

Hovington adding spark to defense

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The timing was going to cut it close, but Erica Walsh knew that. There was no way the Penn State women's soccer coach was going to pass up Bri Hovington's skills in her lineup. Through the last three games,

WOMEN'S SOCCER

the freshman defender has made an impression on the Nittany Lions back line as a reserve with her speed and communication. And Hovington might not be just a sub much longer. "[She's] longer, has good pace. She's a great communicator," Walsh said. "That's why we recruited her, we thought her communication was excellent. She's coming into her own." Hovington came into the season

in the final stages of recovery from an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear. The coaches knew there was a chance the freshman wouldn't be expected to start the season but also reacted a quick impact once she was ready. While the defense typically sees very few subs, Hovington's talents are too good to keep her off the field. The defender played in the team's Blue-White scrimmage on Aug. 22, but didn't make her regular season debut until the Aug. 29 loss to William & Mary. After she got her bulky ACL brace off in the preseason, Hovington said she injured her right patellar tendon in a tackle with Maya Hayes. Despite that, and another, smaller brace she had to wear for a few days, the freshman hasn't been hesitant since returning. "I'm not afraid going into tackles because I've always heard if you're afraid going into tackles, you're going to get hurt again," Hovington said. "I'm excited to be back out here and it's a great feeling."

For some freshmen, coming into an established team can take some getting used to but for Hovington, fitting into the Nittany Lions back line didn't take long. Walsh said the defender easily adjusted in training and quickly started talking. "It's helping me to put those balls through and those assists. I want to get some goals too but it's been great." Junior forward Corey Hertzog has been one of the main benefactors of Braga's play, having two of his three goals assisted by the senior. Hertzog said Braga's play has helped the forwards in getting better chances on goal. Playing on the wing allows the Brazilian-born Braga to take defenders on one-on-one and use his dribbling skills to advance the ball. Warming said every time Braga gets the ball he makes the right choice and always leaves extra options open. Watching Braga challenge defenders, his nationality clearly has an influence on his game and he joked that he tries to give defending right backs nightmares. "That's the beauty of Brazilians soccer," Braga said. "I like to do that, just get a ball and see one defender and flip the ball through his legs. I love to do it. When I dribble it helps the objective to get to the goal."

"Bri can track players down, it's actually her strength. Now that she's a bit more patient with her defending I think she's really going to come on here."

Erica Walsh
Coach

Having established defenders in senior Megan Monroig, junior Emma Thomson and sophomore Lexi Marton helped. Hovington said she's been learning a lot from practicing with Monroig and Thomson, the starting outside backs. "She's working hard, she's very in tune to listening and learning," Monroig said. "She asks questions all the time because she wants to be the best she can be in that position. When she comes in she works hard, gets a tackle in when she needs to."

Monroig said Hovington works well with all of the defenders and never gives up on a play. With her speed, the freshman can get up in the attack but can also track back to defend easily. Hovington said she hasn't lost any of her speed coming off the injury and pointed to a play against Connecticut on Sunday where she and Monroig were able to chase down and stop a 2-on-2 Huskies counterattack. Combining with Monroig and

centre back Carly Niness, the Lions have a quick back line, a benefit that Walsh enjoys having. "It gives you a lot of confidence," Walsh said. "Bri can track players down, it's actually her strength. Now that she's a bit more patient with her defending I think she's really going to come on here."

With games this weekend against Washington and No. 4 Portland, Walsh said Hovington could crack the starting lineup depending on the match-up. Whatever her role is this weekend, Hovington is happy to be back and contributing for her team. "I've been looking forward to being out here with Penn State since I was a sophomore in high school," Hovington said. "To finally get back out here, it was an amazing feeling, absolutely indescribable. I love it out here."

To e-mail reporter: adr5079@psu.edu



Tyler Sizemore/Collegian

Bri Hovington (23) and Maya Hayes (5) chase down the ball

Lions look to further utilize midfielder Braga

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Matheus Braga has four assists in two games, but he's capable of more.

MEN'S SOCCER

At least, Bob Warming knows the senior outside midfielder is, so long as Braga's teammates on the Penn State men's soccer team help him out a little. "He's pretty good but he can't do it alone," Warming, the Nittany Lions coach, said. "We've got to get better runs out of the forwards so that they understand what he's capable of with passing."

