Women’s Soccer Club takes on Washington

Washington State’s women’s soccer club took their first loss of the season against Gonzaga Oct. 1, but look to rebound when they play Washington and Seattle Oct. 8–9. The games will likely determine if the Cougs make the playoffs this season.

The team’s season got off to a good start in their first game against Idaho. The Cougs beat the Vandals 4–0, but the scoring didn’t start right off the bat. The game was tied in the 70th minute before WSU scored four goals in the final 20. Club President Brieanna Cunningham attributed the slow start to the lack of experience on this year’s team. However, once the team found its rhythm in the second half, their scoring woes were solved.

“We put in more experienced players and towards the end of the game we started to figure out what girls worked better in certain positions, and people started to feel more comfortable,” Cunningham said.

The club is a tight knit group that welcomes the newcomers and gets them involved on the pitch. Teammates who get along with each other are more likely to come out victorious in games. That philosophy is one Cunningham has implemented as president the last three years.

“I’ve noticed that team bonding really affects the dynamic and the chemistry of the game,” Cunningham said. “The more you get along with the girls off the field, the better you get along with them on the field.”

In addition to planning events like team dinners, Cunningham focuses on eliminating negativity at practices and during games. While bonding with teammates helps on the field, Cunningham also enjoys the social aspect of the club and all the experiences it has provided.

One of the more memorable trips was the 17-hour drive to a postseason tournament last year. After finishing second in their division in 2015, the Cougs earned a bid to a West Coast Soccer Association regional tournament in San Luis Obispo, Calif. The team lost both of their games at the tournament but is looking to make a further run this year.

The biggest roadblock between WSU and the postseason will likely be UW. The Huskies have not played in the WSCA in recent years, and the Cougs matchup with them will be the first in two seasons. While they may be unfamiliar, Cunningham knows the season will likely be on the line and will have her team prepared.

If they make it to regionals, there is the possibility to advance their season farther. The winner of that tournament receives a bid to a national tournament held this year in Atlanta. The club has never made it to nationals, and in fact, 2015 was the first time it had ever made it to the regional tournament.

The Cougs will host Washington Saturday, Oct. 8, and Seattle Sunday, Oct. 9. Both games will get under way at noon at Grimes playfields.