



THIRD STAR FOR THE THORNS. The players on the Portland Thorns overcame challenges off the field this season and won the National Women's Soccer League championship, earning the club its third star. Pictured at the far left is first-year head coach Rhian Wilkinson and Hina Sugita (#8), far right, who logged 1,855 minutes in 23 games with the Thorns this season. (AR Photo/Jody Lim)

Portland Thorns FC top KC Current 2-0 for NWSL title

WASHINGTON (AP) — The players on the Portland Thorns overcame challenges off the field this season and won the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) championship.

Sophia Smith, the season's Most Valuable Player, scored early and the Thorns won their third NWSL title with a 2-0 victory over the Kansas City Current.

The Thorns also won NWSL championships in 2013, the league's inaugural season, and again in 2017. The three titles are the most for any team in the league.

A recent report that revealed misconduct across the league impacted the Thorns directly, but the players said it brought them together.

"We've put in so much work this whole season. We've gone through a lot of stuff that isn't in the job description," Smith said. "So it just felt really rewarding. I felt

so proud of our team because we've just gone through so much — and to be able to bring this back to our fans who have stuck with us through everything this year, it means so much to us."

The Current had a costly turnover before Smith dribbled down the field, maneuvered around goalkeeper Adrianna Franch, and deftly scored in the fourth minute.

Smith nearly had another goal in the 27th minute, but her shot went just wide. Smith is the second MVP recipient to score in the championship game, joining Lynn Williams for North Carolina in 2016. At 22 years old, she's also the youngest player to score in a league final.

Smith was honored as MVP prior to the championship match, after scoring a club-record 14 goals during the regular

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Former player Mana Shim heads U.S. Soccer task force on abuse

CHICAGO (AP) — Mana Shim, a former player for the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) and the U.S. under-23 national team, will chair the U.S. Soccer Federation's (USSF) taskforce to prevent the abuse and harassment of women that was found to be systemic in the sport.

The USSF created a participant safety taskforce following a report issued on October 3 by former acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Yates.

"There's still so much that needs to be done when it comes to changing the culture of soccer in this country," Shim said in a statement. "I believe we have an opportunity in this moment to protect players and set a new standard for all sports. We don't have any time to waste."

Five of 10 coaches in the NWSL in 2021 were fired or stepped down amid allegations of misconduct, and NWSL commissioner Lisa Baird resigned.

"Abuse in the NWSL is rooted in a deeper culture in women's soccer, beginning in youth leagues, that normalizes verbally abusive coaching and blurs boundaries between coaches and players," Yates wrote.

"For far too long, leaders across the soccer ecosystem — including at U.S. Soccer — have not taken responsibility for protecting players," Shim said. "I believe in the capacity for change. As leader of the taskforce, I am committed to ensuring not only that Yates's recommendations are implemented, but that we push beyond them. We need to find the root causes of our sport's systemic failures and take action at every level from the youth game to the professional game."

Shim, 31, was a midfielder for the Portland Thorns (2013-2017) and Houston



PROTECTING THE PLAYERS. Mana Shim, a former player for the National Women's Soccer League, will chair the U.S. Soccer Federation's taskforce to prevent the abuse and harassment of women that was found to be systemic in the sport. (AR Photo/Jan Landis, File)

Dash (2018-2019) and also played for Japan's Iga Kunoichi in 2015 and Sweden's Växjö in 2017. She made four appearances for the U.S. under-23 team in 2012.

Yates recommended disclosure of termination and discipline by teams to the USSF and the NWSL, a database of complaints and findings, a public listing of discipline, the elimination of nondisclosure and non-disparagement agreements, and annual recertification of coaches and attestation to the accuracy of background information.

She also recommended screening of licensed coaches, limited waivers of licensing requirements for NWSL coaches,

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Welcome back to care

November is Diabetes Awareness Month

Diabetes is a serious disease that affects more than 30 million people in the United States. Make sure you get the care you need. If you have diabetes, manage the disease to help yourself stay healthy. Many clinics have teams that can help. Ask your clinic what's best for you.

Talk to your provider about the care you need:

-  **Blood work:** Get an A1C blood test to earn your reward.
-  **Kidneys:** Screen a urine sample to spot kidney damage early.
-  **Medication:** Talk about the best way to help you take meds as directed.
-  **Eyes:** Find slight changes to your eyes while there is time to protect your vision.
-  **Oral health:** Talk to your provider about the link between diabetes and oral health.

If you need help finding a clinic that offers diabetes care, contact CareOregon Customer Service.

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