

# Lady Rugger captain taking on new role this season



Sadie Anderson (right) carries the ball against Virginia Tech last season.

By: Brandt Gelman  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Watching the Penn State Lady Rugger practice, one player in particular seems to be moving at light speed.

Her name is Sadie Anderson, a junior from Ft. Collins, Colo. She is an All-American, and the captain of the two-time national champion Lady Rugger.

"She is literally the quickest player I have ever seen on the field," senior Deven Owsiany said.

While Anderson has already proven her skill to her teammates, Lady Rugger coach Pete Steinberg said he is looking for more from his captain this year.

"In her first year she was a great athlete," Steinberg said. "In her second year she was more of a game manager, and now we want her to identify the opportunities where she can impose herself."

Anderson said she is ready to take on that challenge.

"When I first got here, I relied mostly on my athleticism," Anderson said. "I always want to improve my game and vision so this year I have been watching more video to push my game farther."

Anderson is also more comfortable this year because it is her first time living at the Penn State University Park campus.

## WOMEN'S RUGBY

"She is the quickest player I've ever seen."

Deven Owsiany  
senior back

She originally went to Penn State's Altoona campus and had to commute for practice her first two years.

"For me I didn't feel like I was part of the team because it was strictly rugby when I got up here," Anderson said. "I couldn't ask teammates to go out to lunch or hang out after practice or games."

Owsiany said players would allow Anderson to sleep on their couches when she would stay overnight, but it was not an ideal situation. Steinberg has been impressed with Anderson's development, and looks for her to be a great team leader this year.

"She has become more vocal by challenging the team to do more than they think they can," Steinberg said. "She's made a real commitment to learning the game."

Owsiany feels the team would be lost without Anderson's voice on the field.

"In rugby, communication is key and she just helps everyone around get better," Owsiany said. "As flyhalf she is like the quarterback of the team. If she's not being vocal, everyone is like, 'You tell us what to do.'"

Anderson's leadership extends beyond game situations, too.

She has made it a priority to come to practice before practice, and stay late after, working with younger teammates on their games.

"I like to come early to focus on my skills," Anderson said. "I work on kicking and passing with everyone because it makes a better team, plus I just love the team and hanging out with everybody."

The team's unselfish commitment to helping out its younger players might be what separates the Lady Rugger from other schools, making them perennial contenders for the national championship.

"For us it is very important that our older players feel responsible for the team to win after they leave, so that means our juniors and seniors take the freshmen and develop them," Steinberg said.

Steinberg is not shy to praise Anderson for all the hard work she has put into the development of the team and her game. "She is one of the best players in the nation," Steinberg said. "She also has the potential to be the best player Penn State has ever had."

Owsiany agrees with her coach's assessment of Anderson. "You ask any other player in the country and they will know who Sadie Anderson is," Owsiany said.

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# Defender Thomson playing more aggressive on offense

By Andrew Robinson  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Emma Thomson stepped into the shot, launching the ball into the air where it arched downward meant for the back of the net.

However, Virginia goalkeeper Chantel Jones managed to get enough of her hand on the ball to send it over the crossbar, conceding a corner kick, but no goal.

Despite the save, the point had been made — Thomson, a junior defender on the Penn State women's soccer team, is going for the goal this season.

"I don't think [opponents] really expect a right back to get up there and shoot," Thomson said. "It's

different. It's good to actually get over the halfway line occasionally."

Through her first two seasons, the versatile Thomson, who can play either centre back or the outside back position, tallied a total of 17 shots, scoring two goals. In the first three games of 2010, the junior already had four shots, three on goal, for a team best .750 clip among players with multiple shots on net.

With the Nittany Lions playing a non-traditional 4-4-2 formation, there is room on the wings for Thomson and left back Megan Monroig to exploit. At West Virginia, the defender made countless runs through the midfield, on and off the ball, to support the attack.

However, the junior isn't one to

just take off on a long run up the field on a whim — she looks for a clear line to make her runs. Lions coach Erica Walsh said Thomson is a "soccer player" and playing outside back is the best way to use the junior's skills on the ball.

"That's the difference between Emma and so many players in Division I soccer, she gets it," Walsh said. "She's been watching it growing up in England and it's a way of life for her, so she understands the game at a higher level than a lot of other players."

Sophomore midfielder Christine Nairn said every time Thomson decides to advance up the field, something positive happens.

And, no matter how bad a ball gets played out to Thomson, Nairn said the defender always seems to

despite playing defense. Walsh

Because of her position, Thomson said she rarely practices shooting, but that fact is hard to believe watching the defender play. Nairn said when Thomson shoots, which isn't often, the other players always watch because it's either going in or going to force the keeper to make a save.

And Thomson seems to have a knack for the unexpected.

"Every practice she does something where we're like, 'Where the hell did that come from?'" Nairn said. "But she's very consistent, she's probably one of our most consistent players and we'll need her this entire season."

Thomson is one of the team's co-captains along with Monroig, and both have been key players in the Lions' attack this season.

despite playing defense. Walsh said Thomson has embraced the leadership role her teammates elected her to this spring, but would like to see her become more vocal at times when the team is struggling.

But Walsh has no doubt the defender will become the leader she needs to be. And if her history of clutch goals is any indicator, Thomson will be a factor in a close game sometime this season.

"When we're down a goal and the games on the line, I expect Emma's going to step up and be somebody that's going to create chances for us," Walsh said. "She's a winner and I think that's where you're going to see her at her best — when we're behind."

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