honestly that they work hard,” Valerio said. “I want people to think that no matter what you’re determined to get the ball back. I may not have the best-skilled players in the world but their extremely hard-working. I want to have people think that.”

Valerio says that the team’s main goal is to finish with a winning record. But she also has higher expectations for her squad.

“I think that every coach wants to make districts and states,” she said. “Above all, I want a .500 record and to get to districts. I want to make the postseason because they are a good team.”

A winning record will be no small feat with the level of competition in the Mountain League. Central Mountain will be favored to win the league title once again in a solid conference.

“I think the girls know who the good teams are,” Valerio said.

The Warriors open the season Wednesday at Juniata High School. The first home game is Sept. 8 against East Juniata.

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