

2011-12 SEASON PREVIEW

Hempfield Ice Hockey enters its 18th season in the CPIHL and is looking forward to the 2011-12 season with promise after finishing tied for the best regular season record in Tier II last year. The team looks to rebound from a tough loss to Elizabethtown in the 2nd round of last year's playoffs with a successful season moving back into Tier I. This could be challenging because of the fact that Hempfield lost its primary defensive core to graduation last year.

The philosophy this year will be score fast and often. Hempfield will want to build a lead going into the 3rd period in order to afford them the luxury of playing their most experienced players in dual roles to protect their lead. With an experienced goal tender, and one moving up into the Varsity ranks this year it will be tough for the opposing team to keep up with the Black Knights.

Leading the Knights this year will be 8 seniors, including Captain Kyle Long who finished 6th among Tier II skaters in scoring a year ago with 32 goals and 36 assists. Wes Bagrowski is back between the pipes after a strong junior season, while Alex Murphy, Casey Weiss, and Zach Hollinger hope to help fill the void left by the 3 defensive starters who graduated this summer. Derrick Matthews, Jarrett Lehman, and Dagen Murphy should all have greater roles in their quest to cross the opposing team's blue line to set up scoring opportunities in the offensive zone during their final season.

Sophomore Elliott Kleckner and freshman Ted Granbois will round out the defensive corps. Sophomore goaltender Kollin Brakefield cracks the varsity lineup for the first time in a backup role and should see some playing time to gain him the experience for a couple years to come. Junior Devyn Tankesley returns after a sensational sophomore year in which he finished with 74 points last season, and along with Long and sophomore Alec Bagrowski should constitute a potent top 1st line this season. Juniors Derek Eisenhour, Chris Christaldi, Brandon Morrow, and newcomer Darin Maurer will be counted on for more production this year with freshman Connor McGuire adding a spark to the Black Knights' offense this fall.

Second-year head coach Tom Garman, along with assistants Steve Kramer and Kevin Molloy will have a motivated group of players to work with in the hopes of challenging for the Bears' Cup this season. The eight seniors, and the rest of the team, know this could be a pivotal year in Hempfield Hockey, as they will lose a host of experienced players to graduation at season's end.

Look for the Black Knights to be both competitive and full of desire and passion this season! This is not a team that will roll over easily.