SPORTS

Seniors shine in dominant shutout victory

By Noah Nunez
General Reporter

The Owls celebrated Senior Day by riding a lead the entire match against St. Thomas Aquinas College 3–0 on Saturday, Sept. 12 at Jess Dow Field.

By the end of the first period, the university led the game with a staggering three goals scored, holding a 73% possession total by the end of the first half.

"As soon as we first scored, we just kept going with the momentum; that's always what carries us every game," forward and defender Bella LaPearl, a senior, said.

LaPearl assisted on two of the goals before the end of the first period.

Being a senior, LaPearl was happy to share the win with her teammates on this day of celebration, and to have it be such a successful game for the team was the exact reward they wanted.

"We felt good; we were really excited; we were really pumped up because it's senior day, and we were just ready to play and get out there and move the ball," LaPearl said.



PHOTO | MATEUSZ GAZDZICKI

Women's soccer team celebrates together on the field following their victory on Saturday Sept, 12.

The third and last goal of the first period was scored by forward Gigi Pena, a freshman, marking not only the first goal of her season but also the first goal of her career here at the university with an assist by LaPearl.

Pena cited the support of the team she has surrounded herself with on and off the field as what helped her throughout the game leading into the second half.

"Seeing how all the newcomers are adapting to everything, it's been pretty easy because of such a welcoming team that we have," Pena said. "The upperclassmen are always so welcoming and supportive, so it's been really helpful."

Reflecting on the conclusion of the game, Pena was happy to provide any support for the team as she did and was excited going into the game under the context of the senior celebration.

"Going into it, I was really excited it's senior day," Pena said. "I wanted to help my team as much as I can, so I'm definitely happy that I was able to provide any assists or goals for my team."

By the second period, the university was able to deny St. Thomas from taking a single shot against them, displaying an aggressive attitude that kept the whole game on St. Thomas's side of the field.

Head Coach Adam Cohen sees this win as proof of how well the team has been progressing in their training and their proficiency at being able to adjust in the midst of a game.

"It's just a progression of what we've been doing in training and then trying to make adjustments within the game," Cohen said. "Score more goals and certainly try to defend and limit chances from the opponent."

While a blowout game like the one the Owls had would mean something lesser to another team, they took the win as a means to celebrate the seniors and the dedication they have put forward for the team.

As the seniors ran off the field, not only because the game was over, but to celebrate their accomplishments, forward, Elizabeth Bishop, a sophomore, described the attitude around the game rather succinctly.

"It was a very special day for us," Bishop said.

Womens volleyball faces tough defeat



PHOTOS | MATEUSZ GAZDZICKI

Women's volleyball players celebrating.

By Noah Nunez
General Reporter

The Women's volleyball team faces a defeat against University of Bridgeport at home on Sept. 8.

The Owls started off the game taking the first set 25–15 and the second set 25–15 back-to-back, displaying an aggressive playstyle early on with 21 kills between the first two sets.

"I felt confident and good," Head Coach Lisa Barbaro said. "The team's been on a good roll and came together and stuff in Florida, so I felt good about it, but I know that Bridgeport's a really good opponent."

Outside hitter Kerrigan Habing, a junior, led the team with 18 kills across the whole game, with middle blocker Sarah Stark, a senior, getting 11 throughout the game and right side hitter Sydney Bennett, a graduate, generating eight.

"I think the momentum was just on their side, and we made critical errors at some key moments, but I think it's a good learning moment for us," Barbaro said.

They were unable to carry that momentum into the last three sets, as Bridgeport took the third 23–25, fourth 22–25 and fifth sets 13–15 in a reverse sweep against the home team.

Along with being the lead on kills in the game, Habing also led in errors with 10 throughout the match.

With outside hitter Marisabelle Sias, a freshman, staying behind with six errors and outside hitter Maria Martinez, a sophomore, having five throughout the game.

"We made a lot of unforced errors, missed a ton of serves, made a lot of attack errors. Our past serve game really broke down, then our setter-hitter connection started breaking down as well," Barbaro said.

Bridgeport was able to take back the last two sets, outmatching the university in kills in the fourth set with 11 to the university's 10.

Setter Kimi Mitchell, a sophomore, had a staggering 38 assists throughout the game.

