

Freshman Tyler turns in impressive weekend

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The ball left Corey Hertzog's foot, lofted into the air and hit the crossbar. Somehow, it stayed in play and fell to the feet of Jordan Tyler.

Tyler controlled the rebound, fought off a defender and scored his first of two goals Sunday afternoon in a win over Binghamton. It's only four games into Tyler's

Penn State soccer career, but the freshman forward is quickly proving to be a valuable weapon in the Nittany Lions' attack. And he's doing it all while learning to be a forward for the first time.

"Jordan's never been a forward, he's always been a midfielder player," Penn State coach Bob Warming said. "He had been signed by [former Lions coach] Barry [Gorman] and I just told him, 'You can't play in the midfield, you're not mobile enough.'"

Looking at Tyler's physical makeup, a move up to forward only seemed logical. The freshman is 6-foot-2, 200 pounds and provides a big, physical compliment to Hertzog.

While Tyler doesn't have much experience at forward, Warming said he's been more than willing to learn and always asks plenty of questions. The freshman has also turned to Hertzog for advice and the two are starting to build chemistry.

"Corey's like our star player and it's great for me to be able to come in as a freshman and play as Corey's wingman," Tyler said. "We watch film together and he teaches me the game a lot, so yeah, I

feel like we're connecting a lot."

Tyler scored three goals this past weekend, one on Friday and the Lions' first two scores Sunday. Hertzog and Tyler showed their connection on the freshman's second goal Sunday where Hertzog flipped the ball across the net, which Tyler headed in for a goal.

With his bigger frame, Tyler provides the Lions with a player who can hold the ball and keep possession with his back to the goal. Keeping the ball allows Penn State's playmakers, Matheus Braga, Mackenzie Arment and Hertzog to make runs into space where Tyler can find them.

And so far, Tyler enjoys being able to use his size to his advantage.

"That's what I like in the transition from club to college," Tyler said. "In club I would get called for fouls a lot, but here it's more physical and guys are actually bumping me off the ball. I just like playing like that."

While Tyler isn't the quickest player on the field, he holds his own dribbling the ball and dropping into the midfield to accept a pass. Hertzog complimented Tyler's physical nature and said

the freshman is a great finisher in the box.

Hertzog knows the big freshman's ability to shield off defenders will be an asset.

"When he checks forward and just holds off one or two players it just opens the lane behind," Hertzog said. "He can lay it off to Matheus or one of them to play a slip through ball. He's going to be the guy to hold people off."

Warming said Tyler had never been on a strength program before arriving at Penn State. However, since starting the Lions' lifting program, Warming has seen a drastic change in Tyler's strength and physical presence from where it was in the beginning of the preseason.

As long as Tyler continues to work and learn, he will keep growing and provide a more reliable threat as the season goes on.

"Jordan has really benefited from two things — watching video and playing with Corey," Warming said. "He's got a big body, he's good with his back to the goal and he's going to get better. He's got to just keep working at it."

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Freshman Jordan Tyler (23) reacts to the ball vs. Bucknell on Friday.

Sarah Finnegan/Collegian

Lions look to heal, improve after weekend contests

By Mike Still
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Andy Parr knows he and his teammates have a tough week ahead of them.

After two hard-fought matches this past weekend against Bucknell and Binghamton, the Penn State men's soccer team will have a short week to recover and prepare for two more challenging games this weekend.

"We've got some bumps and bruises, I know I do, but we have a great training staff here," Parr said. "As soon as Binghamton [was] over, we had to start looking forward. The season really moves pretty quickly, so there's not time to really rest."

The Lions will leave for Colorado on Wednesday for games against Air Force in Colorado Springs on Friday, and Denver University in Denver on Sunday.

With much of the week devoted to travel, the team will need to make the most of its short training schedule this week.

In order to make sure their legs are as fresh as possible for the trip, many players have already paid visits to the trainers, Parr said. These trips include taking ice baths in order to rejuvenate sore muscles.

Coach Bob Warming knows how important rest from the past weekend will be to his team, too.

"We want to get those two behind us," Warming said. "But then it's gonna be all about recovery and regeneration now. We have to do everything we can possibly do, every little trick we can do...hydration, nutrition."

Along with getting ready physically for their trip, the Lions are also looking to fine tune their defensive strategy.

Following a 4-3 victory over Binghamton Sunday, it was clear to sophomore defender Brian Forgue what the team needs to work on.

