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PREP SOCCER

Science Hill sets sights on trip to state tournament

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Science Hill has a proud tradition in soccer, but this year's team hopes to do more than just continue that level.

"I think this could be one of the most special teams to come out of Science Hill," said head coach Brandon Kind. "I would be misleading if I said getting to the state was not the overall goal.

"They are more than teammates. They've been friends since they were eight years old."

At the forefront of the season snapshot is goalkeeper Andrew Kenneson. The all-state performer is a main part of the Hilltoppers' foundation.

"He's the glue of the team," said Kind. "We depend on him for that. His athleticism and goalkeeping speaks for itself. And his work ethic is a great example that we all want to meet."

The Hilltoppers are 2-0 on the season. They pounded Sullivan Central 10-1 and then whipped Elizabethton by a score of 7-0.

Coming up this week, the Hilltoppers will travel to take on Morristown West on Tuesday before returning home to face South-Doyle on Thursday. That game will be played at Civitan Park at 6:30 p.m.

Science Hill has earned the right to dream of a state tournament trip. The Hilltoppers got agonizingly close last season, losing 1-0 to Knox Bearden in the sectional round.

This year the Hilltoppers' defense figures to again be very stingy. In front of Kenneson are junior Terry Murdauh and senior Andrew Cook.

"We really depend on Terry to be the leader of the defense," said Kind. "He's the enforcer. He sets a good tone and he's physical; everything you want in a defender.

"And Cook is his counter-

part in the middle. We depend on him to clean up the loose change."

Also expected to make key contributions on defense are seniors Chris Boswell and Parker Essick, along with junior Ben Cooper.

"(Cooper) is aggressive and skillful and plays with a lot of passion," said Kind.

Seniors Matt Stull and Nate Ryman are also expected to be in the playing-time mix on defense.

Defenders are normally just that, but Kind said he wants more from his guys.

"We attack out of the back," said Kind. "Other teams have to worry about those guys along with our offensive players. We want our defenders to be more than one-dimensional."

In the midfield, senior Peter Kenneson is one of the key players.

"We need his leadership and organization," said Kind.

Milligan College signee Jonathan Watson adds to the mix on the wing. And T.J. Carter is another important part of the center.

"We play (Carter) right behind the other two forwards," said Kind. "He's one of the centerpieces. He's versatile and he's a special player."

Up top, the Hilltoppers expect to get plenty of help from Jonathan Colson. The senior is a first-year player from Brazil, and Kind said he has tremendous skill.

Also in the forward position is senior Selmein Cikaric.

"He's a bulldog up top," said Kind. "He's a true asset, and he can finish."

Conner Franklin, a junior, is another finisher. Senior Nick Smith is the backup goalkeeper and team captain.

Sophomores Johnny Bracewell and Wilfred Williams figure in the mix in utility roles.

"We're coming in with a one-day-at-a-time attitude," said Kind. "We want to be a team that puts in the work. Every day is very important."