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Cigarroa soccer gearing up for deep playoff run

Like most soccer teams, Cigarroa likes to score goals. Not just one or two a game but numbers that will make you do a double take and say “Wait, how many?”

The Toros (21-4-1 overall, 12-1-1 District 29-5A) beat Somerset 13-0 on Feb. 13. That came a little less than two weeks after scoring 25 goals in a shutout win against Uvalde, with their first goal coming just 15 seconds after kickoff.

“We could’ve gotten more,” senior forward Victor Gomez said.

With the regular season over and a district championship in their back pocket, Cigarroa is ready for a deep run in the playoffs starting Friday at 8 p.m. against Flour Bluff in Beeville.

When the team lost in the fourth round of the playoffs last season, head coach Jose Castillo made a list of the things he wanted to accomplish this year. Included was doing better in tournaments, winning 20 games and taking the district championship.

“Every goal that we set, we completed,” Castillo said. “They’re the first district champions from this school and this is the best record any team from Cigarroa has ever had. I’m proud of them.”

Last year, the Toros finished third in the district standings and made it to the fourth round before losing to PSJA Southwest. They lost two seniors and had nine starters come back to make the core of the powerful offensive team.

Four players will graduate from this year’s squad, and the junior varsity players have been training — and winning — right alongside varsity. The JV side has won back-to-back district championships and went undefeated last year.

It’s been three years since Castillo took over as head coach, and he’s not only built an elite soccer team but an intense and stable program focused on soccer.

He sees the players every day and keeps track of their grades and training. Castillo said being in a border town is a huge advantage because the players on the team are obsessed with the sport.

Other coaches try and get the athletes to run track or play football but the athletes don’t want to.

“They could stay on this field all night,” Castillo said. “These guys are a lot more hardcore soccer. They’re a very confident bunch.”

Castillo, the former head coach at United, said only in the last few years have teams from outside Laredo started really respecting the level of play in the city. A few have even gone out of their way to avoid playing against Cigarroa.

Gomez is the embodiment of the commitment Castillo wants. The senior scored 27 goals in district play and 44 overall. He will continue his soccer career in town at Laredo Community College in the fall.

“My dream was to play in college,” Gomez said. “Since I was a freshman, I wanted to be in the competitiveness of a college team. All through my four years I trained hard. It’s been an awesome adventure these four years. The team is like my second family.”

It’s fun to win, score goals and take road trips with the team, but Gomez admits it’s almost as fun to push Castillo’s buttons. But it’s still blatantly clear who’s in charge as soon as players step on the field.

“This bunch is getting better,” Castillo said. “They’re refined and organized. Now they know that they can compete.”