

Built For the Pressure: Hastings Tigers' Girls Soccer Starts Preseason Workouts

Andee Mucklow February 17, 2026 3 min read 475



Monica Perez, Bri Bucknell, and Johanna Hein celebrate a goal against Lincoln Northwest during the 2025 season.

After a season defined by close losses and hard lessons, the Hastings High School girls soccer team enters the new year focused on growth, chemistry, and turning progress into results.

Ranked No. 19 in Class B preseason polls, the Tigers approach the upcoming season with a strengthened foundation, increased experience, and a clear emphasis on preparation. Sophomore returner Hadley Doremus said one goal for this year is strength.

“This year, we will come back stronger and more cohesive as a whole team.,” Doremus said. “The biggest focus is definitely distance and being able to work together to complete our workouts.”

That disappointment from last year was carried into the offseason, where Doremus said the team has focused on building habits that will translate into their matches once competition begins.

“I think that our communication and passing on the field has improved, and just our minds for the game,” Doremus said. “Everyone has been very encouraging to come to our open gyms just to scrimmage. We definitely want to be able to work together instead of just a few individual people we look to use.”

Head Coach Nathan Mueller adds that preseason conditioning plays a central role in preparation. Throughout February, players have committed to early morning and evening workouts aimed at establishing a strong fitness base and ensuring the team is physically ready for the opening match.

“As a coach it is exciting to see the girls that want it. They’re excited to grow and prove to people that they can do it,” Mueller said.

Beyond fitness, the team has emphasized technical and tactical improvement. That work has continued through fall and summer soccer, as many players spent time competing outside the high school season to refine those skills and build confidence on the field. Mueller said the team is focusing on being better off-the-ball players: movements, spacing, communication, etc.

Junior Macy Wademan thinks the team has grown offensively. However, with the graduation of key contributors, she still thinks there is room for the team to grow.

“Knowing how our season went last year and losing a lot of seniors, I think this year will be more of a rebuilding year,” Wademen said.

With 11 returning letter winners, including several juniors and seniors earning their third or fourth varsity letters, leadership is another area where the Tigers expect growth this year. Mueller believes that the returning players have taken on increased responsibility in setting standards for effort and accountability.

“I tell the girls before every game to play hard for each other,” Mueller said. “When a girl on the team is giving everything she has, both physically and mentally, everyone else should be inspired to match that.”

That leadership extends beyond game situations, from practice reps to the classroom and daily interactions. The team values energy and intentionality in everything they do.

“Our returning leaders are very encouraging and talk to newer people and help give pointers,” Doremus said. “This helps our confidence off the field as well. We believe that doing well and having standards for ourselves outside of soccer translates on the field.”

Despite being ranked outside the top tier preseason, players said expectations feel motivating rather than overwhelming.

“Last year we had a lot of really close games that resulted in losses, and this year we are determined to come back and win,” Senior Breianna Campbell said.

From a coaching perspective, success this season will be measured in more than just wins and losses. Although Mueller hopes to surpass last year’s totals in wins, goals scored, and clean sheets, he acknowledged that results alone do not define progress.

“Wins and losses are the most tangible way to measure our success, but they’re not the end all be all given the difficulty of our conference,” Mueller said.

With eight of 11 starters returning and a large group of freshmen pushing for varsity minutes, Mueller expects competition within the roster to play a role as the season unfolds. What stands out most about this group, Mueller said, is its mindset.

“We’re still quite a bit undersized compared to the teams in our conference, but the girls don’t play like it,” Mueller said. “They play much bigger. They’re hungry to keep improving and keep climbing up the ranks in our conference.”