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A shot on Goal

Oregon's women's soccer team may not have the best record, but they have enough appeal to bring a new soccer fan to his feet



Fred M. Collier

I should probably be embarrassed to admit it, but after the Duck soccer team beat Auburn on Oct. 1 I crowded among the second and third graders along the railing at Pape Field to gather some autographs on my new team poster. I suppose I looked pretty ridiculous towering over the little urchins, but those women played an exciting game that kept me jumping out of my seat every few seconds. Hey, I like watching people chase a ball around while doing acrobatic tricks with it. Besides, no one laughed out loud at me — I think.

Admittedly, I'm a brand new soccer fan. Mieczyslaw Szmit, my friend from Poland, has been turning down my invitations to attend football games for years, claiming they're too boring.

"Not enough action," he said. "They spend most of the time just standing around. You should watch a soccer game instead."

Last summer I finally took him up on it and joined him to watch the Women's World Cup on the tube.

It was an eye-opener, to say the least. I was on the edge of my seat for the entire game. Seeing Michelle Akers leap above the crowd to send the ball back every time it reached midfield, I couldn't believe she has Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. I know a guy with it, and he spends half his days in bed. And the action was almost nonstop, just like Szmitty claimed. I'd never realized that a scoreless game could be so exciting. I was hooked.

So it's not surprising that when I learned about the Oregon soccer team, I started showing up at their games.

I wasn't disappointed. The Duck women are an impressive group of athletes, and their play is a thrill to watch. Sure, I was a little puzzled about what was going on the first game, but I found somebody who knew soccer and pestered her with questions. And anyway, who wouldn't enjoy watching midfielder Sierra Marsh steal the ball at midfield and sent it shooting back at the opponent's goal? Or watching forward Erin Anderson outrace two defenders while dribbling the ball down the field before kicking it past the goalie for a score? Or just watching forward Julie McLellan doing backflips to throw the ball inbounds? I got so excited about soccer that I started looking for a bumper sticker or something to let the world know.

But there I got a little stymied. The University and the Athletic Department have done a fairly good job of promoting the soccer team by printing out posters, schedule cards and T-shirts. But I think it's time they started selling the soccer equivalent of "Gang Green" and "Shaq Attack" bumper stickers ("Marsh Madness," perhaps?) in the Duck Shop and University Bookstore,



along with some green and gold soccer balls or something. And maybe it's just my own optimistic opinion, but I also think they should start thinking about how to expand the stands at Pape Field. There isn't a lot of room available if the sport starts catching on.

Of course, some people may disagree with me — now. If you dare judge the team by its record (5 wins, 8 losses), it doesn't look impressive. But the soccer team seems to share the Mallard Malady with the football team. They've had some terrible breaks and made some phenomenal blunders that lost games for them, but when they click, they can play with anybody.

They played 20th ranked Stanford to a standstill and only lost by a penalty kick (phenomenal blunder) that was nearly blocked by goalie Amanda Fox. They dom-

inated Northridge for the entire game, 26 shots to 6, but — both blunders and breaks — the California team managed to find the net three times and the Ducks only once. But against Auburn — whoa! Those poor Auburn girls never had a chance, and Chalise Baysa even scored with a header while beating them 4 - 0.

This team is capable of — and plays — far better than its record shows. But even when the team loses, a couple of hours at Pape Field are well spent. They play with grace, heart and a whole lot of toughness. Their teamwork is often as precise and flawless as a Rolex. Whatever else they may be, this team is never dull. The bottom line is, win or lose, they're just plain fun to watch.

Fred M. Collier is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the paper. He can be reached via email at fmcollier@aol.com.

Letters to the editor

Hold athletes responsible

In response to the article about Peter Warrick (ODE, Oct. 12) I question whether we should hold athletes responsible for anything.

People who are star athletes should be held to the same standard as a normal person. It is about time we hold star athletes to the same standard as we hold everyone else. When that happens we won't have NFL or NBA players breaking every rule imaginable and still playing in their sport. A line needs to be set.

Warrick will still make the big bucks in the NFL, so there is no need to feel sorry for him. However, the NCAA should set a standard that no matter who you are (or will be) you will not be awarded special treatment.

Timothy Sweeney
 Class of 1999

Demonstration effective

What an extraordinary, symbolic sight. Members of Hillel holding up white sheets to block an anti-abortion presentation. If they had set out to graphically demonstrate

the state of denial that is complicit among abortion supporters, they could not have done so more effectively. It is obvious that the only means by which abortion has continued into the present day is the ability of abortion supporters to hold up their own white sheets and symbolically turn their backs on the consequences of their actions. To look their choice in the eye and give it a name is to accept the wrenching conclusion that abortion is not a moral choice and should not be any more legal or socially acceptable than infanticide. Hillel members called the comparison between abortion and the Holocaust "disgusting," but their reaction demonstrated the power of the

comparison. Slavery, anti-Semitism and abortion hold in common the demeaning of one group of persons to sub-human status, a pattern that any student of the history of prejudice would recognize.

The logic of choice is distorted to reflect the rights of those in power to remain in power and the only question that matters — "Is a fetus (or a slave, or a Jew) a person, protected by the laws of government and of morality" — is lost amidst an increasingly violent and confused rhetoric of the rights of the oppressors.

Colby Phillips
 English