

Under Coach King's reign, Wilson women's soccer is flourishing

SPORTS

By Jack Rubinger
The Southwest Portland Post

On a cool night in October, the Wilson High School women's soccer team is looking strong, confident and loose during warm-ups before a game with Roosevelt High School. They're all laughing and talking.

"They're technically skilled. But their hearts and minds need to be in it. It really comes down to mindset. At this level, there are no easy games," said varsity coach Allison King.

Taking the field in pink jerseys in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Trojans clap twice for each opposing player announced. It's a tradition for all youth teams in the sport.

Once the game is underway, the Trojans strike hard, fast and often. By the end of the first half, the team has already scored 8

goals behind the ball handling and shooting skills of Eva Vlassopolous, Talulah Beisel, Sara Trejo, Mackenna Clizer, Tori Butler, and Maddi Day.

The team's style of play is controlled and accurate. Roosevelt is putting up a good fight, but Wilson is clearly dominating the field and their goalkeeper has had few serious threats.

"It's been a season of extremes," King said. "Either 10 goal shutouts or losing by four. We're still trying to find a consistent middle ground."

The Trojans scored three more times in the second half for an 11 - 0 shut out over Roosevelt. Roosevelt had a strong effort, but Wilson showed superior skills and physical toughness. It looked easy, but soccer is a game of possessions. You control each possession and you control the game.

Although King said she sees her entire squad as superstars, one player to watch out for is Sara Trejo. Trejo, number 15, is one of the most skilled and composed young women King has ever worked with at center midfield.

"I'm especially proud of Kennedy Reed (center back) and Sabine Pigg (forward) — two seniors who have successfully rehabbed from serious ankle injuries. Both of them had goals tonight," said King, following the Oct. 7 match-up.

King is honing a state-contending women's soccer team built off of Wilson's legacy as a 2013 Oregon School Activities Association State runner-up, 2013 Portland Interscholastic League co-champion, and 2012 PIL champion.

King was also 2014 PIL coach of the year. Her squad has produced all-conference athletes every season.

Back in September, King was a little frustrated. Her team had a rough pre-season with a lot of injuries, so while they played well, it hadn't shown up on the scoreboard.

"We increased our standing in state last year, so we were presented with a challenging pre-season schedule coupled with injuries," explained King. "It means that our ladies have to work harder."

"Our system of play demands more compact, high-pressing defenders and versatile and skilled midfielders. It really showcases a team's offensive talent and ability to possess and counter quickly. I have high hopes for them to do something fantastic once the season is underway."

The overall good vibe is due in part to girls' soccer being well received at Wilson. They have a supportive parent base who are also active scouts. Administrative support is strong, too. They even have a brand-new turf field to play on.

It doesn't hurt that Portland is a soccer city with a professional women's team (the Thorns) and that the women's world cup was played so close to home last year. All this positivity resonates throughout the community.

King, who grew up in Vancouver with



Allison King is women's varsity soccer coach at Wilson High School. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

three brothers, gravitated toward soccer early on. While she played at Brigham Young University, she started coaching because she couldn't sit still. She's been coaching for 10 years now.

Together with men's coach Frank Matthews, she brings a sense of altruism to the field and avoids most of the sports clichés.

"This team formed an immediate bond," said King. "There's trust and respect. There's positive camaraderie. They are comfortable speaking candidly with us coaches and they have a great sense of self. What more can I ask for?"



Junior Maddi Day (left) and senior Sabine Pigg practice at Wilson. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

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