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Knights dominate on the field against Houston in Big 12 opener

Keira Gilmore
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UCF women's soccer players celebrate as they make their second goal of the first half against Houston on Thursday at the UCF Soccer and Track Complex.

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It was a rout for UCF women's soccer as the Knights claimed an unrivaled 5-0 victory over the University of Houston during their Big 12 opener on Thursday at the UCF Soccer and Track Complex.

The Knights started off hot with a score in the first eight minutes of the game. Star player senior forward Chloe Netzel took to a penalty kick early on, striking it with her right foot past Houston into the back of the net.

“Getting that goal early on really does set the tone,” UCF head coach Tiffany Roberts Sahaydak said. “We’ve missed some real great chances, so it can come back to haunt you.”

Senior defender Taylor Jacobson dominated possession of the ball, scoring an unassisted goal into the back of the net in the first half. The goal marks Jacobson’s first goal of the season.

The Knights added to their lead against Houston with less than ten minutes remaining in the first half. Freshman forward Edidiong Etim took possession of the ball, scoring her first goal of the season, assisted by senior defender Kyleigh Thelen.

With a total of eight shots in the first half, UCF led the Cougars 3-0 going into the second half.

Coming back to the field, the Knights looked to increase their lead even more. UCF didn’t lay off the ball, as the Knights were responsible for a total of 12 fouls, compared to Houston’s nine.

Etim found herself on the scoresheet twice, as she followed redshirt junior forward Mia Asenjo downfield within sight of the goal, assisting Asenjo for UCF’s fourth goal.

Redshirt freshman goalkeeper Genesis Perez Watson made her first appearance back at UCF since playing with the Costa Rica National Team during the 2024 U-20 Women’s World Cup, blocking two goals in the second half.

Perez Watson explained that intensity is something she noticed a difference in when comparing playing on an international level and a collegiate level.

“You have to be resilient when tough moments rise,” Perez Watson said.

Roberts Sahaydak made multiple substitutions throughout the game, emphasizing in the press conference that the team needs depth and that this game was an opportunity to see who can help make an impact this season as conference play kicked off.

As the Knights led 4-0, the Cougars try for a comeback fell short as Netzel gained possession of the ball. Assisted by redshirt sophomore midfielder Brooke Mulrone, Netzel sealed the Knights' win, and her eighth goal of the season.

"To have a win like 5-0 is a huge boost to all of our confidence after a loss, we really needed a win like this," Asenjo said.

The Knights take the road for their first conference road match of the season against Iowa State at 7 p.m. on Thursday at the Cyclone Sports Complex.

MORE INFORMATION



PHOTOS: Knights dominate on the field against Houston for Big 12 opener