



2009 Season Recap

“TEAM Above All Else”

The seniors remarked several times at conditioning that this year's conditioning sessions were the hardest yet and focused on endurance. A minimum of four miles sprinted every Tuesday and six-seven miles run every Thursday became the norm!! The conditioning was brutal but effective. It set the tone for the season and readied everyone for pre-season camp.

The final 2009 squad rounded out at 40 players and two managers. To make room and playing time for the future on JV, eighteen field players and two keepers were selected for Varsity. Off-season moves left more than expected Varsity slots open that were filled with eager replacements. The starting JV team saw a 25 game schedule ahead of them with extra games with Seton LaSalle, Canevin and Serra added to the schedule. Also, to give more playing time and high school experience, the JV subs were split into two teams – Burgundy and Silver. Pre-season Camp lasted a grueling 11 days with beautiful hot, humid weather for the entire time, except for the very last hour of the last day when the skies opened and drenched the players who were planning a team lunch at Red Robin at the conclusion of camp.

The opening pre-season contest of the 2009 campaign saw our Eagles kick off with the Gators from Gateway on a clear, picture perfect summer night in Antimarino Stadium, Coach Truschel's Alma Mater. Sophomore Breana McAfee opened the 2009 season scoring finishing a nice cross from Freshman Anna Kimmich (Little Fuzz). The defense dug in and denied the remaining Gator chances, preserved the pre-season opening win and our JV was off and running. The 2009 Varsity came out looking like the US Women's National team and took the Gators totally by surprise dominating them for the first ten minutes of the match, outshooting Gateway 5-0. The Gators slowed down the pace and managed five shots of their own in the half, putting two past Senior Keeper Maria DiPerna and taking a 2-0 lead into the half. Our Eagles matched their first half shot output in the second half, adding five more, but they also matched their first half goal output and gave Gateway a clean sheet dropping the opening pre-season contest 3-0.

The Eagles second pre-season match found the Crusaders from Canevin taking a 1-0 lead just four minutes into the match. Freshman Kailey Joyce took the ball near midfield and dribbled through a couple of Crusader defenders and finished what she started, leveling the score in the 6th minute. Canevin again took the lead, but Senior Clair Geraghty knotted it in the 63rd minute. The bouncing ball on the hard grass field made passing difficult for both teams and the match ended tied at 2 even though we outshot Canevin 16-5, totally possessed the ball and outplayed them in the second half. Even though it was sloppy at times, a lot of good possession and movement gave the coaches optimism going into the season opener with Bethel Park. Canevin's JV opened the scoring and took a 1-0 lead going into halftime. Not to be denied, Freshman Caralyn Gorman recorded the first goal of her young high school career that leveled the score at 1. That would be the eventual final score as neither team threatened much in the defensive struggle.

Coming into a buzz saw disguised as the Bethel Park Black Hawks, Freshmen Keeper Alex Delazio and our Eagle defense led by fellow Freshman Molly Morabito held Bethel to one goal on 13 shots at the half. The Hawks would add 10 more in the second half and four found the net in the season opening 5-0 loss. The 2009 season opening contest for the varsity didn't prove to be much different from the JV as we chased the ball all night and never really got started. The Eagles were outshot 29-6 and outscored 6-0. We'll see them again.

It wasn't for any lack of shooting as the Eagles JV outshot the Crusaders from Canevin 11-4, but came up dry on the scoreboard as the contest ended in a 0-0 tie.

Taking in the energy from the excitement of playing at the Schenley Oval, freshmen took the stage as Freshman Andi Sciulli got the JV on the scoreboard finding the ball in a scrum in front of the Dragon goal and helping it find the back of the net. Fellow Freshman Jessica Snyder added the insurance that sealed the game with eight minutes left as she finished a beautiful cross from Bre McAfee.

