

Monroig stays positive through tough season

By Stephen Hennessey
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Megan Monroig would have made the same move her coach did.

After admitted-ly struggling against Minnesota on Oct. 16, Monroig was told she would be benched for senior defender Mo Ryan.

The junior had started every game up until this point, but coach Erica Walsh said Monroig took it "so well." Monroig is now content with her backup role.

"Now that we're into NCAAs, it is all about the team," Monroig

said. "There's no individuals whatsoever, and everything is about what's best for the team. As long as Mo is playing great then I have no problem not being in there because she's doing such a wonderful job for us."

Monroig and the No. 16 Penn State women's soccer team (12-5-2, 8-1-1 Big Ten) will take the field at 7:30 p.m. tonight at Jeffrey Field against Colgate (11-6-3) in the first round of the NCAA Tournament. If the Nittany Lions defeat the Patriot League champs, they'll advance to play the winner of Virginia and St. John's, who play at 5 p.m. in Happy Valley.

Having another home game means Monroig's family and

friends can easily travel from their hometown of Northumberland to State College to watch the Lions play, because it's an hour away.

When Monroig's father, Rodney Swineford, died in a tractor-trailer accident last year, Monroig played quality minutes against Michigan two days later.

"She handled it with such grace, and she didn't get angry or anything," senior Melissa Hayes said. "She just makes everyone laugh. ... It's just great to see that kind of joy out of someone who's suffered such a great loss."

Monroig has taken everything in stride. She has been learning how to play defense all season long — something she had never

done since she started playing soccer at age 5.

Assistant coach Michael Coll praised Monroig's performance as a defender all season long.

He emphasized the coaching staff is confident plugging in any combination of the five defenders into the four backline spots.

Monroig said she's comfortable playing any position on the pitch — noting her brief stint as a forward in the Lions' 2-0 victory against Michigan.

Hayes noticed too.

"In practice she'll ask a million questions because she wants to make sure she has it right," Hayes said.

"And you can just see that con-

centration carry into the game."

Monroig makes sure she keeps the atmosphere light in the huddle, too. Hayes said her teammate will frequently jump in front of Walsh in a huddle to make everybody laugh.

"I love joking around and being funny. That's one of my favorite things," she said. "During water breaks at practice things don't have to be focused then. We all feel it's something important to keep things balanced a little bit and to continue to enjoy ourselves."

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The women's soccer team readies for NCAAs. | **SPORTS**, Page 14.

THE GRID

		TIME	PLACE	TV	WHAT TO LOOK FOR
Football	vs. Indiana	Noon Saturday	Beaver Stadium	BTN	It's the last time captains Daryll Clark and Sean Lee will ever walk through the Beaver Stadium tunnel.
Men's Basketball	vs. Penn	7:30 p.m. Friday	Bryce Jordan Center	BTN	Look for a smaller than expected crowd with women's volleyball and soccer playing at the same time.
Lady Lions	at Drexel, vs. NJIT	7 p.m. Fri., 2 p.m. Sun.	Philadelphia, Bryce Jordan Center		It's the freshmen's first road game. Also, watch out for Tyra Grant in her final season home opener.
Women's Volleyball	vs. No. 5 Illinois, vs. Northwestern	7 p.m. Friday and Saturday	Rec Hall		The Illini and Wildcats come to Rec Hall both looking to avenge sweeps by Penn State earlier in the season.
Men's Volleyball	vs. Nazareth, IPFW, Loyola-Chicago (exhibitions)	1 and 7 p.m. Sat., noon Sun.	Rochester, N.Y.		Expect to see some of the younger guys get quality playing time in this early preseason exhibition.
Wrestling	at No. 19 Lehigh, vs. Bloomsburg	7 p.m. Fri., noon Sun.	Bethlehem, Rec Hall		The Lions travel to Lehigh to take on a tough Mountain Hawk team before they return for Sunday's home opener.
Women's Soccer	vs. Colgate, winner of Virginia/St. John's	7:30 p.m. Fri., 1 p.m. Sun.	Jeffrey Field		PSU kicks off the NCAA Tourney vs. Colgate and should they advance, will meet the winner of Virginia/ St. John's.
Men's Soccer	vs. Michigan State, winner of Indiana/Ohio State	4:30 p.m. Fri., 2 p.m. Sun.	Bloomington, Ind.	BTN	The Lions seek their second win over the Spartans and possible redemption over Indiana or Ohio State.
Icers	at No. 7 Rhode Island	7 p.m. Friday and Saturday	Kingston, R.I.		The Icers finish up a four-game road trip with two games against fellow top-10 team Rhode Island.
Men's Cross Country	NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional Championships	Noon Saturday	University of Maryland-Eastern Shore		The Lions try to match last year's second-place finish and earn an automatic bid to the NCAAs.
Women's Cross Country	NCAA Mid-Atlantic Regional Championships	1:15 p.m. Saturday	University of Maryland-Eastern Shore		Penn State looks to earn more points toward an at-large NCAA bid.
Ice Lions	at Temple, Rowan, Penn	8:30 p.m. Fri., 8:15 p.m. Sat., 8 p.m. Sun.	Philadelphia, Glassboro, N.J.		Goalie Thomas Badali looks to continue his hot play in net during a three-game road trip.
Lady Icers	vs. Penn	9:15 p.m. Friday	Greenberg Ice Pavilion		The Lady Icers look to overcome their injury woes and extend their winning streak to five games.
Men's Rugby	at Navy	6 p.m. Friday	Annapolis, Md.		The Ruggers enter their last regular season game with a chance to lock up the No. 2 seed in the MARFU Playoffs.

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