Libero Sarah Henault, a senior, followed behind with six and setter Charly Williams, a junior, ended the game with two.

Barbaro still believed a loss like this one could be useful in strengthening the team for future games.

"I think there's a lot to gain," Barbaro said. "I think there's lots to still continue to train and work on. It's still early in the season; I think our team's just gonna continue to grow. We do have a lot of options on our bench as well that were continuing to kind of develop and try out."

Overall, while coming into this report, the reader knows of the defeat the university faced being there in the moment was a struggle.

The university's playing throughout the match grew weaker the more it played out, as Bridgeport was always able to keep up by just a few points each set.

Each point made by Bridgeport became a scratch against the university's lead, taking more and more out of them.

Having the game end with Bridgeport on top and a team that, while being kept together in the first half, fell apart when they needed to make it just over the final gap.

"But Bridgeport played a great match; hats off for them. They got a lot of strong veterans on their team that really carried them," Barbaro said.

This loss brings the university's record so far to 6–2 overall, with Bridgeport sitting at 2–2.

The Owls stayed home for their next game on Sept. 11 against Post University.



Women's volleyball team gather in a huddle during their match on Sept. 8.

Swimming and Diving welcomes new coach

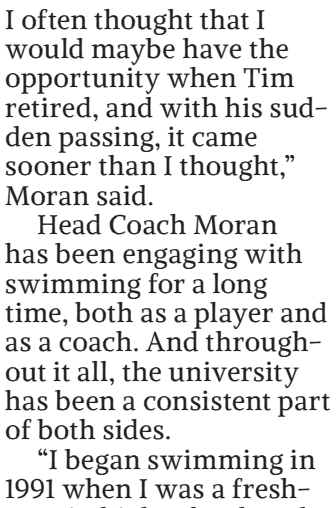

PHOTO | SCSU ATHLETICS

New Head Coach Christopher Moran.

By Noah Nunez
General Reporter

After serving as assistant swim coach for over 10 years, Christopher Moran has taken over as Head Swim Coach this season following the passing of Tim Quill earlier this year.

Despite the tragedy that looms over his promotion, Coach Moran believes he is ready to start the work and help lead the team.

"It feels bittersweet. I often thought that I would maybe have the opportunity when Tim retired, and with his sudden passing, it came sooner than I thought," Moran said.

Head Coach Moran has been engaging with swimming for a long time, both as a player and as a coach. And throughout it all, the university has been a consistent part of both sides.

"I began swimming in 1991 when I was a freshman in high school, and I swam all through high school. I came to Southern and swam four years here from 1995 to 1999; 99–2000 began my coaching career as a volunteer," Moran said.

Moran's time as a volunteer coach would eventually lead to a part-time position as an assistant coach for the university, as there was not a full-time slot for an assistant.

Eventually, Moran had to move on and took a job as a behavioral therapist to make a better living, but he still had coaching on his mind, guiding high school teams in his time away.

"I said to myself, if I could make a living coaching, I'd love to do it," Moran said. "In the time I was away, the assistant coaching job here became a full-time position, and so I was able to take that opportunity in 2015 and come back, and now I have made it into a career."

Now that he is head coach, Moran has had to reconcile with the feelings of being in a new role and what that brings after being an assistant for so long.

"I think it's more of like a nervous excitement, just kind of being in a new role. But I just feel like through the experiences that I've had as an athlete, as a coach, and some of the great coaches I've gotten a chance to work with kind of put my best foot forward here," Moran said.

Following the legacy left in the job is not easy, and Moran knows that he has a lot to live up to, but he is willing to help the athletes through the transition.

He has made sure to keep an eye on each student and help them find where they fit into the team as players.

"It's gonna be really cool to see how the returning athletes develop from year to year and how the new athletes on the team find their niche and begin to work in to help make their impact on the team as well. Always try to think of team first," Moran said.

It is impossible to view Moran's new position removed from the tragedy of Tim Quill earlier this year. But despite that, Moran shows true passion for the sport and dedicated care for his athletes.

Moran wishes to take the lessons of Tim Quill not only as a coach but as an athlete and continue them for his team.

"Keeping with the same coaching philosophy that was instilled in me as an athlete and that we worked on together to instill on the student-athletes here at Southern," Moran said.