



Wittenberg Women's Soccer 2001 Season in Review

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SETTING THE SCENE: The Wittenberg University women's soccer team put together a solid 2001 season, marked by some significant accomplishments in a growing year for an extremely young group of players. The Tigers, with just one senior on the roster, finished 7-7-3 overall and 4-3-1 in the extremely tough North Coast Athletic Conference, which produced two NCAA Division III tournament qualifiers and the eventual national champion, Ohio Wesleyan.

The growing pains became evident early on as the Tigers' schedule was loaded up with top teams both in conference and out. Among the Tigers' non-conference foes were Heartland Collegiate Conference champion Mount St. Joseph, and nationally ranked Elmhurst, Transylvania and Wilmington.

The team rebounded from a four-game midseason losing streak, which included a pair of disheartening one-goal defeats, to finish the regular season on a 5-1-1 tear. By defeating Oberlin, Allegheny in double overtime and Hiram to close the conference schedule, the Tigers slipped into the NCAC tournament for a second straight year before bowing out to eventual national champion Ohio Wesleyan. That late-season rush moved the Tigers to No. 4 among Ohio NCAA Division III schools.

MAKING AN IMPACT: With so many sophomores returning to the fold, it appeared there would be few holes for freshmen players to break into the rotation in 2001. Little did we know.

Seven freshmen finished the season on the Wittenberg roster, and five made a significant impact. Leading the charge was midfielder **Katie Mazzio (Wilmington, Del./A.I. duPont)**, who was third on the team with six goals and four assists for 16 total points.

Mazzio was joined in the regular starting lineup by midfielder **Jessica Wright (Granville, Ohio/Watkins-Memorial)**, defender **Rene D'Aloiso (Fairborn, Ohio/Greenon)**, midfielder **Rachel Ridgeway (Montclair, NJ/The Taft School)** and defender **Jessie Lytle (Bexley, Ohio/Bexley)**. Lytle and D'Aloiso didn't factor into the offense too much, but Wright and Ridgeway contributed more and more as the season went on.

Wright finished with six goals and four assists, D'Aloiso finished with three goals and one assist in nine games, and Ridgeway chipped in with four goals and one assist, including two in the crucial win over Allegheny. That performance was good enough to earn her NCAC Player of the Week honors.

The team's other two freshmen were goalkeepers, including **Eileen Quinn (Glenview, Ill./Glenbrook South)**, who started three games and played a total of 203 minutes in the season.

SUPER SOPHS: The sophomore class is both deep and talented, led by midfielder/forward **Geri Woessner (Dayton, Ohio/Oakwood)**, a fine all-around athlete who is also a contributor to the women's basketball program and an All-NCAC outdoor track performer. She led the team with eight goals and six assists.

She was hardly the only sophomore to flex her offensive muscle. Forward **Jill Rekers (Springboro, Ohio/Springboro)** was second on the team with seven goals and three assists, good for 1.06 points per game. Two other sophomores — forward **Cristin Gill (Loveland, Ohio/Loveland)** and midfielder **Erin Lane (Lucas, Ohio/Mansfield St. Peter's)** — also scored goals during the season.

In the net, sophomore **Jenny Miller (Cincinnati, Ohio/Mother of Mercy)** appeared in 16 games, starting 14. She finished with a solid 1.61 goals against average while yielding 25 goals and making 109 saves in 1395 minutes.

Other sophomores who made significant on-field contributions in 2001 were defender **Jessica Shellhouse (London, Ohio/London)**, midfielder **Melissa Jordan (Cincinnati, Ohio/Finneytown)**, midfielder **Lesley Runyan (Ashland, Ohio/Ashland)** and defender **Kate Williston (Wooster, Ohio/Wooster)**.

POSTSEASON HONORS: Two players made All-NCAC first-team — freshman midfielder **Katie Mazzio**, who was named conference Newcomer of the Year and sophomore forward **Geri Woessner**, who made it for a second straight year after leading the Tigers in scoring with eight goals and six assists. It was the second straight year that a Tiger player earned the Newcomer of the Year award after Woessner claimed the honor a year ago.

Making second team was sophomore forward **Jill Rekers**, who was second on the team with seven goals and 1.06 points per game. Honorable mention recognition went to senior midfielder **Emily Gersbach** and sophomore goalkeeper **Jenny Miller**.

All-Ohio honors were distributed to Mazzio and Woessner as well. Mazzio was named second team, while Woessner made third team. And Mazzio was also honored as a third-team All-Great Lakes Region performer.

As a team, the Tigers claimed one more postseason award — an NSCAA National Academic Award for having a lofty collective grade point average.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS: Unquestionably, the future remains bright for the Tigers, who had 17 freshmen or sophomores on a roster that numbered 19 by season's end.

That means, based upon the roster as it was composed following the last 2001 loss, that the Wittenberg program is well stocked with talented, young athletes, many of whom have already been mentioned in this write-up. More than 90 percent of the team's offensive production and 100 percent of the team's goalkeeping has eligibility remaining.

The schedule will be as imposing as ever, with several of the top teams in the region making appearances on it (*see below*).

THE COACH: **Fran Kulas** ended his third and final year guiding the Tigers with a 24-25-4 overall record. The 24 wins rank him second among Wittenberg coaches in the 15-year history of the program, behind only Sheilah Lingenfelter, who was 36-35-3 from 1990-93.

After the season, Kulas resigned to become the director of coach and player development for the Kentucky Youth Soccer Association. In his three years, Kulas led the Tiger program to its first winning season in five years in 2000 and its first winning North Coast Athletic Conference record in six years in 2001. Wittenberg participated in the last two NCAC tournaments and received a Great Lakes Regional ranking as high as fifth in 2001. Kulas was responsible for two recruiting classes while at Wittenberg, each of which produced the NCAC Newcomer of the Year, and he coached a total of 14 all-conference players.

Aug. 28	HEIDELBERG (Scrim.)	5 p.m.
Aug. 31	Mount St. Joseph	1 p.m.
Sept. 4	WILMINGTON	4 p.m.
Sept. 7	@ DePauw	1 p.m.
Sept. 8	@ Rose-Hulman	Noon
Sept. 11	@ Ohio Dominican	4 p.m.
Sept. 14	@ Transylvania	2 p.m.
Sept. 18	MUSKINGUM	5:30 p.m.
Sept. 21	@ Hiram*	Noon
Sept. 25	CEDARVILLE	4 p.m.
Sept. 28	@ Allegheny*	11 a.m.
Oct. 2	URBANA	4 p.m.
Oct. 5	KENYON*	2 p.m.
Oct. 9	EARLHAM*	4 p.m.
Oct. 12	BERLIN*	2 p.m.
Oct. 16	@ Wooster*	4 p.m.
Oct. 19	OHIO WESLEYAN*	1 p.m.
Oct. 26	@ Denison*	TBA
Nov. 2	NCAC Semifinals	TBA
Nov. 9	NCAC Finals	TBA
Nov. 13	NCAA Div. III Tourn.	TBA

* NCAC matches
HOME GAMES IN CAPS