



Third-year head coach Brian Allinger got into the game because his wife was a player.

As it does for Annie Hoffman, who's played for the Shockwave for five seasons. At 5-foot-8 and 240 pounds, she looks like she enjoys taking her frustration out by playing tough ball on the team's offensive and defensive line.

"There's nothing like it," Hoffman says. "I like to play smart, and I like to play fair. When you start screwing around—that's when people start getting hurt, and I don't want to get hurt or hurt anyone."

She pauses for effect. "But no one is going to respect you if you can't hit. I mean, if you hit someone and they don't feel it, they'll be thinking, 'Get your ass off the field.'"

Hoffman is somewhat of an expert on kicking ass on the field. She was named to the All Star list during her first year in the league and was the team's Offensive Lineman of the Year last year.

Off the field, Hoffman recently completed her master's degree in education and works as a substitute teacher. She is the type who is clearly well-versed in fair play and moderation. However,

there is an air of aggression about her—she is the kind of woman you would want on your side if you were in a bind. Hoffman is straight (as is about half the team), owns her own home, is single and wants to get pregnant. (She told me to put that in the story because her biological clock is ticking.) As I walk away, Hoffman reminds me, "Tell people this is real football—and they will love watching us."

Little-Known Facts

About Women Warriors in History #3:

Zabibi and her successor, Samsi, reigned as Arabian warrior queens from approximately 740 to 720 B.C. Both commanded armies containing large numbers of women.

Tracy Sand is another five-year veteran of the team. She is 33, 5-foot-5 and 190 pounds and was recruited by Hoffman when she worked at Fred

Meyer. Sand is the top recruiter for the team, meaning many of the women playing for the Portland Shockwave were "discovered" by her.

Sand, a lesbian, grew up loving to play "smash-mouth football"—but never was allowed to play. She recently attended a camp at Nike with 400 other coaches—and she was the lone woman. Two coaches approached her and apologized for their "bad language." They added, she remembers blissfully, "Sorry if we offend you." Sand wanted to kick their asses, but she didn't. After a lifetime of being told she couldn't play football, she sucked up the resentment in the name of "not making a scene" and let the comment go.

I sense she is tired of letting things go—she wants to change the world. "You can play football," she starts. "If you have an infinitesimal amount of athletic ability and desire, then you can play." Sand adds: "If someone wants to play football but doesn't know how, we'll teach them. If someone doesn't have equipment, we'll help get it for them."

Her contagious excitement grows. "If you want to do this and your whole life someone said you can't because you were a girl, we're here to tell you that you can and you can do it with the us."

Sand puts her hand on my shoulder and solemnly looks into my eyes, as if to make sure I understand: "Little girls play football all the time and can join Pop Warner, where they play according to weight. If someone's little girl wants to play football, then they can—all the way to high school, when it's hard for women to match the size of the bigger guys. But I say, if they want to play, let them."

Sand just completed her master's in education as well—interestingly, several players are teachers by profession—and it is easy to see why she is so effective as the team's recruiter. She is affable, funny, warm—and last year recorded nine sacks. I'm ready to suit up.

Continued on Page 24

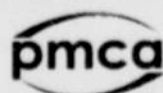
www.tradeswomen.net



Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc. presents

WOMEN in Trades Career Fair

Thanks to our major sponsors:



Plumbing & Mechanical
Contractors Association
www.pmcaregion.com



Sat., April 29, 2006
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

New location: NECA/IBEW Electrical Training Center
16021 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97230

503-335-8200 x21