"Defensive shape," Forgue said.

"All over the field, from top to bottom. The score definitely reflects the stuff that we need to work on."

Having scored the first goal of the game against the Bearcats just 10 minutes into the match, the Lions' defense began to get complacent, Parr said.

This lack of focus when leading is something the team is looking to address.

"Obviously we were able to score pretty early in both games," Parr said. "We need to just stay focused for 90 minutes because we realize that even just one mistake can turn into a goal. And against some of these teams, that's all they need to get themselves back into the game and fired up."

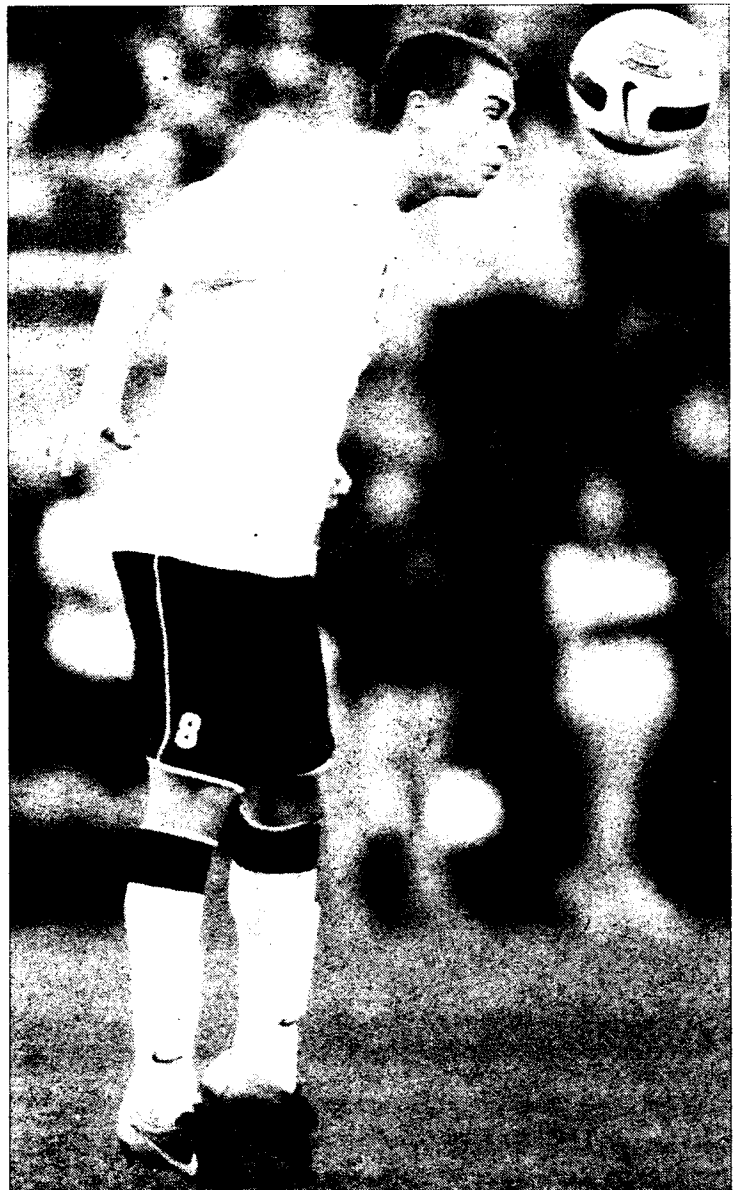
Being forced to take Monday off because of mandatory NCAA regulations, the Lions will have little time on the practice field this week to work on these adjustments.

But the team will be making the most of the opportunity to rest, and will prepare off the field as best they can.

"We're all kind of feeling the affects of the games right now," Parr said.

"But that doesn't mean that we can't start mentally preparing for the next game."

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Drew Cost follows through on a header vs. Binghamton on Sunday.

Nigel Graham/Collegian



Maura Ryan (2) attempts a shot vs. Ohio State in 2008. Ryan is now a member of the cross country team.

Collegian file photo

Ryan running in final year

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Maura Ryan has been running all her life.

For the last four years, Ryan did her running at Jeffrey Field as a defender on the Penn State women's soccer team. At the end of last year, with her soccer eligibility exhausted, Ryan didn't know what she wanted to do after college.

But Ryan knew that she could use a fifth year of eligibility at Penn State, it just had to be in a different sport. A track star in high school, Ryan decided to use her fifth year on the track and is running cross country for the Nittany Lions this fall and will run track in the winter and spring seasons.

