

SPORTS & SCHOOL NEWS

GIRLS SOCCER PREVIEW

A new journey begins

New faces to fill void of 11 seniors; Feddema to miss season with injury



During practice on Aug. 16, Buffalo senior Brooke Gunderson (left) does one-on-one drills against freshman Keara Gerasimenko (right) at Bison Field East. This year's home games will be played on the grass fields. (Photo by Rob LaPlante)

By Rob LaPlante
Sports Editor

Injuries have played a major factor the past handful of seasons for the Buffalo girls' soccer team. This year is no different.

Second-year Head Coach Josh Soukup came to the opening day of practice on Aug. 16 knowing he will be without one of his top players. Senior defender Lauren Feddema will miss the entire fall soccer season due to a knee injury she sustained during an AAU basketball game this summer.

Feddema is one of four captains on this year's team, along with Brooke Gunderson, Kylie Smith, and Claire Erickson.

"I was really bummed. Lauren is such a great athlete and it's really a bummer to hear she's out for the season," Erickson said. "It will be tough to replace her. We'll have to make up for it with some new faces. I still think we'll still be able to have a little bit of success."

As a sophomore, Erickson is the only non-senior among the four captains. To be given a leadership role as an underclassmen is something she takes great pride in.

"It's such a special experience," Erickson said. "I'm beyond blessed for Josh to give me this opportunity. I'm real excited to not only be a captain this year, but to be able to grow my leadership the next couple years, especially with a young team coming back."

Feddema's injury follows a recent trend over the last handful of seasons in which Buffalo has dealt with a major or lingering injuries to one or more of its key players.

"It's happened more than it should," Soukup said. "I haven't taken the time to compare it to other sports, but it definitely has been an issue with this team."

On top of the injuries, Soukup also had the challenge of replacing 11 seniors who all made significant contributions over their high school careers.

Gone are leading scorers Mya Holmquist, Lexi Boyd, Carly Kauffman, and Lauren Boyd, and Brooke Bergeron. The five players accounted for all 12 goals Buffalo scored a season ago. Holmquist led the team with five goals. Lexi Boyd had four. Kauffman scored

two and Bergeron had the other.

Also gone is starting goalkeeper Clara Holmberg, who ranked among the state leaders in most major goal-tending categories. Having the luxury of so many experienced girls a year ago was a blessing in disguise for Soukup, who coached the Bison to a 2-8-2 overall record in his first year.

"It was a huge blessing to come in as a first-year head coach and have 12 seniors that all contributed, it makes your first year go very smooth," Soukup said. "With them gone, the second year almost feels now like my first year, in terms of not knowing what to expect. It has a very different feel than last year."

Like the Bison team of three years ago, this year's squad will be freshman and sophomore heavy. Erickson and freshman Zia Wulf are the most experienced of the underclassmen. Sophomore Peyton Anderson will take over in goal for Holmberg.

While there were only two wins to speak of, the highlight of the year was the team earning a 3-1 home victory on Sept. 22 against Eden Prairie.

The victory came on senior night. It was also the first win in the two years as members of the Lake Conference.

"It was such a great experience, especially on senior night," Erickson said. "It was unfortunate it was our only conference win, but it was awesome."

Unlike last year's schedule, which featured nine of the 11 regular season games against Lake opponents, this year's schedule opens with three-straight non-conference teams. Buffalo hosts Monticello on Thursday, Aug. 26 at 7 p.m. The Bison split their only two non-conference games a year ago against the Magic, winning 3-2 at Monticello, but losing 2-1 at home.

New to this year's schedule is a home game Tuesday, Aug. 31 against Tartan. They will also host Chaska on Sept. 16 and Hill-Murray on Sept. 18. Some key road stops outside the conference includes Sept. 11 at Hutchinson, Oct. 5 at St. Francis, and Oct. 9 at Chanhassen. Buffalo will play each of the six other Lake schools once, except a home-and-home series with St. Michael-Albertville.

"It's going to be interesting, because two years ago we played a whole double round through the Lake," Soukup said. "We actually have a bunch of games against teams we haven't played in a while, or who we never played. It's exciting to travel to new places and see some new competition."

One other change to this year, the home games will move back from the turf stadium at Bison Field West to the grass at Bison Field East. The switch comes with some mixed reviews.

"We have about the most beautiful grass field we can play on. With as dry it's been this summer, I can't believe how green it is," Soukup said. "The grounds crew has done a phenomenal job. It plays really fast, but in a good way. I don't know if it's an advantage or disadvantage. It's just a beautiful complex to play soccer at."

"It's very unfortunate," Erickson said. "I prefer to play on turf field, but we have a very nice grass field. I think we'll be able to adjust accordingly. Soccer is soccer."

2021 Schedule Girls Soccer

August		
26	MONTICELLO	7 p.m.
31	TARTAN	7 p.m.
September		
7	ROGERS	7 p.m.
9	STMA	7 p.m.
11	Hutchinson	3 p.m.
14	Hopkins	5 p.m.
16	CHASKA	7 p.m.
18	HILL-MURRAY	12 p.m.
20	Eden Prairie	5 p.m.
25	ELK RIVER	11 a.m.
28	EDINA	5 p.m.
30	St. Michael-Albertville	5 p.m.
October		
2	MINNETONKA	11 a.m.
5	St. Francis	7 p.m.
7	WAYZATA	5 p.m.
9	Chanhassen	3 p.m.
14	Section 8AAA QF	TBD
19	Section 8AAA SF	TBD
21	Section 8AAA Final	TBD
25-31	State Tourney	TBD
	(neutral sites/US. Bank Stadium)	
November		
1-6	State Tourney	TBD
	(neutral sites/US. Bank Stadium)	
2020 records:		
2-8-2	overall	
1-6-2	Lake Conference (6th place)	
Section Tournament:		
Maple Grove 4-0 loss		
Head Coach:		
Josh Soukup (2nd year)		
Assistant Coaches:		
Carrie Schmitt, Faith Billa, Sam Haryn, Emily Barthel		
Captains:		
Lauren Feddema, Claire Erickson, Brooke Gunderson, Kylie Smith		



