

AN ONGOING SUCCESS STORY

It is 4:30 p.m. on a cloudy Friday afternoon. A light drizzle dampens the field but not the spirits of the F.C. Footsters, the University women's soccer team, as they practice for an upcoming game.

Despite recent financial and coaching problems, dedication and personal sacrifices have turned this close-knit team into a winning group that is currently undefeated in the Eugene City Women's League, said team captain Julie Rostron.

Problems began early this year when the club sports team was unable to find a sponsor to pay \$175 in league fees. But instead of calling it quits, the players chipped in to cover the costs themselves, said Rostron.

"Everyone was so enthusiastic (about playing) they contributed personally," she said.

Finding coaches who are willing to donate their time and energy to the team has been an ongoing problem over the past few years because the position is strictly voluntary and is very time demanding.

"In the past three years, since I've been on the team, I've seen five different coaches," Rostron said.

The girls "showed a lot of dedication" to stick it out through the transitional periods, she said.

But the team is very happy with their new coach, Lori Kats, who has been with them since last winter.

"I am kind of strict," Kats admits. "I push them a lot. The team knows how to play, it is just a matter of fine tuning," she said.

Dedication is further tested each fall when the players are asked to return from their summer vacations two weeks early in order to take part in the team's "daily double" training program.

"But no one minds," said Rostron. "We all have a good time," and it lets the team get reacquainted before the first fall game, she said.

"We get a lot of encouragement from each other," she added.

"The team is really close," said team member, Shonna Smetana. "We do a lot of things together, and several of the girls are roommates."

Smetana feels this personal camaraderie helps the



(above)Liana Neff, of the University women's soccer team, races an opponent from the Queens to the ball in a recent city league match. (below left)Gretta Flatt gets in the thick of another winning battle last week for the University club sport team.

players work well together and has contributed to the success of the team.

The team is "very dedicated," agreed Rostron. "Sometimes, I feel like we make personal sacrifices (to



play)," she said. Classes, studying and soccer practice can become "very time demanding," she admits.

"There are a lot of very talented women on the team," Kats said. "When they play together it is beautiful to watch."

The team is kept busy throughout the school year. During the spring soccer season they compete in the Eugene league, which they entered five years ago and have since finished among the top two teams each season.

"Right now people really want to play for the fun of it," she said. "Winning is funner," she smiles.

The team just returned from a four day invitational tournament at Stanford in which they were the only team asked to compete from Oregon. But despite high hopes, the team just could not "pull it together." They finished sixth out of six teams, Kats said.

"We just ran out of gas," she said. "It was just one of those tournaments that didn't work," she admits. Regardless, the team "still had fun," she said.

During the fall soccer season the team plays in the Northwest Soccer Conference Division. And since 1977 they have finished among the top competitors.

Kats said the team did not do as "well as they should have" last fall however. Their previous coach had a "hard time communicating with the team at their level," and it affected their performance, she said.

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