

# FACEOFF WEEKLY

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# Balance of power



DEAN M. BEATTIE/FOR TRIB TOTAL MEDIA

Above: North Hills Vipers forward Alex Mueller tries to beat a Westmoreland player to a loose puck at the Kirk S. Nevin Arena in Greensburg.

Left: North Hills Vipers defenseman Randy Dengler skates into Westmoreland's defensive zone.

## Rolling balanced lines up front makes Vipers Midget team tough to stop

BY BILL HARTLEP

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Coach Ed Newill uses a unique analogy when describing his offensive philosophy.

When you go to the beach, you walk out into the water and get hit by a wave. As soon as you recover, you jump out of the water, spit the water out of your mouth and boom, another wave hits you. By the third time that wave hits, you get out of the water. You've been beaten up enough that you need to take a break.

While some teams will load up a top line with scoring stars, the North Hills Pittsburgh Vipers Midget A Major Black squad has perfected Newill's balanced three-line format this season, and it's a major reason the team is in the hunt for a PAHL division title.

"I have three lines that are

equally talented, and what that does is wear a team out over three periods," said Newill, a 27-year coaching veteran.

"I want each line to be equally strong, so that every time they go out there, it's like another wave hitting (the opponent). Ultimately by the third period, we wear them down."

Nelson Warner is on the white line with brothers Jeff Donatelli and Greg Donatelli. The black line includes Vinny Silvio, Nick Faletti and Stephen Susalla. The red line includes Sean Bastin, Alex Mueller and Matt Nelson. Ben Beal (six goals) also floats between the three lines.

"On my Pine-Richland team, we have one set line of superstars. With the Vipers team, our depth goes all the way through all our lines," said Warner, the team captain.

"We don't see just one line

scoring or even one guy scoring all our goals. We have everyone scoring, from defense up."

The red line has combined for 35 goals, led by 20 from Mueller, while black (17 goals) and white (13 goals) also have been solid.

Goalies Phil Cappo and Ryan Donahue each have been outstanding at the other end this season, with save percentages over 90 percent.

Their success has been aided by a strong defense that includes Anthony Angresano, Brett Bailie, Randy Dengler, Alex Fuerst, Timmy Nocleg and Cory Sakolsky.

"The goalies are a big part of it. Ryan and Phil are both playing big games," Sakolsky said.

"The defense is playing as a core together, blocking shots, making sure the puck is cleared in front of the net and protecting the house. We're all playing real

well together."

The Vipers are 13-2-3 this season and in the hunt for a regular-season title. The Amateur Pens (14-2-2), North Pittsburgh (12-4) and the Foxes (9-11) also were in the mix heading into the season's final two weeks. The top four teams advance to the PAHL tournament.

But the Vipers have bigger goals than just reaching the post-season. The team advanced to PAHL championship game last year, only to fall to Mon Valley. The coaches and players vowed from day one this year to avenge that defeat.

"We have to keep doing the same thing we've done all year," Bastin said. "Everyone shows up at practice. Everyone works hard, no complaints. Everyone makes the corrections they're told, and hopefully, we win it this year."

## Vipers roster

Here is a look at the Pittsburgh Vipers Midget A Major Black roster:

Name	Pos	Hometown/HS
Anthony Angresano	D	Cranberry
Sean Bastin	F	Tarentum
Brett Bailie	D	Creighton
Ben Beal	F	Lower Burrell
Phil Cappo	G	Leechburg
Randy Dengler	D	Leechburg
Ryan Donahue	G	Bolivar
Greg Donatelli	F	Monroeville
Jeff Donatelli	F	Monroeville
Nick Faletti	F	Leechburg
Alex Fuerst	D	Saxonburg
Alex Mueller	F	Allison Park
Matt Nelson	F	Pittsburgh
Timmy Nocleg	D	Troy Hill
Cory Sakolsky	D	Plum
Vinny Silvio	F	Pittsburgh
Stephen Susalla	D	Pittsburgh
Nelson Warner	F	Valencia