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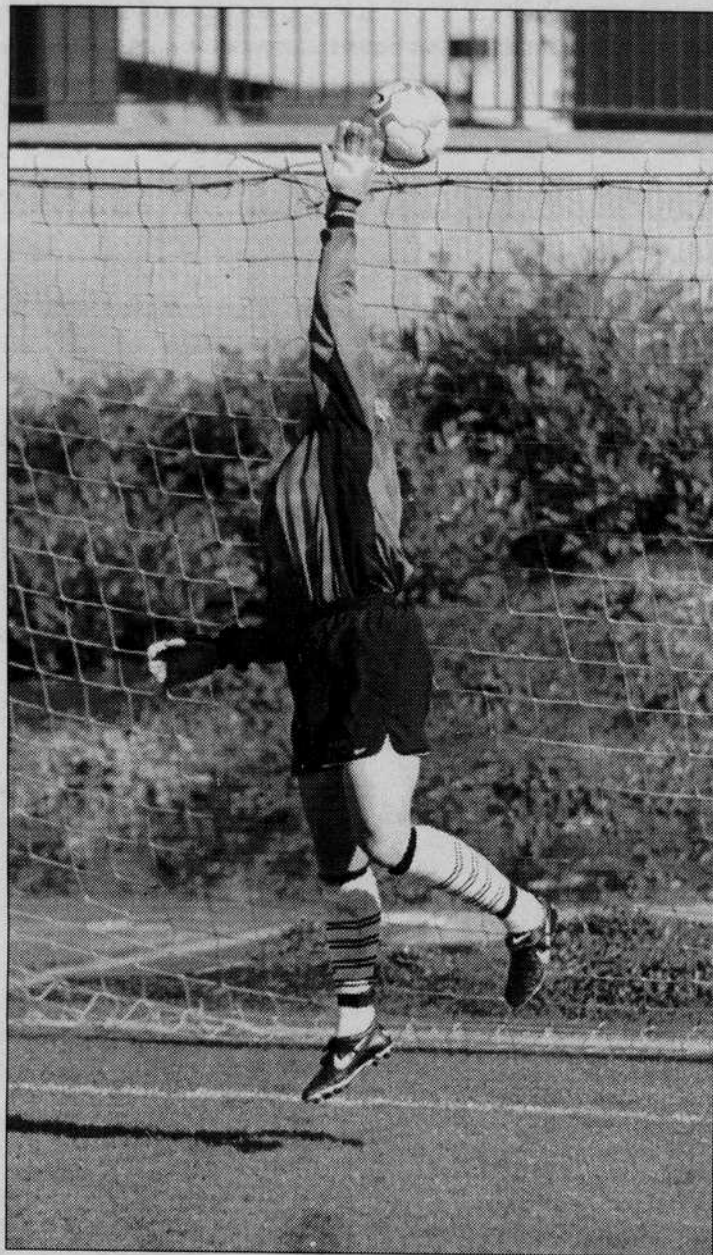
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Sarah Peters has been sharing time with Jeanine Norstad as goalie this season.

Kevin Calame Emerald

Soccer

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Peters says that she's communicating with her defense along with roaming her box, which has fostered her development as a goalie.

"This weekend, I was really communicating with [the defense]," Peters said about Sunday's 3-2 victory over James Madison.

Junior sweeper Starr Johnson, Oregon's defensive leader, liked that communication too.

"In that last win," Johnson said, "when we were excited, we talked a lot, and that helped."

The Ducks yielded only 11 shots on goal in more than 80 minutes of play against James Madison after conceding two goals on two shots early on.

"Our role is to communicate to the team, because we can see everything, me playing sweeper and her in the back," Johnson said about her teamwork with the goalies. "Communication is really big and we did a good job of that against James Madison."

Perhaps the most intriguing part of the goal-saving duo of Peters and Norstad is the way they push each other every day of the week. The two have competed for playing time since last year's spring drills, according to Peters, and will continue to compete for the rest of the season.

"It doesn't seem to have changed anything," Peters said about playing the most minutes. "If anything, it just makes each of us work harder in practice every day because we're both pushing each other: Me to keep the position and her to get the position, but we're always pushing each other."

Steffen says competition between the goalies is the best thing for them.

"I think she likes having a partner to push her," Steffen said of Peters.

"On one hand she likes that comfort of starting, but at the same time I think she feels better having somebody to push her, having somebody to work with her, having somebody to compete with."

Peters and Norstad know all about competition. Norstad played for a top team in Norway before becoming the Ducks' first international recruit; Peters spent time with Washington's state championship club team in 1997. Peters was also a member of the Woodinville High track team, and holds school records for javelin and shotput.

Peters' coach thinks she has the eagerness of a high school athlete, but the dedication and determination of a collegiate athlete. Ask her about next Sunday's home game against Florida State — the Ducks' first chance at a Top-25 team on their home turf — and she lights up.

"I love playing at home," Peters said. "I like the atmosphere and the people around the community, especially the little girls who always come to the games. It's an awesome feeling."

Peters even speaks positively about the road trip that the Ducks just returned from, which included losses to soccer powerhouses Duke, Santa Clara and North Carolina.

"There were a lot of fans [at North Carolina] and when we were walking off the field they said, 'Great game Oregon,'" Peters said. "You don't get that in a lot of places. It was awesome to play over at UNC."

There are benefits to having two solid goalkeepers, as Peters found out when Norstad exited stage left the past three games.

"I started to get sick," Peters commented. "And I said, 'I can't get sick now!'"

After Sunday's Florida State game, Sarah, with Norstad coming back, you can get as sick as you want.

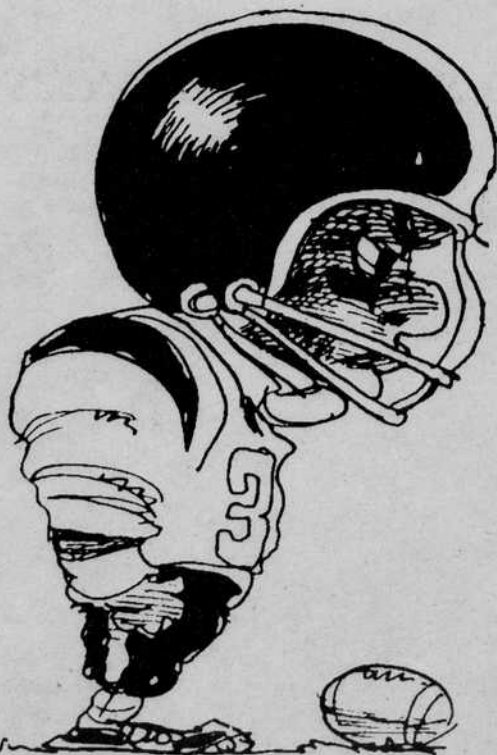
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