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The Duquesne Duke

A Season to Save: Morrin Angling for one more shot at glory

By Will Dodds

Gabby Morrin is not even finished with her career as a Duquesne Duke, but she's already solidified her place as one of the best players in Duquesne women's soccer history.

Three years after assuming the role as the women's soccer team's first choice goalkeeper, Morrin, a senior in her last year as a Duke, is preparing to lead her team through the last two games of their regular season, in hopes of positioning the Dukes (8-7-1, 5-2-0 A-10) for an Atlantic-10 Conference playoff spot. The top six teams in the A-10 qualify for post-season competition and the Dukes currently sit third in conference standings.

Throughout her Duquesne career, Morrin's passion for soccer and her competitive fire have vaulted her to enormous heights. She currently ranks third in program history with 22 wins, third with a goals-allowed average of 1.46 per game, and third in minutes played with 4,425.

"My main thing is to get wins and make saves that are unexpected," said Morrin. "For my team, my coach, my family, for everyone around me, I want to be able to make the saves that no one expects."

But after 66 saves and a goal scored at Navy on Sept. 24, Morrin's teammates have come to expect her heroics.

"She's the best goalkeeper I've ever played with," said senior forward Lauren Ott. "She keeps us in every single game."

Despite Morrin's 216 saves made so far through her career as a Duke, though, statistics cannot characterize some of her best assets as a soccer player.

Ott marveled at Morrin's dedication to the team as a leader.

"She believes in our team more than anyone else," Ott said.

Senior forward Samantha Kaiser also commended Morrin's commitment to her team day-in, day-out on the soccer field.

"She plays her heart out—100 percent," said Kaiser. "You can always depend on her."

But Morrin's quick to brush aside the praise.

"I'm very humbled when they say that," said Morrin. "I enjoy being someone to look up to. But I look at this as a team. We always say that we play for each other. I respect the hell out of everyone."

Throughout her career, Morrin has been a leader by example, as well, and she's been recognized for it. In 2008, she led the A-10 in save percentage (.839) and earned a spot

on the A-10 All-Conference Team. Last month, she was named the Sept. 5 A-10 Player of the Week.

Morrin also has tremendous versatility on the field, and so for head coach Tim Zundel, it was no surprise when she put a dead ball from 40 yards out in the net at Navy on Sept. 24. It was the first goal by a keeper in Duquesne women's soccer history.

"We knew she has the ability to play on the field," said Zundel. "She's got a great foot on her so we might as well use it."

Morrin was ecstatic about her goal.

"I hit it as hard as you could imagine," said Morrin. "It was so cool. We were losing, but we all started laughing."

Scoring goals, for Morrin, is nothing new. She played striker and led her Perrysburg, OH High School team in scoring her senior season.

Now heading into the grind towards A-10 playoff competition, Coach Tim Zundel praised Morrin's versatility and leadership as a crucial asset to his team's success.

"She can help change a game making saves and her distribution with her feet is good," said Zundel. "The girls are confident having her back there. She will definitely help us in the A-10 tourney."

Regardless of how the 2010 season finishes for the Dukes, Morrin says the remaining games will likely be her last playing organized soccer.

"It's time for a new chapter in my life," she said.

A sociology major, Morrin plans to pursue a career in social work upon graduating from Duquesne. In the long run, she says, she would like to start a non-profit organization to help underprivileged city children become more involved in organized sports.

If these are the last days of Morrin's soccer career, as she suspects, she says her experiences playing soccer and the friendships she has developed at Duquesne will last forever.

"This team, these are my best friends. They're going to take me a long way in life," said Morrin. "My personality is because of soccer. Soccer shaped who I am today."