Ryan appeared in 80 games, starting 65 of them, and tallied three assists. Nonetheless, she also carried track memories and how much she enjoyed running.

"In the back of my head there's always been this little noise going, 'You could always run track,'" Ryan said. "One of the things that pushed me to do it is I know in 10 or 20 years when I look back I'd regret it if I didn't give myself the opportunity to run in college."

Ryan e-mailed Penn State cross country coach Beth Alford-Sullivan and assistant coach John Gondak about running, which the fifth-year senior called a "last-minute decision." Running cross country this fall was a bit of a surprise for Ryan, but she said the coaches had most of the middle-distance runners do it.

Alford-Sullivan said Ryan is her third soccer player-turned-runner, and in the past, she's had good results. While soccer and cross country running are two very different sports, the coach likes what Ryan has brought to the team early in the season.

"Soccer lends itself to the toughness factor we talk about that this sport takes," Alford-Sullivan said. "And there's the general conditioning. They have to do things differently, but soccer is physically taxing and she comes in with that."

Preparing for cross country

would have been a challenge regardless, but Ryan's circumstances this summer complicated matters a little. The fifth-year senior played soccer professionally in Iceland for club team Bredablik from May until August.

Like track, going overseas was an unexpected opportunity Ryan couldn't pass up.

"I was checking my e-mail one day and I got an e-mail from a coach that basically said, 'How would you feel about coming and playing abroad in Iceland?'" Ryan said. "It was a kind of an on the whim decision, but I'm so happy I got a chance. I've always wanted to study abroad and never had the opportunity to and this kind of replaced that."

Ryan spent the summer living in an apartment in Kópavogur, Iceland's second largest city, where Bredablik plays its home games. Though Icelandic is regarded as one of the hardest languages to learn, Ryan said all the players spoke English, but usually only when addressing her.

Adapting to life in Iceland was a bit of a challenge, despite the country importing a good deal of its food from the United States. Ryan said she couldn't stream movies from websites such as Netflix or hulu.com, and all the television channels were in Icelandic.

"I was so relieved when the World Cup was on because it was soccer 24/7," Ryan said. "You don't really need commentators to watch it."

Opportunity seemed to follow Ryan this summer. Bredablik's captain and starting centre back suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), which Ryan said propelled her into the starting lineup for much of the season.

As is the case in many European leagues, Ryan said there was a substantial difference in talent between the top teams, including Bredablik, and the lower teams. However, Ryan did get a taste of top-level soccer in the team's UEFA Women's Champions League qualifying campaign.

Ryan said the game that stood out the most to her was Bredablik's final qualifier, a 3-3 Champions League draw with French side Juvisy on Aug. 10.

"It was just the whole atmosphere of hosting the Champions League, they played the Champions League anthem before you walked out," Ryan said. "Everything before just hyped it up."

Since returning to the United States and State College, Ryan is still getting in cross country shape. Alford-Sullivan said she expects Ryan to be a contributor all year through cross country, and indoor and outdoor track.

Though joining a new team with fresh faces, Ryan said the runners were very welcoming and teammate Liz Kearins, who Ryan knew from high school, helped her get to know everybody. Ryan said the first few days were a little awkward when she had to explain she wasn't a freshman, but in fact a fifth-year senior.

Freshman runner Emily Giannotti said Ryan has adapted well to cross country. Alford-Sullivan noted Ryan's toughness from soccer, something Giannotti has picked up on as well.

"That's huge, especially toward the end when everyone's dying and you're pushing so hard to the finish," Giannotti said. "She definitely has it, you can tell."

While she is a runner now, Ryan said she is still close with her former soccer teammates, and is living with soccer players Krissy Tribbett and Jackie Hakes.

Ryan is the team's only fifth-year runner, but is also brand new to the sport and Alford-Sullivan said it's been interesting watching Ryan transition. Coming from soccer, Ryan has brought a team-oriented mentality to her new team and Giannotti said Ryan has helped her learn what it's like to be a collegiate athlete.

It's still early, but once Ryan gets into running form, Alford-Sullivan sees Ryan being a year-long contributor.

"I think she's going to be really good on the track, cross country is difficult to transition to," Alford-Sullivan said. "But by the time we hit track we'll have had all that training under our belt. I don't know what she's going to do yet, but I think she can be really good in whatever event she ends up in."

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