Braga is back at the left wing position he occupied last fall, where he tallied a Big Ten-best seven assists in 2009. The senior said he has no preference where he's playing, saying he'd still get after it if he was moved to defense. But he can only do so much, and it's up to the other players to make good runs that create space for the senior to exploit. Braga has posted results so far and his team-

mates are working to keep that production going. "It's something we've been working on the whole season," senior midfielder Drew Cost said. "If we can exploit that, we'll be a better team."

While Warming said it's going to be on the forwards to start creating space, Warming said they've been improving in that area. What the coach does want to see is more players running past Braga when he has the ball to draw away defenders. The faster the Lions can get players moving and swarming around Braga, the faster the team's left back will make the majority of the runs, mixing up who goes will open up more passing lanes. At the same time, Braga likes the way the team has meshed in the early going. The senior said his teammates have done well responding when he has the ball and making good runs. "The team is really well connected right now, we're keeping the shape and the forwards are making nice runs," Braga said.

It's helping me to put those balls through and those assists. I want to get some goals too but it's been great." Junior forward Corey Hertzog has been one of the main benefactors of Braga's play, having two of his three goals assisted by the senior. Hertzog said Braga's play has helped the forwards in getting better chances on goal. Playing on the wing allows the Brazilian-born Braga to take defenders on one-on-one and use his dribbling skills to advance the ball. Warming said every time Braga gets the ball he makes the right choice and always leaves extra options open. Watching Braga challenge defenders, his nationality clearly has an influence on his game and he joked that he tries to give defending right backs nightmares. "That's the beauty of Brazilians soccer," Braga said. "I like to do that, just get a ball and see one defender and flip the ball through his legs. I love to do it. When I dribble it helps the objective to get to the goal."



Collegian File Photo

To e-mail reporter: adr5079@psu.edu Matheus Braga (7) fights for the ball against Pittsburgh.

Howard drives in six, Hamels solid as Phillies defeat Marlins

By Dan Gelston
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PHILADELPHIA -- Ryan Howard homered and had six RBIs and the Philadelphia Phillies backed Cole Hamels with a rare burst of the support he had been missing most of the season in a 10-6 win over the Florida Marlins on Wednesday night. Howard hit his 28th homer of the season and the NL East-leading Phillies tied a season high with 17 hits. Hamels (10-10) tossed four-hit ball over seven innings and extended his consecutive scoreless innings streak to 25. He

MLB

struck out five and won his third straight start. His record would be well over .500 if not for receiving the fourth-lowest run support (3.18 runs per start) of any starter this season entering the game. He got plenty in Philadelphia's third straight win. Phillies shortstop Jimmy Rollins left with tightness in his right hamstring. He is day-to-day. Gaby Sanchez hit a three-run homer for the Marlins as part of a six-run eighth off Nate Robertson.

20	Philadelphia
6	Florida

Hamels was sensational and earned a standing ovation when he struck out Brad Davis to end the seventh. Hamels, the 2008 World Series MVP might have 15 wins by now if the Phillies had some pop in their bats in his starts. The Phillies were shut out in four of his starts — including consecutive 1-0 losses in early August. The Phillies entered having scored only 19 runs in Hamels' last 11 starts. They scored two or fewer runs in 13 of his first 28 starts. They tried to make it up to him from the start Wednesday, scoring runs in each of the first five innings and staked him to a 10-0 lead.

Howard did the bulk of the damage against Andrew Miller (1-1). He had a two-run single in the first inning and went deep with an opposite-field, three-run shot to left in the fourth that made it 7-0. Miller was long gone when Howard's line-drive single to right in the seventh put the Phillies ahead 10-0. Howard was batting .188 in 16 games since returning from the disabled list on Aug. 21. Put in perspective, the Phillies scored 10 runs combined in Hamels' last six starts. Hamels never groused about his lack of support and kept giving the Phillies the kind of quality starts that has them convinced

they can make another deep October run. The Phillies started the day a half-game ahead of Atlanta in the NL East as they make a run toward their fourth straight division title. The Phillies don't know if they will have to move on without Rollins. Rollins — who has slumped so badly this season he was dropped from leadoff to sixth in the batting order — gingerly ran to second base and didn't slide on a two-out double in the third. He didn't have his usual burst around third base when he scored on Carlos Ruiz's single. Rollins slid at home and slowly walked back to the dugout. He had his head down.

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