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PREP GIRLS SOCCER

To: Mayor and City Council Members  
 P.M. Chapman

# Novi senior class leaves behind a legacy



The Oakland Press file photo/JOSE JUAREZ

Novi's senior class, which includes Emily Esbrook (3), Stephanie Crawford (17) and Stephanie Janssens (5), went 70-1-3 during the last three seasons and won three straight state championships.

By CRYSTAL KRAUSKOFF  
 Of The Oakland Press

Good luck to the Novi girls soccer Class of 2008. You've got quite the tough act to follow.

A group of five outgoing seniors helped take soccer to a whole new level for the Wildcats.

The talented class filled with players bound for Division I schools helped Novi win a third straight Division 1 girls soccer state championship with a 2-1 win over Rochester on Saturday.

Senior Stephanie Crawford, who is headed to play soccer at Michigan in the fall, put Novi on the scoreboard eight-plus minutes into the game.

Rochester knotted the game, but Novi scored one more time as the clock ran out going into half-time to earn bragging rights once again.

"It was my entire team," Crawford said of this season's key to success. "We worked so hard every day, every practice, every game and everyone just worked so well together as a team."

However, the team clicked because of the fine leadership brought about by the senior class.

Crawford, Emily Esbrook (Ohio State), Kristine Chaklos (Vanderbilt), Stephanie Janssens (Eastern Michigan) and Jessica Barndt (James Madison) made up a senior class that left its mark in the record books.

"It's rewarding for me in two regards," Novi coach Brian O'Leary said of the three-peat, "to see those five seniors go out winners and to win three in a row and to see the new kids who haven't had a chance to experience what it's like. Definitely (the state championship) game is different than any other game you'll probably ever play in your life."

The Wildcats are the first girls soccer squad in the state to post a three-peat since Madison Heights Bishop Foley won titles 2001-03.

Foley also won consecutive titles 1997-99 and 1993-95.

Overall, Novi is just the second team to accom-

### Novi's senior class

Player	College
Stephanie Crawford	Michigan
Emily Esbrook	Ohio State
Kristine Chaklos	Vanderbilt
Stephanie Janssens	Eastern Michigan
Jessica Barndt	James Madison

plish the feat since the Michigan High School Athletic Association started the tournament in 1983.

The Wildcats have proven to be a team that is strong from beginning to end.

The '07 senior class finished with a 70-1-3 record during the last three seasons.

The squad's only loss during that period was to Hudsonville Unity Christian on May 12. Sure Unity Christian is a Division 3 team, but it holds the state's record with an 81-game unbeaten streak. It's the third longest streak in the country, but the longest active stretch.

Novi ensured the fact that at least one Oakland County team won a state championship for the 20th straight season.

"Coming into high school I just wanted to make the team," Chaklos said. "I never thought anything like this would happen. I'm just happy we built a good program here for Novi, and for the girls in the future, they get to play for a team that's won state championships. Hopefully they can continue."

"It's not about winning state championships. It's about improving and getting better as players, but luckily having to live up to something like a state championship really makes you work hard with a good goal set in mind."

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