Setting the stage for a thrilling varsity game, the Eagle JV team spotted the Highlanders from Baldwin the game opening goal, but they fought back hard and determined. Freshman Jenna Sciulli got her first of the year and tied the match with 13 minutes left. The tie would stand as time ran out. The coaches called the Baldwin match the best the varsity has looked in a few years. The fans in the stand totally agreed as our Eagles put on a passing and possession clinic but had chance after chance come up short. On one of the few ventures into our half, the Highlanders managed to get one past Maria DiPerna and took a 1-0 lead into the half. The Eagles came out smoking and again it looked like just a matter of time before they would be on the board. Senior Claire Geraghty, having what Coach Mader would later say was "the best game of her career", was taken down in the box in a move that thwarted a sure game tying goal. Finishing what she set out to do, Claire buried the PK and the match was level again. Baldwin pressed and had five corners in the first overtime, but came away empty as did the Eagles on numerous scoring chances. Maria made the save of the night on a Highlander breakaway in the first overtime. The game was destined to end in a tie as the second overtime wound down. As fate would have it, the ball found the back of the net with nine seconds remaining off of Baldwin's ninth corner kick of the contest. It was a very disappointing end to the best game the Eagles had played in a long time.

The emotion and energy spent the previous night at Baldwin took a lot out of the Eagles as they came out flat and listless the next day against Allderdice but Claire Geraghty gave the Eagles a 1-0 lead at the half finishing a beautiful cross from Kailey Joyce who had made her way down the field with an inspiring run to the corner before she lifted a beautiful ball to Claire's waiting foot. The Dragon Keeper was helpless to defend. Dice leveled the score as a Dragon forward dribbled through three defenders on the end line and beat Keeper Maria DiPerna. Junior Midfielder Natalie Stinson put the game away with a beautiful shot that was the highlight of the day from about 25 yards out from the right side of the field to the upper left corner of the goal. In a defensive struggle, both the Oakland and Allderdice JV teams managed just four shots between them (OC-3, Allderdice – 1) in the 0-0 match.

A hot, sunny afternoon provided the backdrop as we traveled for the first of two JV games this season with Serra Catholic. No matter who won, Eagles would be victorious today!!! The Oakland Catholic Eagles found their long lost scoring touch but it took a while. They came away with an impressive 3-0 victory. Freshman Anna Kimmich blasted a shot past the helpless Serra Keeper in the 29th minute taking a really nice feed from Bre McAfee before setting herself up for the game winner. Moving up to center mid, sophomore Allie Scolieri sent a beautiful rocket to the upper corner finishing a great pass from Junior Maddie Butler in the 48th minute. Caralyn Gorman added the insurance we needed in the 58th minute. It was very deserving that she scored after coming up empty on several good chances over the course of the game.

It was an absolutely gorgeous Saturday morning that God ordered up for the Eagles as Seton LaSalle came to the friendly confines of West Field for the 2009 home opener for the OC JV team. Also making its debut for the first time in three years, the Concession Stand returned to the sidelines!!! Coming off the big 3-0 win over Serra the day before and the Freshmen Mixer at Central the night before, it took the Eagles a few minutes to get settled and get their legs going, but once they did, Seton never threatened and when they did, Alex Delazio shut the door on the Rebels and preserved the fourth clean sheet of her young high school career. Continuing her hot streak, Caralyn Gorman got the only goal the Eagles would need just four minutes into the match. A beautiful game on a beautiful day.

Our JV extended their unbeaten streak to six games as Jenna Sciulli netted the game trying goal on one of her game high four shots with just three minutes left in the game. Seton led 1-0 at the half, but we leveled it in the second. Snake bitten is the only way to describe what happened to the Eagles Varsity at Seton LaSalle as we outplayed the rebels and lead in every statistical category except the one that counted – goals – in the 2-0 loss. The goal draught continues as the Mighty OC scoring machine has mustered only three goals in four games, with two of them coming against Allderdice. We are playing well enough to win and the defense is keeping us right in there, but we just can't finish.

Back on the winning side, Bre McAfee got the only goal the JV would need to hand Canevin another loss. She finished a beautiful play as Caralyn Gorman served a nice throw-in to Jessica Snyder, who passed the ball up to Bre who put it home three minutes into the second half. That was the only goal we would need as Junior Keeper Claire Kuszajewski recorded her first clean sheet of the 2009 season.

