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### Q&A with York boys soccer coach Tommy Hipple

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- **Tommy Hipple played for York, now he's the coach**
- **The Falcons have given up only three goals in nine district matches**
- **York has nine shutouts overall**

As a defender during his playing days, Tommy Hipple led York High to three state soccer tournaments and earned state AA co-Player of the Year honors as a senior. Now in his 10th season as boys head coach at York, Hipple has molded a team in his image, one that has allowed only three goals in nine Bay Rivers District games and posted shutouts in nine of 13 overall.

The Falcons (8-2-3, 7-1-1) enter this week's district tournament as the No. 2 seed, a slot that gives them the inside track as the district's second team into the Region I tournament. We caught up with Hipple about York's season.

**Q: How much about coaching York is the pride you take from being a former player there?**

**A:** Ultimately, that's why I came back to York.

**Why is this such a good defensive team?**

With other teams I've been with, if the goalie got scored on, they blamed it on the goalie. This year, it's true team defense, from the top to the back and that's meant a lot. Everyone feels the blame for giving up a goal and everyone shares the credit for our success. Since we got back from spring break, we've only given up one goal.

**Who have been the defensive standouts for you?**

It starts with my goalkeeper, Cory Alexander. Alex Meade, Johnny Howell, Charlie Watt and Tyler Smith have gelled as a foursome and rely on each other.

**Being a defensive guy yourself, how pleased are you to see the Falcons play such great defense?**

To sit on the side and watch people throw their bodies in front of the ball so the opponent doesn't get an

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open shot on goal is something I love, because that's what I loved to do. If someone is getting ready to shoot, we're throwing a leg in front of it, we're falling down, we're trying to get something in front of the shot. No open shots is what we preach.

**Who are the key guys leading the attack?**

Two forwards have been splitting the scoring. Josh Rumble starts and has six goals, and Lucas Farrants has given us a spark off the bench and scored seven. Byran Talbert controls the midfield and distributes very well for us.

**How good did it feel to finish second after your slow start in district play?**

Going into our district, which is very strong, and to be 0-1-1 after the Jamestown game, we had to win all seven of our games after that. To set that goal and achieve it was an awesome thing to watch. And to see them come together as a team, and only give up one goal in that stretch, was amazing.

**Feel any less pressure being second going into the tournament?**

No. It's good, because only two teams are going to the regional, but you're still not guaranteed anything. We look at it going into the tournament that we've got to win all three games in the tournament.

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