

Women's soccer back line still coming together

By Andrew Robinson
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Emma Thomson has been the constant.

The other three players with her on the Penn State women's soccer team's defense, however, have been changing all season.

In the Nittany Lions' first 10 games of the season, the defense has used four different base line-ups, but seems to have settled on a set unit. Despite not having much time to get on the same page, the defense posted a statement-making shutout in its last time out.

"I think we're finally kind of getting each other," Thomson said.



Walsh

"Obviously we had a shutout against Michigan State against one of the top forwards in the Big Ten. We can definitely take a lot of confidence from that."

Thomson, a junior centre back, has started every game on defense, but spent the first five games playing outside back. But with the return of Bri Hovington and Jackie Molinda from injuries and the loss of Lexi Marton for three months, the junior shifted back inside.

Rounding out the back row is junior Carly Ninness, who started the season at centre back, then sat once Hovington returned, but is back in the starting lineup because of Marton's medial collateral ligament (MCL) injury. Senior Megan Monroig had been the left back, but transitioned to the mid-field against the Spartans last Sunday.

With Hovington and Molinda occupying the outside positions, it gives the Lions two players with offensive skills that could help the Lions' struggling flank play.

"They're both very good in the attack, we're trying to encourage them to serve the ball more and get more involved," Penn State coach Erica Walsh said. "That was our emphasis in video and in training."

This weekend, the Lions travel to Ohio State and will meet a big, physical Buckeyes team at 3 p.m. in Columbus.

Without the 5-foot-11 Marton, the Lions' defense doesn't have a ton of size, with the exception of Ninness, who is 5-foot-8.

Walsh said the team can't give up set piece opportunities to Ohio State because it gives the Buckeyes a way to exploit the defense. Penn State's defenders

have plenty of speed, but it's limited on corner kicks or free kicks where taller players have time to set up inside the box.

For the Buckeyes, those players include 5-foot-11 Kristen Niederhaus, 5-foot-10 Lauren Granberg and 5-foot-9 Paige Maxwell.

"It's definitely a key because they are big," Thomson said. "We aren't the biggest back line so we need to keep fouls to an absolute minimum because that's where we can be beaten, so it's important for us."

While the defense still has some work to do, which Walsh said starts with communication, they do have some help. The Lions' base formation uses two holding midfielders who play in front of the defense and in essence act as the fifth and sixth defenders when the opponent is attacking.

Sophomore midfielder Christine Nairn, who plays as one of the holding mids at times, said the midfield and defense are working on getting used to each other and how to combine defensively and when pushing the attack.

Going into Columbus, the Lions have been working on defending set pieces after conceding several late corners to Michigan State. Nairn said the main emphasis has been on avoiding fouls, but also marking and communicating, which starts with the defense.

"We have [Thomson] and [goalkeeper] Krissy [Tribbett] and all the people behind me directing everybody else where to go," Nairn said.

"I think we're fine in that department, but we can always get better."

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Field hockey looks to rebound after loss to Wolverines

By Matt Howland
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

The Penn State field hockey team received a reality check on Sunday when its five-game winning streak came to a halt against Michigan, which beat the Lions 2-0.

The No. 14 Nittany Lions will look to get back on track against the Iowa Hawkeyes at noon Saturday at AstroTurf Field.

The team showcased a low intensity level in last weekend's loss against Michigan, and coach Char Morett voiced her displeasure about that level. The Lions came out flat and never quite had the fighting spirit needed to compete in a Big Ten game. With this lack of intensity a problem, the team realizes it needs to step up the emotion on Saturday.

Redshirt junior captain Lauren Alloway recognized the team wasn't where it needed to be last Sunday and she expects the team

to come out much stronger against Iowa.

"Losing sometimes fires you up more than winning, so I think we have a fire burning right now," Alloway said. "So we don't want Iowa to a) beat us, and b) beat us on our home turf."

The Lions lost at Iowa 1-0 last year, and are 17-23-1 all time against the Hawkeyes. But freshman midfielder Brittany Grzywacz, who has yet to face Iowa, recognizes how important it is for the team to rebound quickly after its first loss in six games.

Grzywacz emphasized the importance of staying confident and positive after the loss. She said mental strength is crucial for the team to maintain going forward.

"I think it starts with practice the day before, staying intense through practice," Grzywacz said.

"Then the warm-up needs to be intense from the start all the way through, even in the locker room,

just staying intense, having our heads in the right spot, and coming out strong the first 15 minutes of the game."