A must win game with huge playoff potential saw our Eagle Varsity come out ready to put it all together. The Jaguars from Thomas Jefferson were coming off a 1-0 overtime win over Baldwin and brought a 6-1-1 record into West Field, Oakland's little piece of heaven. We came out smoking and driven to score as Claire Geraghty placed a beautiful shot over the outstretched arms of the Jaguar Keeper for a 1-0 lead in the 22nd minute. She took an accurate lead pass from Junior Natalie Stinson and finished the play for the go ahead goal. TJ leveled the score in the 28th minute sending in a shot from far out that eluded Maria DiPerna. We wouldn't be denied today as Claire raised her shot percentage for the day to 100% scoring her second goal of the day on her second shot of the day taking a nice through ball from Sophomore Colby Foster and beating the Jaguar Keeper for a lead we would never relinquish. TJ threatened, but our staunch, senior led defense, anchored by Captain Blythe Young, Maggie Bernard, Cate Linden and Co-Captain Kate Zirpoli was up to the challenge and turned back every attempt to tie the score. Maria had some huge saves and we were back in the playoffs!!!! A damper on the festivities came when Junior Hanna Lauff collided with a TJ player on a seemingly innocent play of two players hard charging for the ball. The ambulance was called and when the dust settled, Hanna ended up with a concession, a sprained neck and actually, a slight fracture of her hip. The team rallied around her and dedicated the game to her. They started the 2nd half with the chant "Let's Go Hanna" and came out with revenge in mind. That motivation was all Bre McAfee needed as she took it upon herself to pick up the loose ball, drive through three Jaguar defenders and record the game winner in the 40th minute. Molly Morabito led the Eagle defense that held TJ shot less in the half and the 1-0 victory ran the season record after ten games to 5-1-4. Not bad!!!

Maybe the two day lay-off because of the G20 wasn't the right thing to do, maybe it was. But judging from the touches and play against Peters Township, both the JV and Varsity, had trouble getting things going. But, the varsity played even with the Indians for the first 26 minutes of the match. Once Peters scored, we just couldn't get it going. The JV managed three shots in their 5-0 loss and the varsity managed just one lone shot in their 6-0 loss. We'll get 'em next time!!!

The Eagles launched a season high 44 shots at the Keystone Oaks keeper and allowed a season low one, loan shot against in the 9-0 goal fest. Kailey Joyce and sophomore Colby Foster both recorded hat tricks. Junior Lauren DiRubbio recorder her first varsity goal from her friend and team mate sophomore Rachel Vigliotti. Blythe Young finished a nice cross from Natalie Stinson with a header goal. Senior Lauren Oliphant left no doubt with a bullet that almost ripped a hole in the back of the net finishing a great pass from Claire Geraghty who recorded her second assist of the contest. Rachel Vigliotti recorded an "assist hat trick" with her 3rd on the day. Bre McAfee, playing her first varsity game, recorded a game high 9 shots for the Eagles, but the perfect player was Colby Foster who finished all three of shots and went 3 goals for 3 shots for the day.

We thought that the grass and an afternoon match might slow down the WPIAL 3rd ranked Bethel Park. We held them to two goals in the first half and were looking for a chance in the 2nd half, but the defense wore down and the eventual 6-0 score didn't reflect how hard we fought. A Black Hawk corner kick in the 6th minute was all Bethel JV would need enroute to a 4-0 win.

The annual State College trip may have been just what the doctor ordered as the Eagles, fired up from watching Remember the Titans on the trip up, played one of their best games of the year outplaying Juniata and out shooting them 31-12. Their efforts yielded a three goal outburst in the 3-1 win. It took a while to finally score, but Kailey Joyce took a nice pass from Lauren Oliphant and finished her shot in the 52nd minute. Juniata leveled the score off a corner kick just four minutes later finishing a ball Maria DiPerna had trouble controlling. It appeared the game was destined to end in a tie until Blythe Young took the ball and drove to the right corner sending a beautiful ball into the box that Claire had no trouble burying for the eventual game winner in the 74th minute. Taking advantage of momentum, Kailey sent a beautiful cross into an awaiting Claire just two minutes later.

We're still trying to figure out if she headed the ball in or the ball bounced off the defender in front of her into the goal after Claire managed to "help" the defender into the goal. In any case, as she trotted away with a Cheshire cat grin, the game was in the bag. In an offensive explosion, Claire and Kailey both recorded eleven shots each while Lauren Oliphant was next with five.

