

# Experienced Legacy Boys soccer team ready for season to start

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**JOSH DUNGAN - Bismarck Tribune**

Last year's Legacy boys soccer team was ranked fourth in the conference in the preseason poll before a second-place finish in the regular season and the conference tournament -- to Minot on both occasions -- as well as a third-place finish at state.

This time around, the Sabers aren't going to be sneaking up on people, as their returning core of players has the Sabers picked as conference runners-up this time around, again to Minot.

"Every year brings a new team, and we have solid talent coming in, but really it comes down to how well we play and mesh together as a unit," Legacy head coach Tom Marcis said. "We played well together last year and for this year, it really does come down to us getting on the field for a few games and seeing how things play out."

That returning talent fills out the Sabers' roster from front to back.

It starts in net with senior Nathaniel Olheiser, who enters his third season at the varsity level.

Olheiser was third in the West Region last season with 124 saves and was second to Minot's JJ Dufner with eight shutouts.

"He made all-state last year and he wants to improve on that," Marcis said of his veteran netminder. "We also have a junior, Liam Horner, who is pushing him hard from behind. Nathaniel's got someone

behind him now that's making him work hard and keep improving. We're really liking the situation we have with two outstanding keepers on this year's team."

Assists leader Jacob Lelm departed, as did defensive captain Matthew Souther, but Marcis isn't terribly worried about how his team will replace their graduated teammates.

"We had a lot of strong, viable options for the positions we needed to fill," Marcis said. "(Kamden Kooiman) played up front last year but now he's more in the middle of the field to fill in Jacob Lelm's spot from last year. We had to move things around to make room for the upcoming class of players, we have a lot of guys we're excited about."

Kooiman (nine goals, seven assists) is just one of the four players that Marcis expects will cue his team's attack.

Joining him are Ben McDonald (nine goals, two assists), Uriel Rivera (seven goals, seven assists), and Reece Snow (two goals, five assists).

"Those four give us a lot of really solid scorers," Marcis said. "We have a lot of guys that can score and we can score from a lot of different areas and not rely on just one."

Legacy and Minot are in a good position to become one of the state's best rivalries in the sport.

Battling to a 2-2 tie in their four matches last season, the Sabers had the last laugh when they beat Minot 2-1 in the third-place match.

"All of our games against them last season were decided by one goal," Marcis said. "We won two, they won two, it was evenly matched. I expect us to have a good rivalry with them again this year. Third was

great last year, but the guys are anxious to give themselves the opportunity to improve on that this year."

All three Bismarck public school teams made an appearance at state last year, but Century was the only team besides Legacy to earn a win.

With both teams returning top talent this season, Marcis knows that there won't be a lot of easy games for his team when they're playing local opponents.

"Every time we play Bismarck and Century that'll be a rivalry game as well," he said. "We'll just have to play hard against all those teams. It's important for the guys to know they can't sneak up on teams this year, they have to be ready for everybody to give them their best every game out."

What will help the Sabers be prepared for that is a lack of travel.

Including their season opener against Fargo North on Saturday, the Sabers have just five games all season in which they will travel outside the Bismarck-Mandan area.

Even the regional and state tournaments are played locally, with the region tournament being played at St. Mary's in early October and the state tournament being played at the Community Bowl Oct. 12-14.

"We know the playing surfaces we'll be on, and we'll be looking forward to staying in our own homes, our own beds, and then being able to give our best efforts," Marcis said. "Definitely prefer that to when we're getting back at 1 a.m. like we do when we play in Williston."

It's the second straight season the Sabers open with Fargo North.

Legacy beat the Spartans 3-0 last season, and are hoping this year's match gives them a similar ability to work out kinks in their game before conference matches begin.

"When you're training, you can think a player can fit in a position, but until you get out on the field and actually see them play, you can't have the bugs worked out," Marcis said. "It's nice to have the one game before conference play starts to test everything out."

## **WDA BOYS SOCCER PRESEASON POLL**

### **Ranking;Team;Points**

1. Minot (3);44
2. Legacy (3);40
3. Jamestown (2);33
- T-4. Century;32
- T-4. Bismarck;32
6. Mandan;20
7. Williston;13
8. Dickinson;10