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Soccer a Family Affair for Trojans

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By Alex Frazier

It's a family affair at Wissahickon.

The Trojans hope to unseat Upper Dublin atop the American Conference this year, and their success may just depend on a pair of brothers.

Seniors Sepp Dasbach and Kevin Matthews are two of Wissahickon's three captains and the elder siblings of sophomores Stefan Dasbach and Dan Matthews.

"Both sets of brothers are pretty close," said Wissahickon coach Stuart Malcolm.

"What's different is that Stefan and Sepp have an understanding of what one another does on the field and will play with that understanding.

"Kevin and Dan are a situation of what you would expect brothers to be. Dan is the younger of three and so he has a competitive edge. There's a competitive spirit within the Matthews brothers."

Last year all three Matthews played together.

With the graduation of Nick, Kevin is now lord of the family. He had to play second fiddle to his older brother for at least eight years both at Wissahickon and on their club team, the Reading Rage.

"That was kind of cool," said Kevin, who believes the sibling rivalry helped all of them. "There was a lot of brother rivalry during practices. It was good for the team and made the practices intense. We're always trying to outdo the other one."

Kevin, especially, felt competition toward his older brother Nick.

"I liked it in practice when we were on different teams and I could make fun of him later, 'My team beat yours' and stuff like that. It's always good to have that competition in practices. It's good for the team and for the individual. It helps you become better."

Playing in the shadow of his older brothers has had a positive effect on Dan.

"He's used to getting the short end of the stick," said Kevin. "He's always had to fight for his own."

As a captain this year, Kevin is hoping to be a role model for his younger brother.

"I'm used to telling him stuff to do," said Kevin, "but he usually doesn't listen. It's that brotherly thing. But he'll listen to things I have to say. I'm just here to try and help him learn and grow as a soccer player."

For his part, Dan likes playing on the same team as Kevin.

"We have an unspoken connection," he said. "I always seem to know where he is on the field."

As the youngest brother, he doesn't feel any pressure to outdo his siblings.

"We all have different strengths," said Dan. "I play to my strength, being competitive."

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Sepp and Stefan's rivalry goes back a long way—ever since they started playing soccer, in fact.

"We always practiced together even though we played on different club teams," said Sepp.

Though there is rivalry between the two brothers ("We can get competitive sometimes," said Stefan), Stefan admits that Sepp has been a good influence on him. "We always want to do better than the other, but we still work well together. I always aspire to be like him. I've learned a lot from him."

Sepp is looking forward to his new role as captain this year.

"I like it," he said. "You feel a little more in power, but it's a big responsibility. I feel like I'm up for the challenge. I should be able to lead these guys well. They all listen to me well during practice."

And even though Sepp is a captain, Stefan doesn't think it will affect his relationship with his older brother.

"I try and treat everybody the same," he said. "I don't take it any lighter or heavier than my brother is captain. I just try and take it as a normal day."

Aside from the sibling rivalries, the Dasbach and Matthews' brothers are good friends with each other.

Stefan and Dan both play on the same Spirit United Celtics club team out of Downingtown.

"We carpool a lot and hang out outside of school," said Stefan.

Sepp and Kevin are also good friends.

"We played on each other's teams when we were younger," said Sepp. "I've always been good friends with him."

"Our relationships have helped build the team chemistry in general, helped us improve at practice and push each other," said Stefan.

The closeness among the brothers is also mirrored at the team level.

"We've known each other for a long time," said Sepp "We all work well together and like each other. There are

no cliques or people with bad attitudes.”

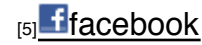
Sibling rivalries aside, all four brothers have one common goal—to win the league.

“We should do really well in the league this year,” said Kevin. “We brought back a good core group of guys that will help us. We have 11 guys returning from the team last year.”

The preseason start has been promising. At the Abington Tournament last Saturday, Wissahickon went 3-1-1.

“Things are going well,” said Kevin.

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