

August 24, 2011

LCA 0 - Henry Clay HS 1

Season Record: 2-3-0

The LCA Lady Eagles opened city play tonight against the Henry Clay Blue Devils - a team with many friends and family members who are well known to most from the club soccer circles. While the Lady Devils ultimately prevailed 1-0, a steady breeze made the night of soccer under the lights fairly enjoyable and it was a great opportunity to learn for the young Lady Eagles. Lesson #1: You can't coach size.

From the opening kickoff, the Blue Devils had their heads up and their shoulders squared as Julie Sunday was taken down almost immediately after a short twelve yard return - no wait, this is soccer. With eleven seniors, twenty five players, and a host of talented underclassmen, the Blue Devils are a very good soccer team that will battle Bates Creek to get out of the Region and should go far if they do. The defense (sans Willis) remains solid and the size, strength and speed of the offense is pretty impressive.

Despite possibly a mismatch on paper, the Lady Eagles came to play and elevated their intensity early on to match that of the Blue Devils. The first half began with the Blue Devils dominating possession and maintaining the ball in the Eagles half of the field. As concern mounted, the Lady Eagles found their footing and began passing and possessing and the momentum seemed to completely turn in favor of the Lady Eagles. Despite the seemingly dominating play on both ends of the field, the first half ended in a 0-0 tie with the Lady Eagles having better statistics (3 shots on goal to Henry Clay's 1) if not the better chances. It could be argued that Henry Clay had the best chance when the right forward worked back to the edge of the box and let fly with a beautiful left footed shot that was destined for the upper left corner. A brilliant touch by the ultra quick Katelin Bundy kept the score knotted at zero and all breathed a sigh of relief to be tied at the half.

Just five minutes into the second, lightning struck and Henry Clay capitalized on a 40 yard through ball that ultimately found the foot of Lindsey Elsen who niftily slotted the ball past Bundy - that's two years in a row for the Sophomore Elsen who won last year's game 1-0 as well. While the goal was created by several breakdowns in the back, it is a tremendous teaching opportunity for the team and lesson learned heading into ALL "A" and district play. Despite the momentary letdown, the back line battled the larger Blue Devils all night long with an admirable grit and determination and more than held their own against one of the more physical front lines they will see all year. While the back line battled, the offense did as well. Maddie Sjogren once again provided the fuel and pace as she flew all over the field. Rachel Bertrand and Caley Hall were likewise always near the ball and were not shy about meeting Henry Clay's aggressive play. Treadway, Boone, McKinney and Madden likewise showed great conditioning working hard up top all night and had several moments throughout the game - especially late where energy, effort and smart soccer (stringing short passes) resulted in several near goals. All in all, a pretty good effort by the Lady Eagles who proved once again that they have the talent to play with the best teams in the state.

The JV squad likewise performed admirably despite the game time temp near 90 degrees. As the Varsity did, the JV squad lost 1-0 to the Blue Devils conceding a goal only when the team was forced to play down a player for several minutes due to an injury. The two new players should be a welcome relief to a team that has been playing with few, if any, subs and at times like tonight even down a player.