

JUNIATA MENNONITE GIRLS SOCCER



Members of the Juniata Mennonite girls soccer team are, from left, front, Madison Rheam, Caleigh Hahn-Kline, Lydia Rudy, Alaina Shambach and Lauren Breon; back, coach Trisha Hoffman, Alicia Glick, Bethany Saner, Blaze Kelley, Amy Esterline, Ciara Shay, and Monica Brubaker. Lexi Hahn-Kline, Valarie Meiser, Leah Cross and Chloe Campbell also are team members.

Sentinel photo by TABITHA GOODLING

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Lions look for another good year

By **KENNY VARNER**

Sentinel correspondent

MCALISTERVILLE — 2012 was a turnaround season of sorts for the Juniata Mennonite girls soccer team. The Lions completed their preseason team goal of breaking the .500 mark. With basically the same squad minus one lost to graduation — Rachel Allen — the hope of an even better record seems like a strong possibility for this year's version of the squad.

The team was 9-7 overall with a 5-7 record in the Allegheny Christian Athletic Association last year.

This season coach Trish Hoffman will be assisted by a new assistant, Hope Watts. Hoffman will be counting on numerous players for leadership in the upcoming campaign.

"My key returners are Lauren Breon, Bethany

Saner, Alexis Hahn-Kline and hopefully Valarie Meiser," who is currently sidelined by an injury, Hoffman said. "But I hope we can get her back soon."

There are no real new players in the younger group because league rules allow players below the high school level, but Hoffman thinks that a few players could step up and play an important role for Juniata Mennonite this season.

"We don't have a whole bunch of new players because we also play seventh through 12th graders," Hoffman said. "So, obviously the younger players that have been on the team will be moving into a starting position. We have two new players and we do have a girl who is coming back on the team that used to play for me.

"She was a home schooler and last year we weren't allowed to have any home

schoolers. Leah Cross will be stepping in and helping us out at the midfield position. She will be a good asset as a newcomer," Hoffman said.

The Lions potential strength will come on both the defensive and offensive side of the ball.

"We have a pretty strong defense and a strong offense, actually a strong forward line. It will be just putting them together and hoping that they stay healthy," she said. "Obviously we don't have a big team ... so you kind of have to move people around and I could move my ideal starting line up in, I think our defense will be strong and our frontline will be strong so if we can connect those we will do well." Juniata Mennonite's weakness will be due to its youth and inexperience coming from the bench.

"I do have one seventh grader and two eighth graders so we're young and

AT A GLANCE

JUNIATA MENNONITE LIONS

Allegheny Christian
Athletic Association

Coach: Trish Hoffman,
assisted by Hope Watts
2012: 9-7, 5-7 ACAA

my subs are going to be young," Hoffman said.

Old mainstays from division leaders past seem to be the teams that Hoffman sees as tough teams to do battle with this season.

"Usually the top two teams in our division are Northumberland Christian and Meadowbrook Christian," Hoffman said. "They have a lot bigger school than us and they have a lot bigger numbers. Obviously we would like to win against them but we focus on just working together in those games."

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