

# Lions graduate talented, influential senior class

By Stephen Hennessey  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Bri Garcia wants to channel senior forward Katie Schoepfer's passion from the last minute of Penn State's last game into the next three years of her career.

## WOMEN'S SOCCER

With the women's soccer team trailing 6-2, Schoepfer kept running. A loose ball was 40 yards in the distance, probably out of reach, but Schoepfer sprinted.

The senior didn't win the ball, but that relentless attitude is one of many things Garcia has learned from this year's senior class.

"Schoep told me, 'I did it because I didn't want my last minute on Jeffrey to be me not hustling,'" said Garcia, a sophomore. "I want to take Schoep's last minute and put it into every single practice, every single drill and every single game."

Come this spring, the women's soccer team will realize it must move on without the core of seniors the team leaned on this year.

Juniors Dani Toney and Megan

Monroig return to comprise next year's senior class. Toney was second on the team with 13 goals and Monroig started 14 out of 21 games for the Lions.

With only two returning true seniors next year, the underclassmen realize it will be a team effort to lead the Nittany Lions. While the players will move on without the seniors, the lessons they've learned will stick with them.

One of those players is freshman midfielder Maddy Evans. Evans was one of the quietest players this year, but said she will be more comfortable being vocal after the spring.

In her end-of-the-year meeting, Evans said coach Erica Walsh asked her to step up to be a leader next year. Evans said after this spring, she believes she will be more comfortable.

"Every one of the seniors just did a great job of being incredibly unselfish and positive even when times were tough. If they're having a tough game, just playing through it," Evans said. "That really had a big impact on me."

Garcia said her class has talked among itself about the importance

of stepping up and being leaders. She said Toney has told her the team will need the 2010 juniors' help next season.

Defender Emma Thomson is one of those players. Each Lion has pointed to her leadership presence in the backfield this year as being essential. Next year, she and fellow centerback Lexi Marton will continue that trend.

"It's stuff they say to the players on the field that is huge," Evans said. "Even if it's just a small, 'Keep it going.'"

Senior forward Nikki Watts noticed that at the end of the team's last home game, most players were underclassmen and noticed their presence on the field.

If there's one thing the seniors hope the underclassmen carry with them, it's the necessity to stick together, senior midfielder Melissa Hayes said.

"It was really incredible to be part of such a supportive group," Hayes said. "I really hope they continue that culture of just working hard and being there for each other."



Bryan Wade Heritage/Colegian

The women's soccer team hugs after its season-ending loss to Virginia. The game was the last for a talented group of senior leaders.

**WHAT THEY WILL MISS**

**18** goals scored by seniors

**87** saves tallied by a senior keeper

**59** shots on goal by seniors

**20** assists registered by seniors

To e-mail reporter: [sih5037@psu.edu](mailto:sih5037@psu.edu)

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Bell is currently being restored to its original form

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