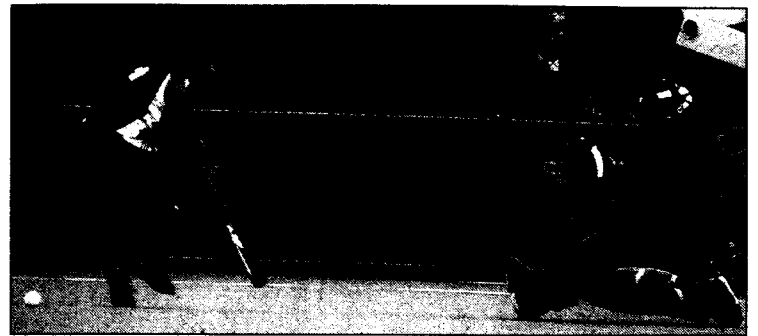
Morett highlighted intensity and the transition game as two aspects the team needed to improve before the Lions face the Hawkeyes.

In practice on Tuesday, Morett had the Lions divide into two teams for a blue-white scrimmage. She felt the experience would help create a game-type atmosphere in practice and better prepare the team for what they would see against the Hawkeyes.

"It gets us back into that competitive mindset right away," Morett said.

The physicality of conference play was evident in both of the Nittany Lions' games last weekend, and Morett said it is likely to continue.

In four conference contests so far in 2010, there have been more than two goals scored in a game



Tom Ruane/Colegian

Goalkeeper Ayla Halus (right) blocks a save vs. Michigan this season.

only once. Morett said she is expecting a physical, low-scoring game, and based on what has happened so far this season in conference play, there's little reason to doubt the coach's prediction.

"I don't think the scoring is going to be that high," Morett said. "I think our conference, because of its physical nature, it's a very stingy conference on the defensive end, so it's going to be tough."

Alloway agreed with Morett's sentiment, and wanted to make clear that the team is not looking past Iowa, despite the Lions' No. 10 RPI ranking, 33 spots ahead of the Hawkeyes.

"Iowa's a great team and they lost their first [Big Ten] game, so they're going to look to beat us, especially on our home turf," Alloway said. "It's definitely going to be a physical game."

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Field Hockey Complex behind Shields Building

By Jacqueline Bigar

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Friday, Oct. 1, 2010:

This year, you might be in a leadership position more often than you would enjoy. The responsibilities could feel burdensome, but there are pluses. Be honest about what you want out of various situations. If you are clear, you won't need to go into overdrive. Push easily could come to shove if you are too much in your head. You could gain financially, but use care with spending. Money doesn't grow on trees. If you are single, you draw many people to you. Your creativity bubbles up in your day-to-day life. If you are attached, the two of you benefit from a mutual hobby. If you don't have one, develop an interest that the two of you like. CANCER can create a lot of tension.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★ Good intentions mark the morning. Confusion surrounds the best of communicators. A meeting or situation involving others could seem more chaotic than it really is. Others seem to understand each other and what is going on. Tonight: Too many choices!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Your solidity often can be an asset as well as a detriment. How you respond to a boss's or older friend's lack of clarity could define the moment, if not the day. Smart Bulls look to the big picture. Tonight: Going from one gathering to another.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Your dedication to a project cannot be questioned. Your determination and ability to take it to the finish line could be an issue. Whether it is a painting project, clearing off your desk or making holiday plans, decisions will be hard to reach. Tonight: Visit with friends.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ As you watch those around you scatter and, in some ways, seem undirected, you smile with understanding. A discussion about a money matter or partnership might not be successfully concluded for a while. Tonight: As you like it!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★ Know when to pull out of a situation that has complication after complication. You could be feeling a bit out of kilter dealing with a friend or in a meeting. Be careful, as communication runs amok. Tonight: Vanish while you can.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Emphasize the possibilities, even if you feel fairly weathered by the workweek. Your caring comes through to others, even if they have difficulty responding. They, too, are spent from recent events. Tonight: Go along with an excessively optimistic friend.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ Others think you will pick up any slack. Please feel free to say otherwise. You have your hands full with work and a personal matter that you could be overthinking. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ While others could find their nerves fried, you detach and gain understanding. An innate creative ability allows you to open up to unusual ideas, thus finding unusual solutions. Don't let friends distract you. Tonight: Follow

your feelings.
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Opportunities come forward that you hadn't anticipated. It is your choice how to deal with key associates. Someone you looked up to could be unusually difficult and touchy. Tonight: Accept a personal invitation.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Let others take the lead. Know when you have had enough and when you need to head in a different direction. Others like what they hear and what is coming up for you. Communication flourishes. Tonight: Where the crowds are.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ Clearly, you willingly put in the necessary effort to accomplish what you want and need to complete. Be careful with your finances, especially if you are not commander of the ship. You could run into problems before you know it. Tonight: Easy does it.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Let more creativity come forward. Your ability to understand what others seem to be fretting about helps. Don't trigger; detach. Within that stance lies a great idea and perhaps a solution. Tonight: You deserve some fun. Put on your dancing shoes.

BORN TODAY
39th U.S. President Jimmy Carter (1924), actor Walter Matthau (1920), outlaw Bonnie Parker (1910)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at www.jacquelinebigar.com.

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