

# Dorton taking knee injury in stride

By Jocelyn Syrstad  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

For the past three weeks, everywhere Darcy Dorton has gone, Myrtle has gone, too.

The freshman outside hitter on the Penn State women's volleyball team, who will have surgery next week on a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in her left knee and medial meniscus, gets from place to place via a motorized scooter, which she and her teammates elected to name "Myrtle."

Although Dorton walks around her dorm room and Rec Hall with the help of a full-leg brace, she cruises around on the scooter to travel longer distances.

While many people would be devastated about a serious injury that requires surgery, Dorton is trying to find as many positives as possible, a main one being "Myrtle."

"The scooter's the perks," Dorton said. "This is faster. I feel like an idiot sometimes, but when people are walking on the sidewalk, I pass them."



Check out the Can You Dig It? blog for more details about Darcy Dorton's left knee injury: [psucollegian.com](http://psucollegian.com)

## WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL



Dorton

Dorton's teammates said the freshman, who still attends practices, has remained positive through everything. They said it is weird training without Dorton on the court, but she makes sure to stay as involved as possible.

Assistant strength and conditioning coach Kirk Adams said Dorton even attends weightlifting sessions with her team, participating in anything that doesn't involve using her injured knee.

"She's a champ. She has her head up," freshman setter Marika Racibarskas said. "She's really been positive. She knows exactly what she needs to do, and she has really good spirits about it. She knows she'll be back better and stronger."

The recovery process of a basic ACL tear is nothing new to Dorton. She tore the ACL in her right knee six years ago while playing for her club team in seventh grade.

Racibarskas said the injury has also allowed the team to learn how to deal with adversity. The Nittany Lions are confident Dorton will overcome the obstacle in front of

her, especially because the freshman has experienced orthopedic surgery before.

"She knows what she needs to do," freshman outside hitter Kristin Carpenter said. "She knows that she needs to work hard. She's gonna come back so much stronger, so it's gonna be OK."

Dorton appreciates her teammates' support, especially because the recovery process is going to be a bumpy road. She said there is going to be some days when she feels great and other days when she is in a lot of pain and doesn't want to get out of bed.

Dorton said she might as well give her roommate, sophomore defensive specialist Megan Shifflett, a gold star now for all that she is going to have to put up with.

"I'm going to be grumpy sometimes, and I'm really going to need their support, and they know that," Dorton said. "We have that unspoken bond that we're there for each other all the time. We just know that I'll take care of my thing and they'll help me along."

Dorton has learned quickly that as long as she is accompanied by "Myrtle," she will need to seek out help from time to time.

As much fun as she has riding her scooter, she said it made her more aware of how inaccessible campus is to handicapped people. She said she often has to drive the whole way around buildings just to find the ramp.

However, getting into her Thompson Hall room proves to be the most challenging. She and her roommate perform what they call a "drive-by."

When Dorton wants to get into her dorm, she will drive down the hallway and knock on the door. Shifflett will then hold the door open while her roommate drives down the hall, turns around in the bathroom and turns in with the perfect angle to get inside.

"The dorm is so hard to get into. It's quite the process," Dorton said. "It makes you realize how much you take other things for granted."

While Dorton looks ahead to the recovery process, grimacing when she recalls the shots, pumps and blood bags she will have to deal with, she said it is something she has finally come to peace with.

Dorton doesn't like that her legs will turn into "pudding," that she



Abby Drey/Collegian

Katie Kabbes (2) spikes the ball during a match in November. With Darcy Dorton scheduled to have surgery, Kabbes may need to step up.

will have to give up West dining hall cookies and go on a "celery-for-lunch" diet and watch her teammates as they practice and improve.

However, Dorton knows it's only a matter of time before her routine gets back to normal.

"It's something I have to do. It's

what's in front of me," Dorton said. "I can choose to be upset about it or run with it, and I'm choosing to run with it."

Collegian staff reporter Bill Landis contributed to this story.

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Abby Drey/Collegian

Coach Russ Rose talks to the team during a match last season.

