

## JUNIATA GIRLS SOCCER

# County rivalry renews as Indians return to TVL

By **SARAH WHITESEL**

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MIFFLINTOWN — Juniata's girls soccer team comes into this fall after accumulating a 19-2 record last year, its second in the Mountain League.

Along with two consecutive District 6 Class AA titles, it has undoubtedly been very successful two years for the program. However this year, as Juniata transitions from the Mountain League back into the Tri-Valley league, and as last year's JV coach Brian Strawser takes the head coaching position, it is yet to be determined whether the team will continue to rip through the competition, or if it will fall flat after the past two years of success.

And as the preseason progresses, although Strawser isn't making any predictions about how his team will do in the TVL, he hopes to be competitive in every match.

"Our hope is to be able to compete in every game that we play," Strawser said.

Returning to the TVL after two years in the Mountain League, Strawser and team aren't entirely familiar with this year's competition, but one team Strawser expects to be tough is cross-county rival and winner of last year's TVL title, East Juniata.

"Lori (Goodling) and Andy (Goodling) have done a great job out there with that program. And so I really expect that until somebody can step up and knock them off that plateau, they're going to be very tough," Strawser said.

However, even though the competition looks tough and Strawser is of yet still unsure how his team will fare in the TVL, Juniata at the very least has all the earmarks of a team that could make a



Sentinel photo by BUFFIE BOYER

Members of the Juniata girls soccer team are, from left, front, Joelle Winey, Amber Myers, Lauren Baublitz, Hannah Shertzer and Madalynn Marrore; row two, Brianne Kell, Anna Hershey, Samantha Knapp, Emily Clark, Janelle Swartz, Jenna Bretz, Abena Dufie and Caitlin Reichard; row three, coach Brian Strawser, Christen Baublitz, Lexie Zimmerman, Elisabeth Ritzman, Cecilia Fitzgerald, Taylor Fulkroad, Brittany Hople, Allison Kint, Rylee Duck and coach Gary Beasom; back, manager Brenna Strawser, Alyssa Burd, Tori Warfel, McKala Dressler, Carly Burns, Michelle Horning, Megan Shoop, Lauren Lock, manager Rachel Bargo and manager Meagan Beasom.

splash this year.

First off is the fact that the girls have had a great attitude in the preseason.

"The girls have been working hard, we've had a lot of positive attitudes with the team, and the chemistry seems good," Strawser said. "All the things that make it fun to coach have been there. We're only a week or two in, but I've really been impressed with this group so far. The attitude they bring in, the strong work ethic and so forth."

One way the girls have demonstrated this positive attitude is in their willingness to try new things.

"We're changing this year," Strawser said. "I'm a different coach, and I don't do everything the same as previ-

ous coaches. But I think they've bought into that and they've accepted that quickly. It's been, I think, a pretty quick transition between what they've been used to and they way that Gary (Beasom) and I do things. And I think that's been a big help to keep us on track to where we want to get to."

But in addition to good team chemistry and a strong work ethic, Juniata also shows some promise in that many of this year's starters know from years past what it's like to be on a successful team.

"They know what the expectations are," Strawser said of his returning starters' knowledge of how to get to the top. And for the most part, Strawser has been pleased

with how the girls have been passing on that knowledge to the newer players.

"They have helped, without a doubt, to pass on what those expectations are," Strawser said.

When it comes to last year's graduating class, Juniata lost some key players, but Strawser thinks the team will still be able to recover from those losses.

"We lost quite a few players off of last year's team, that's obvious. But what's nice is that we have at least one starter back on all three lines," Strawser said.

"We have our goalie back, which is very important; we have one starting defender back, we have one starting midfielder back and we have

two on our front line back."

One of these returning players in particular is junior goalie, Joelle Winey.

"Last year we prided ourselves in defense and having shutouts, and Joelle Winey was a big part of that," Strawser said. "Having her in goal is very important because she's an excellent player who communicates well, and is very intelligent, and understands how our defense works."

Juniata also has junior Carly Burns returning at the midfield, and junior Megan Shoop returning to defense. As far as the offense goes, Juniata has sophomore Janelle Swartz along with sole senior and 2011 all-state selection, Lauren Baublitz.

### AT A GLANCE

#### JUNIATA INDIANS

District 6, Class AA  
Coach: Brian Strawser,  
assisted by Gary Beasom  
2011: 19-2

Potential is only a word until it's turned into reality, but if the girls at Juniata soccer can continue the success from years past, they will have a very strong season. However, rather than focusing on the success of the past, Strawser is looking ahead.

"We just hope to go out, get better every day, and become more and more competitive," Strawser said.