



Senior quarterback **Matt McCaffrey** runs after a fake hand-off during the Prairie Fire's game against the Eureka College Red Devils on Saturday, Sept. 2. McCaffrey led the team to a 28-21 comeback win to capture the Lincoln Bowl trophy. (Katy Coseglia/TKS)

Football enjoys impressive 2-0 start

Knox comes out of bye week with perfect record, sky high confidence

BY EMILY MOSHER
Sports Editor

Knox College football has opened 2017 with wins against Eureka College and Beloit College, an exciting beginning to a promising season.

In 2016, the Prairie Fire opened with losses against both aforementioned teams, but took the wins 28-21 and 35-17, respectively, this season.

Junior wide receiver **Patrick Marzolino** attributes the early success to having "18 returning starters, all of which are doing a great job leading the freshman class we've got."

Junior defensive end **Jordan Anderson** thinks that the success is because of the mix of upperclassmen returners and the young talent new to the team.

"We've had freshman come in and make big tackles and make big plays in big situations and I think that's a testament to our coaching and our coaching staff and their ability to recruit quality players," Anderson said.

The Prairie Fire has brought in 25 new freshmen, a great wave of young talent coming into the program and filling out the roster to increase depth.

"[The team dynamic] feels like everybody's a leader. There's even some freshmen out there that are leaders so everyone has a leadership mentality on the team; coaches, players, first year, and seniors," freshman wide receiver **Hunter Lee** said.

"Our freshmen have definitely stepped up. A lot are playing right now and if they're not playing, they're scouting for us and giving us good looks on the games," Marzolino said.

The team has five goals this season, one of which was bringing home the Lincoln trophy.

Anderson explained that another was "to win the Bronze Turkey, which hasn't been done since 1998. I think that'll be



Junior linebacker **Tyler Podwojski** helps a teammate take down the ball carrier against Eureka College in the Lincoln Bowl. Podwojski finished with a team-high 15 tackles in the season-opening win. (Katy Coseglia/TKS)

the hardest one but not out of the realm of possibility based on how we've been playing."

The rest of the goals focus on starting and finishing games strong, going into the game against St. Norbert 3-0, finishing with a winning record and raising the team's GPA collectively.

Marzolino feels that this team has a different social dynamic compared to past years.

"We're all really close. We hang out on weekends, we hang out during [the] week, and we have classes together; that's how it's kind of set up so we help freshman with classes; just a closer team in general," Marzolino said.

Their success can also be a part of this closeness, as they feel they can trust each other

both on and off the field.

"I've seen a lot of different teams, and a lot of different areas and I'd say this is one of the most close-knit groups. I've talked with parents that have said 'you guys just vibe together,' and I think that's why we're playing better," Anderson said.

Anderson also touched on the team's confidence that has grown immensely.

"I think that we're just confident. We believe in ourselves," Anderson said. "We remember why we committed to play college football and I think that's helped us and every day I notice at practices there's so many more guys with upbeat attitudes and I think that just shows we're having fun and this fun combined with our confidence is really helping

our success."

The leadership has seen huge change since last season. Eight players meet per week to discuss the culture and goals of the team, which keeps them on track.

"Your organization is only as good as your leaders so I think that speaks to the fact that a few years back when we didn't have this leadership on the team and now that we have that you're starting to see a lot of things change," Anderson said.

The Prairie Fire looks to defeat Ripon College at home on September 23rd at 1 p.m. in the Knosher Bowl and lead into the game against St. Norbert College the following week with a 3-0 record.



TKS PLAYER OF THE WEEK



ERICK KARKUT

BY EMILY MOSHER
Sports Editor

Erick Karkut, a junior from Mount Prospect, Ill. has opened the men's soccer season with incredible statistics and notable achievements.

In his second season, the valuable starter has been used as a utility player and has stepped up and excelled at each position he has been asked to play.

At their Warrior Cup tournament, Karkut was named the Most Valuable Player.

He scored a goal in each game, and the defense did not give up a single goal in their games versus Franklin College and Wisconsin Lutheran College.

During the tournament, he played center back, defensive mid and forward.

Currently, Karkut has scored three goals thus far, with seven shots total, leaving him with a percentage of 0.429.

After his 2016 season with six goals and one assist and 0.750 shooting percentage, the starter is coming into his own this year, looking like a force on the field for Knox.

The Prairie Fire will look to take a win against Lawrence University at home on September 23 with Karkut's help.