

Goalie Tribbett confident despite haunting mistake

By Alex Angert
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Like a merry-go-round, the play runs through goalkeeper Krissy Tribbett's head over and over again. She can close her eyes for a split

second and can't help but see it play out right in front of her.

No matter what she does, Tribbett can't escape the horror of what happened last weekend.

After receiving a pass back from defender Emma Thomson during overtime Sunday, Tribbett turned

the ball over in front of her own net to set up Ohio State with a chance to end the game.

The Buckeyes scored an easy, game-winning goal, and it was all Tribbett's fault — at least in her opinion.

But with her team traveling to Northwestern and Iowa this weekend, she's not letting the mistake keep her spirits down.

"I can definitely just picture it," she said. "I can see Emma playing the ball back to me. All day Monday it was going through my head and I was like 'Ahhh, just kick it out or do something.' But it's in the past now so there's nothing I can really do."

Ever since the goal went in, Tribbett has been reminded of the very play that now haunts her.

And with two important road games Friday and Sunday, the pain still lingers. However, she has finally been able to take some of it off of her mind and turn a potentially crippling mistake into a learning experience.

"It definitely took a couple days," Tribbett said. "I still take the blame even to this day. I take the blame on myself because it was my mistake that lost it. That's my opinion."

"As much as it was a horrible thing and a bad experience, it kind of helped me put it in perspective. I really need to focus and stay concentrated during the game to make sure something like that doesn't happen again."

After the game, the Colorado native went off on her own as the blame consumed her. But her teammates quickly pulled her aside, huddled up as a team and told her everyone makes mistakes.

This reassurance is what helped Tribbett survive the game-ending turnover.

"They were really supportive," she said. "I feel like you are always your own worst enemy when it comes to stuff like that. You are always hardest on yourself. If the team hadn't treated me nicely I wouldn't have been able to eventually recover from it."

Following the loss, coach Erica

Walsh came up to her goalkeeper, gave her a hug and told her how important she is to the team.

With eight games left in Big Ten season, it's essential Tribbett can overcome the mistake.

"We need her," Walsh said. "We need her to come back from this. It's a team effort. We couldn't put one in the back of the net ourselves. We win together and we lose together."

The redshirt sophomore keeper has kept Penn State in games all season despite not having much offensive support — only once has her team scored more than two goals.

After going 215 straight minutes without allowing a goal, the Lions' lack of scoring finally caught up to them when Tribbett turned it over.

"She's a little down but we still all support her and we're behind her in her goalkeeper skills," teammate Megan Monroig said. "She is the best we have. We still need her head in this season because we still have a Big Ten championship to win."

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Sarah Finnegan/Collegian

Goalkeeper Krissy Tribbett kicks the ball vs. Virginia this season.

Sophomore Carpenter improving with experience

By Ryan Loy
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Dave Shondell knows Kristin Carpenter isn't the same player as Alisha Glass, and for the Purdue coach, that's a good thing.

Shondell said Glass, the former Nittany Lions' All-American, was the best setter he's seen in his eight years coaching the Boilermakers.

But when the No. 4 Penn State women's volleyball team plays at 7 tonight in West Lafayette, Ind., Shondell believes the Lions' new setter will bring her own strengths to the floor.

"She's a little less experienced in setting the ball, but she brings a great defensive setter to the team," Shondell said of Carpenter. "You don't see a lot of great defensive setters at the collegiate level."

The sophomore's defensive

pro prowess can be traced back to last season, when she played mainly as a defensive and serving specialist.

But Carpenter's setting skills are a culmination of many years of volleyball experience.

Carpenter was the starting setter on the USA Youth National Team during her sophomore year of high school.

However, Carpenter said she did a lot of hitting for her club team.

She said having a hitter's mentality helps her as a setter because she has perspective from the hitter's side of the set.

As she continues to get a better feel for the position, Carpenter said she's working on building better consistency.

Each Lion hitter requires a slightly different type of ball, and she said she is constantly looking to improve.

"You have to take into consideration the fact that, 'Well she jumps higher or she's a giant.' Stuff like

that," Carpenter said. "They jump better and are getting stronger, so you have to put it up a couple more inches because they're jumping higher now."

Carpenter is doing well, recently, compared to other Big Ten setters.

She ranks third in assists during conference matches with 11.29 per set. Carpenter has helped Penn State to the top hitting percentage in Big Ten matches, as well.

Penn State coach Russ Rose said Carpenter is improving as a setter and experience is a key to her progression. Though he admits there are some limitations because of her size — she's 5-foot-6 — Rose doesn't view it as a problem.

"I think there are a lot of examples of taller setters that aren't good," Rose said. "To discriminate against a small kid because they're small just doesn't make sense to me."

Despite her height, Carpenter

has managed to record 20 blocks thus far. Many are the result of combination blocks with taller teammates.

But when Carpenter is the one to stop the opposition's hit, senior middle hitter Fatima Balza said it's exciting for the Lion players knowing opponents assume they can just hit over the smaller blocker.

While Penn State will take any blocks Carpenter can provide, the players know her main assignment is to set for the hitters. There may still be room for improvement, but Balza believes Carpenter has made strides since the offseason.

"On the court, it was frustrating for us as a hitter and her as a setter, but we'd always try to keep it positive," Balza said of offseason workouts.

"Now, it's a lot different from the beginning of the year. She has a lot of confidence now."

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Carpenter reacts during a game.

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