

Speedy frontline learning to work as one

By Alex Angert
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Like a hawk stalking its prey, senior Dani Toney hovers around midfield awaiting her next opportunity to strike.

Next to the crafty, experienced senior are two freshmen — Hayley Brock on one side, Maya Hayes on the other — both full of raw potential, trying simply to learn the college game from under Toney's wing.

A trio of electric forwards with separate styles of play, Toney, Brock and Hayes are slowly working toward building a chemistry together to lead Penn State in its quest for a 13th straight conference title.

"There's a ton of respect for each other," coach Erica Walsh said. "They need to learn how to work with each other. Right now, I think it's three individuals working hard and we've got to get three individuals working hard together."

When watching the three play on the field, it's easy to notice one

glaring similarity — speed.

But though they are similar in that aspect of the game, Walsh said they each contribute different strengths to the team. And with Hayes and Brock being freshmen, it's just a matter of combining all those strengths.

"They are young and just trying to get acclimated to Division I soccer," Toney said.

"It's a big change with the speed of play. We have to get used to each other and learn more about each other's aspects of the game. It's coming along."

Toney, who utilizes the speed all three possess, harnesses that quickness with an ability to get behind the backline and create scoring opportunities.

On Sunday against William & Mary, Toney raced the entire length of the field by herself with two defenders back and still got a shot off. A minute later, she was at it again as she got past the defense only to just miss getting the ball into the net.

The senior wasn't done yet as she once again used both her speed and ability to beat the defense to get a third straight shot

off in as many minutes. This time it was a goal.

Lucky for her two freshman teammates, Toney has a special ability to relate to them and guide them through learning the college style.

"Dani Toney was Maya Hayes and Hayley Brock when she was a freshman," Walsh said. "It's great that she has that insight that it's not good enough and there is another level for you that you need to have higher expectations for yourself."

Walsh added that Toney has done a great job of setting that standard so far early in the season, as the senior added she is trying to be as approachable as possible while encouraging the two freshmen to ask questions.

Through three games, Toney already has two goals while Brock also has a goal and an assist. Nevertheless, while the trio has shown glimpses in their three starts together, they realize they have stuff to work on and Brock knows how fortunate they are to have a senior leader to help them out.

"[Toney] has so much more



Sarah Finnegan/Collegian
Senior forward Dani Toney (28) races a defender downfield against Virginia on Friday night.

experience than me but hopefully I can keep up and keep working with her," Brock said. "I hope to get to where she is soon by the end of the season or anytime. As the

season goes on I think we'll grow and learn how to play with each other better."

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Defender hoping for shot at starting lineup

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

In the spring, Brian Forgue looked right at home as the third inside back on the Penn State men's soccer team's defense, which played five men at the time.

But that was the spring, and this fall, the sophomore is back where he was a year ago — on the bench, trying to just crack the lineup. But with a new coaching staff in place and a return to a four-defender set, Forgue is still trying to figure out how he can accomplish that.

"To be quite honest I'm not exactly sure. I'm just coming out every day and working as hard as I can and hoping something cracks," Forgue said.

"I know my role as far as pushing the starters at this point, I'm hoping to break into the starting lineup but right now, I've just got

to control what I can control."

Forgue came to Penn State last season as a highly touted prospect but with veterans already in place on the defense he had to wait.

However, injuries and suspensions affected the back line, giving Forgue a chance to play.

The defender appeared in 11 games with four starts, including the final three of the year when now redshirt senior Andy Parr went down with a knee injury. In the Nittany Lions' season-ending loss to Maryland in the NCAA Tournament, Forgue scored his first career goal which tied the game.

Assistant coach Isang Jacob said the sophomore has been doing what is expected of him since returning to the bench.

"He's learning, the expectation is very high and the demand is

very high because of the new system," Jacob said. "I think 'Forguey' needs to do what is expected of him to get the job. That's what he needs to do."

Losing minutes has been frustrating for Forgue, but he said the coaches have a vision for the team this year and he is going to fulfill his role to the best of his ability. In the Lions two preseason games, the defender tallied about four minutes in clean-up duty against Hartwick College and did not play against Louisville.

Despite not getting a large amount of minutes, Forgue has no doubt he can step in and be ready if the team needs him.

"Anyone would like to play more, but I feel I'm very fit and technically I'm sound," Forgue said. "If my name's called, I'm ready to go." While Forgue doesn't have the role he had last spring, his teammates haven't seen it affecting him. Parr said Forgue still works just as hard in practice and isn't slacking off.

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Isang Jacob
Men's soccer assistant coach

For a recruit of Forgue's caliber, going from a starring role in high school to fighting for time on the field can be tough. To the sophomore's credit, Jacob and Parr said they haven't seen Forgue accept being a reserve.

"The way I see him I don't think he's accepted it yet and I think that's a good thing," Parr said. "He comes out everyday trying to earn that starting spot and trying to become that regular guy."

Parr also said Forgue has been pushing the starters to stay on top of their game. Playing behind veterans Andres Casais and Mark Fetrow, Forgue said he is using his time to be observant and learn

what he can from the pair because they are the ones on the field.

Jacob said the coaches would like to see Forgue continue to work on using his left foot and playing quicker and that when the sophomore does that, he will be ready for a bigger role this season.

However, should the need arise, Forgue's teammates have faith in him to be able to come in and contribute, just like he did a year ago.

"When we needed him he was ready and that's the key thing," Jacob said. "If that's the role he fits into this year, that's not a bad role."

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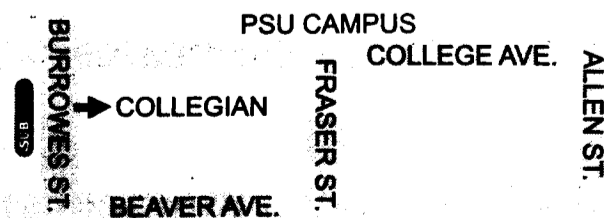
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