

Making her mark

Junior Alison Peters contributes to Ags with ability to play several positions

BY JASON LINCOLN
The Battalion

Scoring goals usually highlights an offensive soccer player's career. Often times, other abilities are overshadowed by the more flamboyant skill of goal-making. The Texas A&M Soccer Team has no shortage of players with abilities that go beyond goal-scoring. Consistently, one of the strongest of these players for the Aggies has been junior Alison Peters. Peters has contributed to the team with her flexibility, leadership and soccer ability while still making the plays that put points on the scoreboard.

Peters has found her rhythm this season, already scoring six goals. The total has put her in a tie for the team lead with her teammate and roommate Nicky Thrasher.

Even more impressive about the six goals is that she has scored them on only ten shots, a .600 shot percentage, the best on the team. She is also tied for second in game-winning goals with two and has two assists, giving her 14 points on the season.

Peters' success this season has not been the product of domineering soccer play, but instead the result of consistent drives, smart plays and an undying competitive spirit.

"I'm not a big powerhouse; I get it done by being more of a workhorse," Peters said. "I'm a very competitive person, and that is what drives me, along with my love of the game."

Peters has found success by working hard to stay ahead of her competition and by learning more about soccer everyday, instead of just relying on her natural ability. This gives her the edge when it gets tight on the field.

A&M soccer coach G. Guerrieri said Peters is not alone with her fascination with every facet of the sport.

"We have more players on this team that we classify as 'soccer rats' — which is the equivalent of the gym rat, someone who eats, drinks and sleeps the game, and

the game envelopes a lot of their life," Guerrieri said. "We have several players on our team, Thrasher, [Heather] Wiebe, [Amber] Childers, [Amber] Reynolds and Peters who really study the game and have evolved their game because of their perception of the game."

"[Alison] is the same way. She leads by example because she never gives less than 100 percent, and she improves by her mentality of always trying to learn the nuances of why things happen."

In her freshman season in 1997, Peters was in the shadow of All-America forward Bryn Blalack, yet was able to score 10 goals, good enough for second on the team. She also added 11 assists to give her an attention-grabbing 31 points, second only to Blalack.

Peters' performance was not as strong last season, as far as numbers go. She had seven goals and four assists for a total of 18 points. Her season was highlighted by a hat trick early in the year against the University of New Mexico.

"I wouldn't say I had a good season last year," she said. "Anytime you go through a slow period, it's a struggle to get out. I got on a little bit of a bad side and wasn't playing as well as I wanted to be. I lost a little bit of confidence and it hurt me."

Flexibility has always been a key part of Peters' role in the game. Because she can adapt to most positions on the field, she has held a variety of positions over the past four seasons.

When Peters came to A&M, she was a play-making center midfielder. Yet with Blalack in that position, the Aggies had to find another way to utilize Peters' abilities, so she was moved to forward for her freshman season.

"We know we can move her around because she's versatile," Guerrieri said. "That's how we can identify most of our great players, by their versatility to do more than what they like to do the most."

With the strong play of sophomore Michelle Royal this season, Guerrieri has



BRADLEY ATCHISON/THE BATTALION

Junior midfielder Alison Peters takes a corner kick against Ohio State University during the GTE Soccer Classic. Peters is tied with junior forward Nicky Thrasher for the team lead in goals scored with six.

looked to maximize the teams' offensive power by putting both players on the field at the same time. Peters' ability has allowed her to quickly adapt to her new role

as outside midfielder this season.

"Two of her big strengths fit into the profile of what a great outside midfielder should be able to do," Guerrieri said.

"They are to bend and serve balls and have the capacity to get up and down the field

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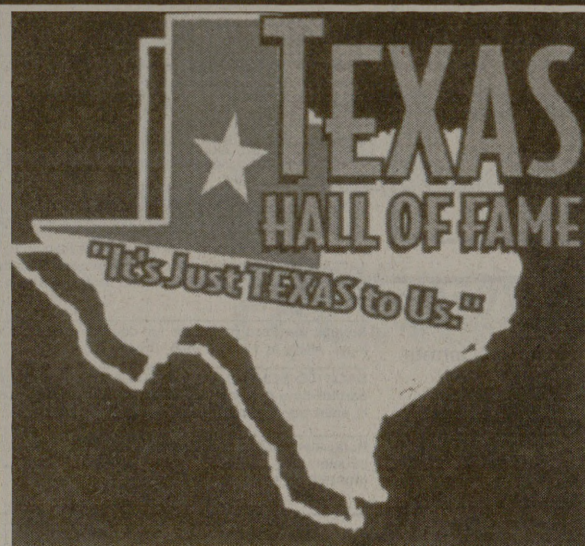
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