

The immutable bard once told us that, "If it be true that good wine needs no bush, 'tis true that a good play needs no epilogue. Yet to good wine they do use good bushes, and good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues."

When William Shakespeare wrote that, some 400 odd years ago, modern soccer was still roughly two and a half centuries upon the horizon, but the soccer bush had already sprung through the games of cuju in China and harpastum in the Roman Empire, early but crude forms of the international sensation enjoyed by players and fans the world over today.

So too has Salem reached its current soccer state, with the seeds being planted at the YMCA soccer fields some 10 years ago. At the high school the girl's program stood alone five years later, and this year's team is the maturation of that germ. First year head coach Dan Tally has led the team to a 6-1 start, and credits those early days, saying, "A lot of these kids have been playing together from the YMCA all the way through for the last 10 years and now you're seeing the results of that. (It's) a decades worth of work. So, even though last year they had some struggles in the plus or minus column, this year they have come together so good."

The Lady Lions started the season 5-0, and then fell to a powerful, senior laden New Albany team, but bounced back the following night to beat Silver Creek 2-1. "(That) was more heart than anything. It is always nice if we can have a day in-between to recover, recoup, and go over our strategy," stated Coach Tally after the win. "We didn't have the time to do it, and the girls showed what they're really made of just by, even though they are hurting and working hard yesterday, coming out and putting it all out there. Some girls went to the point of exhaustion on the field."

Sophomores and seniors lead Salem, a defensively minded team that has no problem in the goal scoring department either.

Through seven games, according to Varvee.com, the Lions ranked in the top 10 in five team defensive stats. They have scored 25 total goals and yielded 13 (eight against New Albany). Senior Kelsey Campbell, Salem's center-midfielder and leading scorer gives the sophomores credit, saying, "The sophomores came in really strong as freshman. They're really strong now, but even as freshman some of them were starting."

Any championship-caliber team requires skills that statistic lines can't represent, and this team has that from their early work together. "I think that makes our soccer team better," says senior left defender Lexi Warren. "With the girls' close personal relationships our communication on the field is better and stronger, and as a team we all stick up for each other. It's really nice to have a team like that."

Senior left midfielder Mel Cooke furthers, commenting, "I think that we've gotten a lot better this year in knowing where a lot of the players are going to be. The silent communications have increased. That helps, because when you get tired you don't have to continuously yell for people."

The Lady Lions have six games remaining in their regular season, with sectionals slated to start at the end of this month, and they have a team goal to win their conference and do well in the state tournament. "Whether it's hot, whether it's cold, without complaining, they just work

hard," says Coach Tally. "They are going to do well and have a great season just because of their attitude."

The play so far this season by Salem has been very successful, but the epilogue is not yet written. If it is to be autumn leaves should cluster the ground, not the sky.