

## MHS Girls Prepare for Powderpuff Showdown vs. Swampscott

-Matt Lieberson

It all comes down to this. One game, for all the marbles, against Swampscott. This is the way it was supposed to be. But I'm not talking about the varsity football team at Marblehead High School. Granted, their scrappy 13-12 victory sets up a showdown with the Big Blue for Thanksgiving Day with a playoff spot on the line. But I'm referring to this Saturday at Blocksidge Field, where the MHS senior girls will play the Lady Blue in the annual Powderpuff football game. Expectations for the girls this year are high, as last year's seniors defeated Swampscott handily under the lights at Piper Field, 41-20. But this year's team isn't daunted. "Our goal is obvious and simple: to win," a focused captain Cailin Daley said in a recent interview. "We're already having fun as a team, and I'm sure that will continue. The only thing we haven't done yet is beat Swampscott, but that should hopefully come soon enough."

Daley, elected captain by her team and the coaches, has been raised on football her whole life. "My dad is using this experience to justify bringing me up watching the sport since I was about 3 months old." Still, learning football provides some difficulties for the team. "None of us have played football before, and many have not been involved in high school sports in general. The main thing was to make sure everybody wanted to be here and have fun. This is much easier said than done with a roster of over 90 girls, but now we have a team that not only understands the game, but wants to and can play it well." Daley found challenges to being a captain with a large team of girls who hadn't played together before as well. "In most captaincies, you're inheriting a team that has played before." But Daley appreciates the powderpuff girls differently from her other teams, "I have never been as excited for just daily practices as I am for powderpuff practices. Everyone is so excited for the game and really just to be involved in the tradition in general, and it's a great atmosphere to be a part of every day. It is also a chance for most of the girls in the grade to bond, which is one of the best parts of it all."

Daley had nothing but good things to say about the coaching staff, as well. "We're lucky enough to have a very dedicated coaching staff," Daley said. "I doubt Swampscott will be prepared for what we're gonna show them." One of those coaches, Zach Kovner, was confident in what he and the other coaches have been planning. "Jeremy [Meyer], Jacob [Maselek], Kyle [Forsgard], Asher [Goldman] and myself all have a lot of knowledge of the game and good things happen when our minds collide." Kovner has had to remember who he was dealing with while he prepares the girls for the showdown. "The biggest challenge has definitely been getting the girls familiar with the playbook. We sometimes forget that these girls have limited football knowledge and the coaches and I sometimes get ahead of ourselves." He still took the challenge on with his fellow coaches, and he couldn't have been having more fun. Coaching has been an absolute blast... This is a special group of girls and they deserve to win this game. The coaches and I will do whatever we can to make that happen."

When implored on who would win the game, Kovner took a Belichickian approach. "Our girls definitely have what it takes. We have been working real hard. The girls have put countless hours into practicing and studying the playbook. We all hope for the best." Daley was much more direct with her prediction. "Of course we'll win. There's absolutely no question."

The game is this Saturday at Blocksidge Field in Swampscott.

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