Lauren Feddema will have to lead the team her senior year from the sidelines. A knee injury suffered in summer basketball will force her to miss the entire fall soccer season. (Photo by Rob LaPlante)

BHM DISTRICT 877 CALENDAR

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Thursday, August 26	
PRIDE TRANSITIONS OPEN HOUSE	2-7 P.M.
CONCERT AT STURGES PARK	7 P.M.
Friday, August 27	
Saturday, August 28	
FOOTBALL SCRIMMAGE W/PRINCETON, WILLMAR/ BISON FIELD WEST	9 A.M.
Sunday, August 29	
Monday, August 30	
TEACHER WORKSHOP BCMS OPEN HOUSE	4-8 P.M.
Tuesday, August 31	
TEACHER WORKSHOP ELEMENTARY OPEN HOUSES DES ICE CREAM SOCIAL	5-7 P.M. 5-7 P.M.
Wednesday, September 1	
TEACHER WORKSHOP BHS/PLC OPEN HOUSE	5-8 P.M.
Thursday, September 2	
TEACHER WORKSHOP	

OUTDOORS

DNR: Waterfowl hunters may face challenge on Pelican Lake

Hunters who want to launch a boat on Wright County's Pelican Lake during this year's waterfowl seasons may encounter some challenges as a result of low water levels.

Minnesota's statewide drought combined with a multi-year habitat restoration project have resulted in conditions that make Pelican Lake's two public accesses not easily useable by all watercraft.

As of early August 2021, the newer Pelican Lake Wildlife Management Area boat access on Fallon Ave. NE, on the northwest side of the lake, remains usable to smaller boats that can be moved a short distance by hand. The access on the southwest side of Pelican Lake (near 40th St. NE) also remains usable to smaller boats, but parking there is limited to the east road shoulder of Edmonson Ave. NE. Larger boats may not be able to launch.

This is the final year of a multi-year drawdown aimed at restoring critical waterfowl habitat on Pelican Lake. The project, funded by the Outdoor Heritage Fund through a partnership between the DNR and Ducks Unlimited, has already resulted in the re-establishment of lush stands of aquatic vegetation and a resurgence of invertebrate populations. Observers of the lake also have noted increases in the numbers of waterfowl using the lake as a stopover during spring and fall migrations.

With average amounts of precipitation, the lake should return to about its normal level by next year. In the meantime, waterfowl hunters and other users are encouraged to keep an eye on Pelican Lake boat launching conditions and adjust plans as needed.

DNR: Don't shoot ear-tagged, radio-collared research bears

The Minnesota bear hunting season opens Wednesday, Sept. 1, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is asking hunters to avoid shooting marked research bears. These bears are marked with distinctively large, colorful ear tags and have radio collars.

Researchers with the DNR are monitoring about 20 radio collared black bears across the state, especially in bear hunting zones 25, 27, 45 and 451, and in parts of the no-quota zone. Most of them are in or near the Chippewa National Forest between Grand Rapids and Bigfork. Others are near Voyageurs National Park and around Camp Ripley.

"We're asking hunters to avoid shooting these valuable research bears," said Andy Tri, DNR bear research scientist. "These collared bears give us much of the data we use in bear management and are most valuable to us when they are collared for multiple years."

A key to the research is looking at year-to-year changes in natural food supplies and how that affects individual bears in terms of their habitat use, physical condition, denning, reproduction and interactions with people. This research is not designed to evaluate mortality from hunting. Trapping new bears every year to replace the ones killed cannot substitute for long-term data on individual bears.

All of the collars the DNR uses in this research have GPS units. The GPS coordinates are either uploaded to a satellite or stored in the collar and downloaded by DNR researchers when they visit the bears in their dens. Each bear provides several thousand data points per year.

The bear's coat often hides the collar, especially in the fall, and most of the collars are black. But all collared bears have large (3 by 2 inch), colorful ear tags so hunters can simply identify a collared animal by these large tags, whether or not a collar is visible. The tags should be plainly visible on trail cam photos or when a bear is at a bait.

Links to photos of collared research bears and some research findings gained from them are available on the DNR's bear management webpage. DNR officials recognize that a hunter may not be able to see a radio collar or ear tags in some situations. For this reason, taking a bear with a radio collar is legal; however, waiting a few minutes to get a clear view of the bear's head would reveal whether it has large ear tags, which indicates that it is collared.

Hunters may see bears with very small ear tags (1 by 1/4 inch). These bears are not collared but are important for other ongoing research projects. It is legal to take a bear with small ear tags. The DNR asks any hunters who do shoot a collared or ear-tagged bear to call the DNR Wildlife Research Office in Grand Rapids at 218-328-8879 to report it and coordinate the pickup or drop off of the collar.

Most collared bears have a small implanted heart monitor under the skin on the left side of the chest. It looks like a small, silver capsule that is approximately the width of a paper clip. This contains valuable information stored in memory. Hunters who find this device while skinning the bear should submit it with the collar. Hunters with trail cam photos of ear tagged bears are asked to email the photos and locational info to mnbearcams.dnr@state.mn.us.

Buffalo Girls Travel Basketball Registration is open through Sept. 15th

All girls in 4th-8th grade are welcome!

Go to www.buffalogirlshoops.org
to register and for more information