The rain held off for the varsity game, but the skies opened for the JV game bringing back memories and talk of last year's swamp game. The sloppy weather didn't dampen the play much as both teams managed 12 shots. Juniata snuck one past Alex in the 51st minute for the only score and a rare JV loss.

The long night of team bonding, techno music, missing pillows and glo sticks on top of a decimated line up thanks to homecoming, left the JV depleted and sluggish against the Lewistown JV. Kailey Joyce was pressed into service and sophomore Morgan Rodella volunteered to suit up to help. Even so, the Eagles flew over the Panthers, out shooting them 13-7 and controlling most of the play. Their efforts were rewarded as Andi Sciulli took a pass from Kailey and finished a nice breakaway to give OC the lead in the 8th minute. Lewistown tied the score six minutes later on a steep angle shot from the corner and went ahead in the 32nd minute on a fast break of their own. Caralyn Gorman placed a nice shot on target that the keeper tried to save but bobbed the ball and Morgan buried it to level the score at 2 at the end of 60 minutes. Coach Mader and Coach Schmidt had agreed to play an overtime period to give the teams experience and to include penalty kicks if the score was still tied after OT. Kailey put us ahead just one minute into the OT period dribbling around the last defender and putting the eventual game winner home. Andi cemented the win three short minutes later finishing a nice pass from her sister Jenna and the team avoided pks with a 4-2 victory after 70 minutes.

Senior Recognition was a truly fabulous night all around. The weather was perfect – a crisp and cool October evening under the lights at Central Catholic. The opponent, Baldwin, was up and ready for the challenge of spoiling the evening for the Eagles and their parents, but the Mighty OC would have none of that. The competition started with the Eagles JV unleashing 16 shots on the Highlander Keeper. It took 29 minutes, but Jenna Sciulli took a nice cross from Anna Kimmich and buried the biscuit past the helpless keeper. Molly Morabito and the defense dug in and preserved the shutout for Alex Delazio and another low scoring 1-0 victory was ours. One goal wins seemed to be the trend of the year for the JV. The all-senior line-up took the field after a beautiful ceremony that honored both Oakland's and Baldwin's senior class. The even field seemed to tip a little in the wrong direction and the regular line up returned to the field. It didn't take long to establish control as Kailey Joyce came back for the ball, taking it from behind off a Highlander Midfielder, turned and marched, determined to the goal. She dribbled through 3-4 would be defenders and sent a hard shot at the Baldwin keeper. The keeper couldn't control the rebound which came out to the waiting foot of Claire Geraghty who left no doubt as the ball came to rest in the back of the net in the 31st minute. The game was tight and hard fought the rest of the way, but the Eagles were up for the challenge, spurred on by the raucous fans, the festive atmosphere, and, of course, God on our side. The second half seemed to go on forever, but the play by both teams was a true pleasure to watch. As the final horn sounded, victory was ours!!! It was the best effort and game of the year – to date.

The Eagle JV paid a visit to Springdale for a match who are coached by Coach Jerry Concannon, a regular clinic coach at the summer OC pre-season camp each year. Springdale was a formidable challenge on the OC schedule as their varsity was undefeated and ranked 2nd in the WPIAL, Class AA. Their JV team was very talented and had suffered few losses to date. The Eagles came out ready to face the challenge and played very tough. Springdale's goal in the 14th minute proved to be the game winner and only goal we would concede. The 1-0 loss seemed very much like a victory against a quality opponent and showed how far this JV team had come!!!

The Crusaders from Canevin next ventured into West Field for an actual regular season match. It didn't take long to get on the board as Kailey Joyce sent a nice ball into the danger area off a corner kick that Lauren Oliphant buried in the 9th minute for the eventual game winner and a lead we would never surrender. Rachel Vigliotti took the ball past two helpless defenders on a breakaway and had no trouble with the Crusader Keeper giving us a 2-0 lead in the 23rd minute. Seeing how it was done, Lauren added her second goal of the day on a fast break of her own from deep in the midfield just two minutes later in the 25th minute.

The starting varsity gave way to the subs and JV players who finished out the match and preserved the clean sheet for sophomore Keeper Claire Kuszajewski. What has become a trademark low scoring; even JV game with Canevin, the match was level at zero at the half. Anna Kimmich found a ball at her feed in a scrum in front of the goal and buried it in the 34th minute. But, the lead was short lived as a Canevin forward landed a fast break behind Alex Delazio to tie the match. Another tie with Canevin is the way the match would end leaving us with five ties to date.

