

LAMORINDA SPORTS

SMC Women's Soccer Looks to Improve

By Michael Sakoda



Caroline Beaulne has been a leader this season for the Gaels.

Photos Tod Fierner

After a hot start, the Saint Mary's women's soccer team has suffered its first setback of the season—two consecutive losses.

The Gaels (3-3) opened their season with a pair of shutouts at home, besting Albany 2-0 on Aug. 22, and St. Joseph's 4-0 on Aug. 24. After faltering at Oregon 0-2 on Aug. 29, the team rallied, posting a 4-2 victory at Oregon State on Aug. 31.

"We showed a lot of character to come back and beat Oregon State," said head coach Kai Edwards. "We scored four goals on a Sunday, away, which is very difficult to do."

Part of the Gaels' early season success must be credited to the team's nine returning starters.

"We only have to teach a couple players our philosophies and our ideas, and that has allowed us to focus on refining and elevating the level of the kids who returned," said Edwards.

Among those returners are last season's All-WCC performers—juniors Caroline Beaulne and Cassidee Lynch.

"Cassidee's a leader on and off the field; she does things the way they're supposed to be done all the time," Edwards said. "Caroline is one of the best attacking players in the country; she has the ability to beat players one-on-one, and her technical talent makes it very hard for teams to defend her."

Beaulne said she's trying to shoulder some responsibility. "The All-WCC Honorable Mention last year motivates me a lot. I feel like I have to help lead my team," she said.

But this past weekend was a tough one for Saint Mary's, as they dropped a home game 0-4 to Cal last

Friday, and a heartbreaker, 1-2 at Nevada on Sunday. Still, the 3-3 mark is a better pace than that of a year ago.

As the Gaels look to bounce back against Idaho this Friday, Edward's said the focus doesn't change. "Teams change; standards don't.

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Vicki Shimkus has recorded one goal and three assists so far.




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