## Filling their shoes

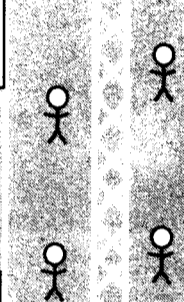
With Megan Hodge graduating and Darcy Dorton scheduled to have surgery on her ACL, the Nittany Lions need new outside hitters to step up.

### Madison Martin 6'2"

Incoming freshman Martin won four straight state titles and recorded 390 kills with a .550 hitting percentage her senior season.

### Deja McClendon 6'0"

Incoming freshman Kentucky's Miss Volleyball had 320 kills and 72 blocks her senior year.



### Ariel Scott 6'5"

Incoming freshman Scott had a .500 hitting percentage and recorded 366 kills in her senior year.

### Katie Kabbes 6'5"

Sophomore A vocal leader on the team, Kabbes recorded 44 kills and a .253 hitting percentage in 33 sets this year.

Source: [gopsusports.com](http://gopsusports.com)

Tiffany Liaw/Collegian

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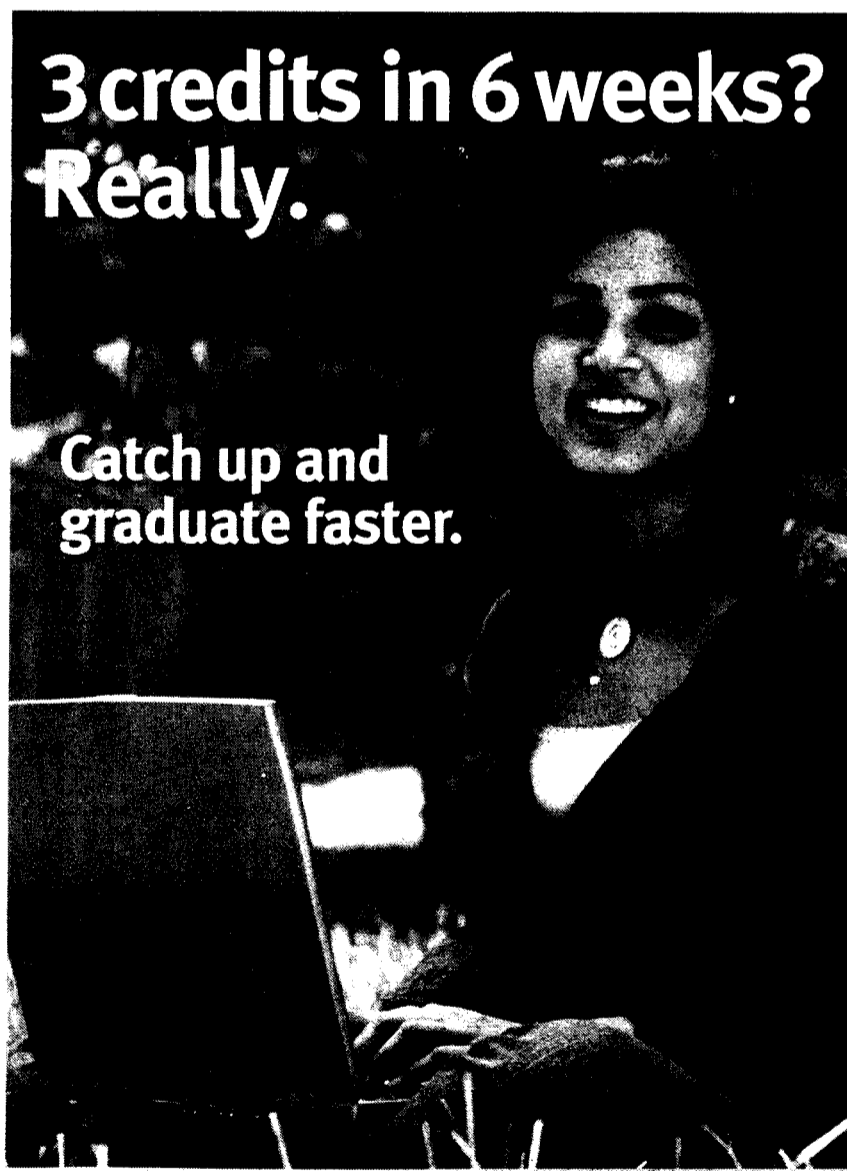
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