



With World Cup play under her belt, Moore brings experience to A&M Soccer Team

Story by Jason Lincoln • Photo Illustration by Kimber Huff and Guy Rogers

The 1999 season shows a more experienced Texas A&M Soccer Team. No longer can the Aggies be described as young or inexperienced. The roster as a whole features players with experience under their belt that can prove to be as valuable as their talent. However, the team did face a scare at the end of 1998 with the loss of two defensive starters.

But A&M coach G. Guerrieri appears to have found the answer in freshman Martha Moore. "Despite being a freshman, Moore is no stranger to competitive soccer and has had enough experience coming into A&M to gain a starting position with the Aggies.

"She came in with a lot of experience and was able to fit right into the lineup," junior forward Alison Peters said. "She is an awesome player with a great feel for defensive play."

Undoubtedly the highlight of Moore's short soccer career came last spring when she played in the 1999 Women's World Cup for the Mexican National Team. While playing in the World Cup, she faced seasoned veterans of the sport and was able to hold her own.

Moore said she was amazed at the skill level of her fellow World Cup participants.

"I liked the challenges," Moore said. "The forwards were incredible — quick on their feet, huge, powerful. They were just awesome."

The 18-year-old played in two games out of Mexico's three in the '99 Cup series. She logged 115 total minutes in games against Brazil and Germany.

From her experience in the highest level of soccer, Moore could only take a step back.

That step was to college soccer, where she hopes she can achieve even more success against less formidable opponents.

"I knew after playing at that top level [the World Cup] that I could step down to the collegiate level and compete," she said.

With such experience behind her before she started college, surprisingly Moore was not recruited by some of America's top women's soccer schools. She visited second ranked University of North Carolina and 18th ranked Clemson University, among others. Yet she settled on Texas A&M, which entering the '99 season was unranked in the NCAA top-25 poll.

The choice seems to have paid off, as A&M has quickly won all of its six games this season, moving the Aggies into the top 10.

Moore said her decision was based on the characteristics of Aggie soccer rather than ranking and reputation.

"I love the coaching staff and the team's great," she said. "I love the style of play and thought this is where I would fit in best."

Since her arrival at A&M, she has quickly fit in with the team and its style to become a key player for the Aggies. Peters said Moore's ability to fill the defensive gaps has quickly earned the young player the confidence of her teammates.

"We play the same side (of the field)," Peters said. "And I know that if I fall short, Martha's got my back. She's awesome."

At 5-foot-4 inches tall, Moore is relatively small, compared to many of her collegiate opponents. Yet this never seems to affect Moore, who uses her skills, footwork and soccer intelligence to keep opposing forwards under control.

"I ignore [the size differences] and do my best," she said. "I try to outwork my opponent, find out her weaknesses and use them against her."

Moore describes her style of play as influenced by her personal drive.

"The biggest influence on my play is my desire to improve every time I play," she said. "I drive myself."

"I love the game of soccer, and I'm going to play it the best I can, as often as I can."

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