

Nasello Brings Coaching Pedigree Back To Alton High - Team Has High Hopes For 2023 Season

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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ALTON - It seems like the boy's soccer head coaching position has been a bit of a revolving door at Alton High over the last seven years. Now on the program's fourth different coach in that time, this one has no plans on leaving anytime soon.

That new head coach would be 1982 Alton alum and former four-year varsity player Greg Nasello.

He was appointed head coach back in late March, but couldn't really get with his new team until spring and summer workouts. Well, those are now over as Monday began the first official practices of the fall season.

"It was a good turnout, we've had a really good turnout all summer," Nasello said after day one of practice. "It's great to see that many numbers out here and it was great to see everybody working as hard as they did."

Since his hiring, Monday, June 6, was really the first-day Nasello coached the new team. During the summer they would practice twice a week and scrimmage other schools on Sundays.

"Now it matters," Nasello said. "In the summer it doesn't matter so much, it's much more lax when people can't come, but now they have to be here every day."

His team has been and will continue to put in the work as the program seeks its first winning season since the 2017-18 school year.

Since then, over five seasons, including a shortened one in 2020, the team has gone a combined 23-63-5 and 6-38-1 in the Southwestern Conference.

The team also graduated 12 seniors last year, but none of that matters to Nasello and his new team. They're worried about going forward.

He believes the best way of doing that is by leading by example.

"We've got to get these kids in that frame of mind," he said. "I always say discipline is behavior."

According to him, his returning players have been doing a great job of being leaders and show it every day in practice. Nasello believes that the Redbirds have already gotten used to his coaching style and are bought in.

"The new guys, I think they're a little intimidated, but not the older guys. They know what to expect. They know if they're out here working hard, they're going to hear me cheering them on."

The team still does return some experienced players including seniors Brody Clark, Cameron Belchik, and Logan Rynders as well as juniors Dillan Cowan and Jack Lombardi.

They did graduate their starting goalkeeper Aiden Belchik but the team has plenty of other options in goal this year with junior Owen Sutton seeming like the go-to replacement.

"We're gonna be ready," Nasello said. "We'll compete. They're ready to be physical and go hard, we just have to get our style in and get playing."

Alton will open the season by hosting the three-game Redbird Tournament. The tourney consists of eight teams: the hosting Redbirds, Duchense, Beardstown, Granite City, Belleville West, Jerseyville, Hillsboro Mo., and Ritenour.

Alton plays Duchense in their opener at 7 p.m. on Friday, August 25, at Piasa Motor Fuels Field.

Following the tournament, Alton immediately jumps into SWC action against Belleville East and West as well as Edwardsville before the rivalry game against Marquette Catholic, a game they won in penalty kicks a season ago.

Of course, the team wants to excel in the regular season, but the main goal is to do something they haven't done in over a decade, win a playoff game.

Nasello said that the Redbirds "have to find a way to get over that hump."

He said that when he first got hired in March. He says he's super competitive and will do whatever it takes to get this team to win.

He's now only got two weeks until the start of the fall season, and once it gets going, it doesn't slow down.

