

## MIFFLIN COUNTY BOYS SOCCER

# This year's team benefits from legacy of hard work

By **SARAH WHITESEL**

*Sentinel sports reporter*

swhitesel@lewistownsentinel.com

LEWISTOWN — Hard work and a great attitude.

That's what Mifflin County boys soccer coach Jared Byler has been stressing for his boys this pre-season. And so far he's been pleased with what he's seen. "Practice has been great,"

Byler said. He explained that he and the junior varsity coach, Robert Lepley, have been pushing the boys to work hard and improve each practice, and that's exactly what the boys have been doing.

"We've been stressing a lot with the guys," Byler said. "We're on a high work rate every minute of every practice."

Byler attributes some of his team's great work ethic to last year's seniors, explaining that they left behind a strong legacy of hard work and positive attitude.

"They laid a great foundation for Mifflin County High School soccer as far as developing a good work ethic," Byler said. "All preseason, all practices, all games — they laid a great foundation for how guys are supposed to conduct themselves at practices, on the field, and in school. We had a great group of guys last year."

This year, as Mifflin County makes the transition into the highly competitive Mid-Penn Conference, this attitude of hard work and strong ethics will be much needed.

Byler predicts that the Mid-Penn Conference will challenge his boys with a level of competition they've never seen before.

"It's definitely going to be completely different than



Sentinel photo by BUFFIE BOYER

Members of the Mifflin County boys soccer team are, from left, front, Weston Shugarts, Evan Hartsock, Bret Pallotto, Trevor Middaugh, Ben Renninger, Hunter Wray and Owen Farley; middle, coach Robert Lepley, Derek Heimbach, Levi Sunderland, Caleb Neff, Nick Brought, Ben Kauffman, Ben Knepp, Noah Fisher and coach Jared Byler; back, Andrew Moon, Ian McGinnis, James Wilburne, Tucker Bachman, Evan Zewe, Kyle Bodtorf, Andrew Traxler and Zack Bonson.

### AT A GLANCE

#### MIFFLIN COUNTY HUSKIES

District 6, Class AAA

Coach: Jared Byler, assisted by Robert Lepley  
2011: 8-7-1

anything these kids have ever seen," Byler explained. "The game's going to be faster, it's going to be more physical, players are going to be more skilled than we've seen in the past. It's going to be a much, much higher level of soccer than (my players) are accustomed to."

However, while Byler predicts the competition will be tough, he sees this not so

much as a problem, but as a challenge for his team to improve.

"It's going to force us to be in tune with what we're doing every practice and every game," Byler said. "We can't be lackadaisical anytime of game or practice."

And Byler is right — Mifflin County will face some significant challenges in the Mid-Penn Conference. Two Commonwealth Division teams — Central Dauphin and State College — both finished within the state's top eight last year, and Byler expects those teams will be tough competitors again this year.

"It's going to be a chal-

lenge," Byler said. "But our coaching staff and our players — we're relishing the challenge."

As Mifflin County prepares for the season, Byler is still unsure which players will take which positions.

"It's early in the season, and we're still experimenting with where we want to put guys on the field," Byler said.

As of yet, he's still watching how the boys perform in practice before he decides which eleven will earn starting spots.

"We've still got a long time to go until the season starts, so they've still got a lot to prove," Byler said.

However, even though

Byler is still figuring out which specific players will fill certain spots, he expects that all his seniors will step forward as leaders of the team.

"I feel like at this point in the year any of our seniors can step up and be leaders,"

Byler said. And considering that Byler has seven seniors this year, this leadership could be very beneficial to the team."

Already Byler is pleased with what he's seen from his

See **Huskies** | Page 39



**RICK SMELTZ**  
BROKER  
248-8525

501 Electric Avenue  
Lewistown

717-248-2122 Fax 717-248-6031

[www.SA-RE.com](http://www.SA-RE.com)

