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## Durango boys ready to play physical brand of soccer

DHS loaded with talent in 2015

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Photo by: Jerry McBride/Durango Herald file photo (2014)

After a freshman season to remember, Durango High School sophomore Elijah Fenton, right, is expected to be one of the best players in all of Class 4A soccer in Colorado this season.

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By [John Livingston](#) Herald staff writer

If Dalon Parker is correct, a new golden era of Durango High School boys soccer may be upon us.

One year after going 13-3-1 and 7-1 in the 4A/5A Southwestern League to claim the league championship, the Demons' head coach envisions even greater success in 2015.

"I feel like we're going to be better than we were last year, which is a big statement because we were pretty darn good last year," Parker said during team practice Tuesday. "Last year's team did an astonishing job for us on and off the field, but this year's team is more athletic.

"We're going to be faster, stronger, fit, and this team has a good demeanor and vibes around it. It's going to be a good year for us."

But this year's team will have slightly less experience than last year's team loaded with nine seniors. The Demons currently have five seniors on the varsity roster.

The Demons graduated their entire back line of defenders from last season as well as their starting goalkeeper.

“We don’t have as many seniors, but there is no big difference in how we play,” said senior Vance Bulen, son of David and Janine Bulen. “We’re still moving guys around and seeing what fits best, but all the new defenders will be fine. They’ll just have to work hard.”

It doesn’t hurt having star striker Elijah Fenton back as only a sophomore this season. During a scintillating freshman season, Fenton led the Demons with 16 goals. Added to another seven assists, and he led the team with 39 total points. Those numbers had him in the top 25 of the state for both categories.

“It’s nice to have a year under the belt and getting used to the style of play, so I’m excited for this year,” said Fenton, son of Mike and Wendy Fenton. “I know more what the program is about, the competition and how it all works.”

The biggest question will come at the other end of the field, where the Demons will try to keep opponents off the scoreboard. Two goalies, sophomore Trey Furnas and junior Seth Marvin-Vanderin, both have played well enough in practice to be considered for the starting spot.

“Both are exceptionally good. It makes it such a hard decision after tryouts,” Parker said. “We haven’t decided who will fill that role, but both are capable.”

Parker is mixing and matching his defenders to find the right fit, moving some players, including senior Austin Urban, to add some leadership to the back line.

But with all the added depth and young talent on this year’s team, Parker is confident his team can play a physical brand of soccer all over the field.

“We are going to be quicker, more aggressive, which is what we like at the end of the day,” Parker said. “It’s going to be an American-brand of soccer where we’re up in people’s face using our athleticism, because we’re a very athletic culture.”

DHS received six points in the Colorado High School Activities Association Class 4A preseason poll, good for 16th in the state. Air Academy, which beat Durango 4-0 in a match last year, received 107 points and eight first-place votes to enter the year as preseason No. 1. Montrose is 11th with 14 points.

The Demons hope to run into Air Academy again at the Kadet Classic Tournament, which will begin Sept. 11 with Durango facing Pueblo South in its first game.

Despite all of last year’s success, the season ended with a 1-0 loss in the second round of the Class 4A state tournament on the road at Littleton. The Demons have used that experience as fuel.

“We came off those playoffs, and this summer I saw the guys immediately ready to work,” said DHS senior Jared Webster, son of Anne and Don Webster. “It was a heartbreaker, and we don’t want that to happen again this year.”

DHS went 4-0 at home this year and beefed up its home schedule with seven games this season. Parker hopes that helps bring more enthusiasm to the sidelines for one of Durango's favorite sports.

"We would love to see the community come out and support these guys who work hard on the soccer field and in the class room," Parker said. "We want the community to show the kids they are proud, and we want them yelling loud. We go to Montrose, and they're screaming. It would be good to see that here."

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Photo by: Jerry McBride/Durango Herald

Durango High School head boys soccer coach Dalon Parker is thrilled with the turnout for the program this year. He will lead a talented and young group of Demons on a quest to defend the Class 4A/5A Southwestern League championship.



Photo by: Jerry McBride/Durango Herald

Durango High School sophomore goalie Trey Furnas, right, has impressed the team this preseason.

