

## MIDD-WEST FIELD HOCKEY

# Despite graduation losses, districts is team's goal

By **ZACH KNEPP**

*Sentinel correspondent*

### AT A GLANCE

#### MIDD-WEST MUSTANGS

District 4, Class AA

Coach: Mandi Romig, assisted by Jackie Sheaffer, Jen Hummel and Jodie Sheaffer  
2011: 14-4-1

MIDDLEBURG — Last year, the Mid-West field hockey team put together a great regular season, finishing second in the Heartland Athletic Conference Division I. Unfortunately for the Mustangs, the momentum did not extend to the playoffs, as the squad from Snyder County was eliminated in the quarterfinals of the District 4 Class AA tournament.

The sour taste of the early playoff exit is not the only thing Mid-West and coach Mandi Romig will be looking to replace this fall. The Mustangs also need to find a way to fill seven starting positions that were vacated by a tremendous graduating class. Six all-stars, including Lyndee Sheaffer, the conference's leading scorer in 2011, will need to be replaced in hopes of making a championship run.

"We lost a lot of playing experience," Romig said. "That group of seniors played hockey all year long."

Sheaffer teamed up with fellow first team all-star Mariah Osgood to make up one of the best one-two offensive punches in the area. The pair could usually be counted on when a big goal was needed in a close game.

Katelyn Walter led returning scorers with four goals and seven assists in her junior season. Romig is hoping her most experienced goal scorer will pick up where the class of 2012 left off.

"She learned a lot from last year's seniors who played on the front line," Romig said.

A newcomer to varsity field hockey may also be looked upon as an offensive leader. Senior Brenne Kratzer, who was not on the

squad last year, should contribute to the goal scoring, Romig said.

While Walter and Kratzer will be looked upon to take a new role as the leaders of the offense, the last line of defense is a seasoned veteran.

Senior keeper Mikayla Freed comes into her final season anchoring the Mid-West team after a stellar junior campaign. In 2011, she only allowed 1.0 goals per game while recording 96 saves.

"We'll be looking for her to lead the defense," Romig said. "With a year of varsity under her belt, I think she'll be more comfortable in doing that."

Other returning starters include juniors Tricia Martin and Danielle Ulrich. Martin will patrol the midfield, while Ulrich looks to keep opponent's offensive attacks at bay from her defensive position.

Two other returners should earn their first starting jobs this season. Senior Alley Sharp should crack the lineup in the midfield or defense, Romig said, while junior Adrienne Gesselman should also be a constant in the lineup in the midfield.

Despite the young and inexperienced team, Romig has been happy with what she has seen during the preseason.

"Everyone is being very positive and working hard," she said. "I think their willingness to learn and work



Sentinel photo by BRADLEY KREITZER

Members of the Mid-West field hockey team are, from left, front, Wynnie Warren, Bree Kratzer, Jen Elliott, Alley Sharp, Katelyn Walter, Mikayla Freed and Sarah Deppen; second row, Larissa Sparrer, Perk Fisher, Tricia Martin, Adrienne Gesselman, Kassidy Klingler and Madison Hokenbrough; third row, Merissa Aucker, Shelby Shrawder, Alexxa Dauberman, Megan Walter, Danielle Ulrich, Erica Kuhns and Casey Stuck; fourth row, Audrey Trego, Kara Freed, Brandi Goss, McKenna Beck, Jessica Whitesel, Abby Miller, Kaitlin Schell and Katie Swineford; back, Alexis Steininger, Emily Hackenberg, Makayla Keister, Morgan Jordan, Brittani Hayes, Cassie Oldt and Samantha DeLong.

hard will be the strong point of the team."

While improving on last year's 14-4-1 record may be a stretch, the team's goals are very obtainable.

"We want to be competitive and qualify for the District 4 playoffs," she said.

Last year the Mustangs finished second behind perennial power Selinsgrove in the large-school division of the Heartland Conference. Romig thinks her squad will once again have to battle the Seals to earn a conference and district title.

"Selinsgrove is always a favorite to win both," she said. "Lewistown, Mifflinburg, Shikellamy and Danville will also be tough in the conference and playoffs."

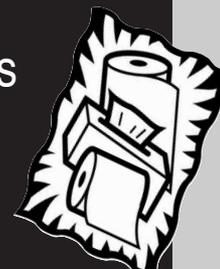
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