

Women's soccer still scoreless in young season

Deacs post scoreless tie against No. 8 Connecticut, lose to No. 6 Notre Dame 3-0

By Gerard McMahon
Contributing Reporter

The women's soccer team came away from the UConn Adidas Soccer Classic with a tie and a close loss, but the news was not all bad for a team with 13 freshmen playing against the No. 8 and No. 6 teams in the nation.

The Demon Deacons played No. 8 Connecticut to a scoreless tie before falling to No. 6 Notre Dame, 3-0, in a game where the score did not accurately depict how close the game was.

In the season opener Aug. 29, junior goalie Kenna Healy was impenetrable making 10 saves against 6th-ranked Connecticut.

Unfortunately, the Deacs could not score any goals either, and the game ended after 110 minutes in a scoreless tie.

For Healy, it was her second shutout in just three career starts, a statistic that bodes well for the Deacs.

The closest the Huskies came to getting a ball past

Healy was just six minutes into the match when forward Kristen Graczyk beat the Deacon defense down the left side of the field, and Healy came out and challenged her. The two collided, and the ball trickled toward the net, but junior midfielder Alli Hunt was there to deflect it safely out of the goal.

The Deacs had two stellar scoring chances against Huskies keeper Erin Rice.

In the second half, freshman Elizabeth Remy shot it from the left side of the box to the top right corner of the goal, but Rice was barely able to make the save.

Later, in the first overtime, senior A.B. Robbins shot a bullet that nearly got by, but Rice was again able to keep the game tied.

The Huskies ended up barely out-shooting the Deacons, 21-17.

The Deacs opened strong against the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame Aug. 31, as Healy appeared to be on her way to shutting out the Irish in the first half. However, with 26 seconds remaining in the opening stanza, Notre Dame's Jill Krivacek broke the scoreless tie with a goal.

In the second half, Notre Dame was able to hold off the Deacs and score some insurance goals. Mary Boland scored on a rebound after a save by Healy in the 65th minute to make it 2-0. Amy Warner then finished the Deacs off with a goal with just 10

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seconds remaining in the match, as the Irish were victorious by a score of 3-0.

Deacon Head Coach Tony da Luz, while admitting that he felt his team felt the pressure of the big tournament, said that the team played well considering its youth and the quality of the opposition. When prompted as to what style of play the Deacons would play against upcoming competition Liberty and Davidson, Coach da Luz alluded to his team's inability to score in the initial two games by responding that the team would "concentrate more on attack ... our defense has been solid this year."

The players agreed that goal scoring was obviously the team's biggest concern coming off a tournament in which they failed to score a single goal.

"So far this season we have worked on our team defense," senior forward Lindsey Griffin said. "Now we need to score goals."

Though the Deacs have a very young team, with only four seniors as opposed to 13 freshmen, they are optimistic that they can improve after the first two games.

"We have such a strong senior class that it's great to lead our 13 freshmen down the right path," Griffin said. "Our team is such a unit."

Senior Katherine Winstead added, "Our attitudes are positive and our team chemistry is really good. We definitely have improvements to make on the field, but I think we have the potential to be very successful this season."

Up next for the Deacs is their home opener against Liberty, 7 p.m. Sept. 4 at Spry Stadium. The Deacs will be looking for their first win and a kickstart to a successful season.

The freshman class will be essential to the team's success this year in meeting Coach da Luz's goal of finishing in the top half of the ACC and earning a sixth straight NCAA appearance.

Under the leadership of seniors Griffin, Winstead, A.B. Robbins and Alena Thom, and with the expected development and maturation of confident sophomore Melanie Schneider (All-ACC Rookie team last year), the Demon Deacons should be able to reach the goals laid before them by da Luz. The building blocks are in place; all that is left is the hope for quick maturation from the young team.

Pressbox: Wake Forest athletics showing lots of promise

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However, the Deacs welcome back star second baseman Nick Blue after he redshirted a season due to injury. They also return seven other starting position players, two-thirds of the starting pitching rotation and several top relievers. They will also enjoy the arrival of a strong freshman class. After a season in which they struggled as a result of leaning too heavily on record-setting stars D'Antona and Sleeth, the Deacs should have a solid team this year that could return the Deacs to the upper echelon of ACC baseball.

The football team has an extremely tough schedule that includes eight teams that played in bowls last year, and they lost a ton of seniors from their offense. But, as they showed in the season opener at Boston College, this team could turn some heads. Cory Randolph has been a solid replacement so far for James MacPherson at quarterback. Chris Barclay and Cornelius Birgs should pick up the slack at running back after losing Tarence Williams. Willie Idlette and Chris Davis have looked surprisingly similar to fan favorite Fabian Davis. As for the defense, they will miss Calvin Pace and Montique Sharpe on the defensive line, but they are stocked with veterans at the linebacker

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positions and in the secondary. If all goes well, the Deacons could be bowl eligible for the third straight year.

Men's golf had senior leadership, incredible talent and the motivation to prove they were one of the top teams in the country last year. Though senior Bill Haas, a two-time first team All-American, will don the Black and Gold one more season, the rest of the squad will be looking for his leadership to carry them through. Haas was last year's ACC Player of the Year and has already established himself as one of the most highly decorated Deacon golfers in school history. The

play of freshman Kyle Reifers last spring drastically improved and Coach Jerry Haas has once again brought in a solid freshmen class. On paper this squad does not have the depth or experience of last year's team, but with Bill Haas, who has a chance to win every time he plays, leading the way, one never knows what could happen.

The basketball team lost Howard, an All-American and national player of the year by some publications, but added one of the top freshman classes in the nation, led by point guard Chris Paul. The addition of Paul and three other solid freshmen, as well as the continued development of a squad that will not have any scholarship seniors this year, could make for even more success than last season, when the Deacs won the ACC Regular Season title and earned a No. 2 seed in the NCAA tournament. The Deacs have depth and skill at every position, and with many returning contributors expected to be even better than last season, the sky is the limit.

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