The Eagles faced off against previous Section 3 rival Gateway and were ready for a fight. Gateway, ranked 9th in the WPIAL, and heading to the playoffs wasn't ready for what the Eagles were going to give them. Kailey Joyce finished a patented corner kick-like throw-in from Blythe Young as her header gave us the lead just eight minutes in. The Gators were surprised and pushed and pushed. Their frustration was mounting as the Eagles possessed and dominated play thwarting every Gateway attempt. Our defense left a Gator midfielder unmarked as she sent a clean pass to a waiting forward who blew a shot past Maria DiPerna to level the score in the 30th minute. Playing with passion and drive, Rachel Vigliotti fought her way past two defenders and cleanly beat the Gateway keeper who came out to challenge her. To save a sure goal, the Gateway keeper grabbed Rachel and pulled her down in the box. Claire Geraghty left no doubt on the ensuing penalty kick as we regained the lead in the 37th minute and took the lead into the half. The team wanted to push for the win and fought hard, but injuries and sickness forced most of the starters to the sideline in the second half. The 5-3 loss was a very "good loss" as it gave notice that we could compete easily with a team that we could eventually meet in the playoffs. It was a rewarding loss and showed how far we had come since the beginning of the season.

Showing great improvement of their own from the first time around, the JV dominated Gateway for a 3-0 win. Scoring Leader Bre McAfee beat her mark and broke in alone finishing a beautiful breakaway just two minutes into the match. The goal would be all the Eagles and Alex Delazio would need. Just to be sure, Jenna Sciulli finished a corner from Maddie Butler with a beautiful, text book header in the 10th minute that was just like we drew it up. It was truly a pretty play. Bre recorder her second of the day in the 40th minute finishing a well placed cross from Andrea Sciulli and the match ended at 3-0.

The JV team showed everyone just how far they have come since the beginning of the season at Thomas Jefferson on a clear, brisk October evening. They controlled play, passed well, and had several quality scoring chances. With the score level at the half, the resolve to win spurred the team. In a scrum in front of the Jaguar goal, Junior Kelley Stretavski took the ball, turned and fired from the right side. The ball eluded the TJ keeper and the eventual game winner found the back of the net. It was the first goal of Kelley's high school career and it was a big one. Bre McAfee registered the assist on the play. The Jaguars fought back and the game was close until Bre gathered in a nice lead pass from Jenna Sciulli to start a 40 yard breakaway. Bre raced in with the defense closing fast but she sent the insurance goal home in the 59th minute, sealing the win. The win moved our Eagles to 9-5-5 on the season.

Fired up and ready was an understatement for describing the tenor of the varsity during the pregame warm-ups. Coach Truschel demanded that the varsity "Take It!!!" and they listened!! Coach Mader later remarked that it was the best game he has ever seen an Oakland Catholic team play. We DOMINATED with a passing clinic from the opening kick-off and had TJ chasing and on their heels. Using a patented Blythe Young throw-in, Kailey Joyce headed the ball to Natalie Stinson who one-timed a shot for the opening goal in just the 3rd minute!!! It was the quickest goal recorded for the year. TJ was in shock. An inspired Rachel Vigliotti stole the ball on the ensuing TJ kick-off and the Mighty OC pressed again leaving the Jaguars wondering where this buzz saw was coming from for the first 15 minutes. TJ gained possession and finally crossed the half line about the 16th minute, but the Eagle defense was waiting, refreshed and ready for action. An unintentional foul gave TJ a free kick from about 35 yards out. The ball found a sweet spot just under the crossbar and over Maria DiPerna's outstretched fingertips for the game tying goal. TJ went ahead in the 25th minute as their leading scorer gathered in a long cross and tapped it in the corner for a 2-1 lead. To close out the scoring in the half, Rachel Vigliotti found an open Claire Geraghty who recorded the game tying goal in the 35th minute. The very hard fought second half saw no scoring on either side and into overtime we went.

