

Framingham aims to finish deal in Div. 1

By Mike Farrell / Boys Soccer | Sunday, September 7, 2008 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Other High School](#)

Last season, the Framingham Flyers were a collection of wide-eyed sophomores and juniors, young kickers who lacked the experience to understand the pressure of tournament play. That supposedly “green” team rolled off five wins in its Division 1 tournament bracket before losing a 1-0 penalty kick-decided state final to St. John’s of Shrewsbury. Now a year older and savvier, the Flyers’ frightening talent is ready to take flight toward another title shot.

“We’ve got a bull’s-eye on our back,” said Framingham coach Dan Avery, now in his 27th season. “I know that sounds like something (Bill) Belichick would say, but we have to be ready. If you’re not ready in high school play, that’s when you lose.”

Equipped with offensive-minded talent like striker John Goncalves and last year’s Bay State Conference MVP, midfielder Erick Nader, Avery’s senior-laden squad won’t settle for less than another deep playoff run. Behind its scoring fury will be senior netminder Luca Pignatiello, who hopes to build off a stellar tournament performance (three goals against, three shutouts in six games).



Photo by Nancy Lane

Speaking of postseason goaltending brilliance, before falling to Bay State Conference foe Framingham, 2-1, in the state semis, Weymouth and senior Nick Patten didn’t allow a goal in the South sectional. His vital leadership spearheads six returning starters who, according to second-year coach Bill McEachern, understand how selfless contribution can equal wins.

“Last season, the team chemistry was incredible,” he said. “Some of the guys sacrificed a lot of personal accolades for the good of the program.”

Those unselfish Wildcats hope the upperclass combo of midfielder Greg Kennerly and Ryan Bradford can fill the scoring void left by departed dynamo Kyle Cronin. They’ll need all game facets to gel if they’re to best the Flyers, as well as Carey Division rivals Newton North and Brookline.

Also aiming for Framingham will be Middlesex League machine Lexington, which fell to the Flyers, 2-1, in last season’s Div. 1 North semifinals. The Minutemen have replaced 10 graduating seniors with a wide array of talent from the undefeated (17-0-1) junior varsity squad, including junior midfielders Jordan Mizerak and Kevin Choi. The pair are two of many underclassmen call-ups who will help hold off league foe and sectional finalist Woburn.

After falling to Big Three power Brockton in the Div. 1 South semis, defending Hockmook champion North Attleboro returns in search of its fourth straight tournament appearance. The Rocketeers will depend on senior co-captain Sam Ocel (league all-star in ’07) for offensive pressure and rely on the lunch-pail work ethic of stopper Colin Flynn, a gritty defender who excels in transition. Both will be key in holding off divisional and league adversary Mansfield and Div. 2 Hockomock iron Canton and Sharon.

If Charlestown is to run at another Boston City League title, it will be a lot slower grabbing it. Two of last season’s best players - Omar Aden and Ahmed Ali - were too good at running, so they’re lacing up this season for Townie cross country. Still, first-year coach Dan Hackett hopes stopper Yaovi Jondah and goalie Brenton Beaufiles can help build on last year’s two tournament victories.

Elsewhere in Div. 1, look for Dual-County rivals Acton-Boxboro and Lincoln-Sudbury to slug it out again, while tournament regulars Haverhill and St. John’s Prep will dance amongst the top of their conferences.

The Div. 2 conversation must start with DCL small champ Concord-Carlisle, state champions in ’06 and a double-

overtime loss away from returning to the state final last season.

“It was just one of those games,” seventh-year coach Ray Pavlik said of the semifinals loss to Sharon. “We had more shots on goal than they did, but soccer’s one of those games where stats like that don’t really matter if you don’t get the win.”

Though his team graduated Mike Burke and Theo Terris, they still have electric forward Rob Kolowicz and junior defenseman Drew Vanasse, who must anchor the Patriot defense eager to again best the likes of Cape Ann stalwart Masconomet. After falling, 4-3, to oncord-Carlisle in the North semis, the Chieftains return with a fluid passing attack from halfback Brad McDonald and forward John Miller. With Masco goaltender Jon Doucette hungry for tournament redemption, he’ll assure an impenetrable defense. Within the Cape Ann, North Andover and Wilmington are contenders.

Div. 2 threats can also be found in the Merrimack Valley’s Central Catholic and Dracut, as well Chelsea and Medfield.

After dropping a 2-1 overtime decision to Bromfield in the Div. 3 state final, Lynnfield hopes its senior trio of Sean Morrissey, Matt Dillon and Dan Kearney can power the defense enough to compensate for the departure of scoring virtuoso Mike Kennedy (38 goals last season). In the Cape Ann small, they’ll be pushed by Hamilton-Wenham, while South sectional champion East Bridgewater will depend on Jesse Masse and a slew of fresh faces to hold off Patriot Leaguers Pembroke and Hingham in pursuit of a state semifinal rematch with Lynnfield.

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