

Across high school sports, teams suffer the losses of graduating Seniors, developing underclassmen, and program turnover year-to-year. For Simon Kenton's Lady Pioneer soccer team, however, one thing remains constant: winning.

It has been an incredibly hot start to the season for the Lady Pioneers, beginning their season with a 5-0 record ahead of the Smoky Mountain Cup. Highlighted by Seniors **Reese Johnson** (Youngstown State commit) and **Ella Smith** (Central Michigan commit), the two have combined for 14 total goals in the first five games of the season, most notably Ella Smith, turning in two hat-trick performances. With a President's Cup win over Scott (4-1) and a momentum-building win over a highly-ranked Bishop Brossart (4-2), it is evident that the Lady Pioneers are playing with a purpose. After their win against Bishop Brossart Monday night, I spoke with Senior Reese Johnson on the team's hot start and the team's strong connection with one another.

"We've had a lot of work put into our preseason. We've had a lot of diversity thrown at us the past few years with rebuilding, with constant senior loss. [...] It's all really coming together." In addition to her early-season success, Johnson was emphatic about the team's success as a whole, apart from her own.

"We have other amazing players around us, like Meg (Gadzala), Macie (Bach), Alexis (Howard) [...] and starting out undefeated is really just a good setup for a really good season."

As the Lady Pioneers head into the bulk of the season, and with district games looming, they show no signs of slowing down. Heading into the weekend with a three game set against Greenwood High School (Bowling Green, KY), Harpeth Hall (Nashville, TN), and Page High School (Franklin, TN), these three games will all be interesting matchups to prepare the team for the bulk of their schedule as district play begins next week at home against Grant County. If their strong play continues, the Lady Pioneers could be looking at their first state-tournament birth in five years.