The Eagles outshot TJ 8-2 in the half and had numerous, quality scoring chances but couldn't put any of the shots home - a trend that would haunt us all season long. The quickly moving first overtime period saw the score still level at the whistle. OC again dominated the second OT period as possession was the name of our game. It looked like a tie – and a playoff spot – was eminent until TJ sent a long cross that looked harmless, to the front of the Eagle goal. Maria came out to meet it, but so did the TJ forward who sent a header into the net for the heartbreaker with just 1:35 left on the clock. The loss was devastating and ended our playoff hopes, but the game was truly a testament to how far we had come. The TJ coach even remarked in the post game handshake that the better team didn't win the game. Our dreams were shattered and the players were distraught, but the heads could be held high knowing they gave their best and truly let it all out on the field.

The cold, wind and rain didn't dampen the spirit, drive and determination of the Mighty OC Eagles as they braced for the Indians of Peters Township at West Field. Playing a compacted formation, the Eagles looked good and denied and frustrated Peters with excellent patience and well timed ball control. Peters scored on a set shot in the 9th minute and we started to press to tie when a second goal slipped through. The Eagles pressed for a score in the 2nd half, but came up short in the end 3-0. The JV fared a little better with the score level at 0 after 30 minutes. Peters turned up the pressure in the 2nd half and we ended up on the wrong end of a 4-0 score. But, both the varsity and JV teams displayed vast improvement from the first time facing the Indians, something we can be proud of and a good take away from the match.

An injury decimated South Allegheny limped into West Field with only 12 players. They would lose another one with an ankle injury on the second half. It was the Colby & Rachel Show as the Eagles peppered the Gladiators with 22 shots. Rachel Vigliotti put the first goal and the eventual game winner past the SA Keeper in the 18th minute taking a nice pass from Colby Foster and finding the net. A little over 10 minutes later, Colby launched a shot from about 35 yards out that eked in just under the crossbar and over the outstretched fingertips of the Keeper. Colby notched the second of the day just one minute later as she took a direct kick and sent a rocket to the upper corner for the Eagles 3rd goal in the 30th minute. Moving to the second half, Natalie Stinson sent Rachel in on a breakaway in the 68th minute. Showing her scoring prowess, Rachel helped the ball find the back of the net. Freshman Jessica Snyder helped anchor down the defense that provided Claire Kuszajewski with her second shutout of the season. It was the end of another home year as the players celebrated the victory by carrying the goals to the side and putting them away for the long, cold winter.

The last Varsity game of the year saw our Eagles traveling to Dormont Stadium to face Keystone Oaks. An all senior line-up was announced for the second time of the year. We were missing a couple of seniors so Kailey Joyce got the nod. The game started a little sloppy as the seniors got used to each other on the pitch. The Golden Eagles surprised us and put their first shot on goal past a diving Maria DiPerna. It was the cold water to the face we needed as our Eagles responded and recorded 35 shots on goal while limiting KO to only six more. The game was truly a very fitting end for the careers of the talented seniors Claire Geraghty, Blythe Young, Kate Zirpoli, Cate Linden, Lauren Oliphant, Kristen Esposito, Coleen Hyland, Colleen Duggan and Keeper Maria DiPerna. They played tough and all had a great game. After having a little trouble finding the net all year, Claire exploded for four goals!! One of those was her third PK of the year, converting on all three. She opened the scoring in the 10th minute taking a well placed lead pass from Kailey Joyce and beating the helpless Keeper to level the score. Eleven minutes later, Lauren Oliphant picked up the assist for Claire who finished the breakaway goal. After getting mugged in the box by a frustrated Golden Eagle, Claire made them pay the price as the helpless Keeper could do nothing to stop the shot to the lower left corner – the same spot for all of Claire's three PKs this year. Blythe Young took the ball in her own end, marched through four would-be defenders and found a wide open Claire who finished the perfect pass in the 62nd minute. What a fitting end to a stellar career God had in store for Blythe this night. With time running out, she took the ball, charged down the field, from sideline to sideline, left to right and was in alone. The Keeper charged out and just as she reached Blythe, Blythe sent the ball back across the grain to the far post and the last goal of the season in the 80th minute. When the final whistle blew, the seniors realized their high school careers had come to the end. After shaking hands with KO, they joined together, prayed and cried as a team, together on the field of battle for the last time. A perfect evening and a perfect game. Truly memorable for all.