

Recruits have Macky 'Singh-ing' happy tune

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ACAA Soccer | Tommies women's squad on the rise

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Macky Singh is hopeful that the seven recruits he's brought to the St. Thomas University women's soccer program in the off season will have an immediate impact on the team's performance.



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Coach Macky Singh, shown here at Scotiabank Park South as midfielder Kaitlin Callaghan kicks a ball in the background, has brought in seven new recruits to help build the Tommies in the Atlantic Colleges Athletic Association this season. The third-year coach is optimistic his team will improve on their 2-10 record last season and contend for a playoff spot this year.

The third-year head coach is looking to improve his team's sixth-place, 2-10 record in the seven-team ACAA conference from last year, and with the addition of a local striker and a four-year veteran, he believes his Tommies are on the upswing.

"Last year we were played very defensively, and this year we will continue to look at solid defense as a team, but we will be looking to attack a lot more with players we have this season," he said.

Leading the new recruiting class -- which makes up nearly half of the team's roster -- on offence will be Fredericton product Hailee Cornford, who comes to STU after a high school career with the Leo Hayes Lions, where she was named MVP twice.

"We'll be looking to her to get our goals this year," said Singh of the rookie striker. "She will be key."

Bringing experience and tenacity to the Tommies midfield this season will be Emily Coady, a four-year veteran of college soccer who joins St. Thomas after a three-year stint with Holland College, where she won an ACAA title in 2008.

Coady also suited up in the Atlantic University Sport (AUS) conference for one season with Acadia in 2003.

Singh said her experience will prove invaluable.

"She will bring a lot of experience, and we are really looking forward to that," he said of the education student.

The Tommies will also rely on the steady hand of eight returning players, including team captain and midfielder Rachel Greene and 2010 rookie of the year Grainne McKenna, who was also named a first team ACAA all-star last season.

The Tommies' first test came earlier this week in a friendly against the local Fredericton Wanderers women's side.

Despite falling behind 2-0 in the opening minutes, the Tommies stormed back and took the match 3-2, giving Singh a feeling of confidence in the character of his team.

"That should carry us into this weekend," he said.

This weekend marks the team's opening game. Tonight they travel to Saint John to take on the UNBSJ Seawolves, who finished fourth in league play and second in the playoffs last year.

"They'll have a very similar team from last year," said Singh. "They only lost two players to graduation, so they will be solid."

Having missed the playoffs last year -- only the top four teams qualify for the postseason -- Singh said the goal for this season is to win five or six games, which could be good enough to sneak into the playoffs.

"There are a lot of positives for us right now, and our team looks a lot better than it has in the past few years," he said.

The team is enjoying a new home this season, and will be playing all home games at Scotia Bank Park South.

There will be a \$2 admission charge for each home game.