

KEY PLAYERS SET TO RETURN FOR 2001

Maryland heads to Europe to open season

Every new season brings thoughts of hope and glory. For the Maryland women's soccer team, championship dreams will begin on international ground. The Terps take the first-ever trip to Europe in program history. From Aug. 15-25, Maryland's preseason training and five-game exhibition schedule will take place in Germany, Holland and Belgium.

"It will be a wonderful experience for our entire team," said head coach **Shannon Higgins-Cirovski**. "We will have the benefit of playing some of the top teams in the world, such as FCC Frankfurt [the German Bundesliga Damen National Klub Champion] and Eendracht Aalst [the Belgium club league national champion]. We will also be able to train at some of the finest facilities.

"It truly is the ultimate situation for development of the team on and off the field. It's a total experience that will be one every player will always remember and cherish."

Once the Terps return to the United States, Higgins-Cirovski will have a team with five games and 10 days of bonding and camaraderie under its belt.

"I'm very excited about what the 2001 Terps can do," said Higgins-Cirovski. "Given the fact that we have three significant players returning to the lineup, we think we are headed in the right direction."

Returning to the lineup are senior goalkeeper **Ali Wolff** and sophomore back **Lindsay Givens**, team captains who both redshirted last season. Also expected back early in the season will be sophomore sensation **Jen Biscoe**. The 2000 *Baltimore Sun* Player of the Year, who suffered a torn ACL five games into her freshman campaign, re-tore the same knee during her rehabilitation in March.

"Getting Lindsay Givens and Ali Wolff back from redshirt seasons and having Jen Biscoe return from her knee injury will all be immediate boosts for the team," said Higgins-Cirovski. "We are a better team already than we were last year with those three players in the lineup."

Higgins-Cirovski is also thrilled with the addition of impact freshmen **Melissa Anderson**, **Lindsay Niehaus** and **Caitlin Curtis**.

"Adding the likes of freshmen Melissa Anderson and Lindsay Niehaus will be a major factor and will make us much improved."

Despite all of the energy of a trip abroad, the return of three dominating players and the infusion of youth, the coach was devastated by one of the team's losses. High school All-American and Pennsylvania State Player of

the Year **Kimmy Francis** suffered a torn ACL in her right knee in April of her senior spring season.

"We are saddened with the loss of Kimmy Francis," said Higgins-Cirovski. "She would have been a stellar performer and an All-ACC candidate, but we will have to look for her to come back in the 2002 season."

Forward

The Terps return their top four scorers from the 2000 season led by senior striker **Sara Gustafson**, a member of the *Soccer Buzz* Mid-Atlantic Region third team. The Reisterstown native came into her own as a junior, leading the team with nine goals and 20 points. Gustafson had the two biggest offensive performances of the season. She lifted the Terps to their first-ever upset of a Top-5 team, when she netted a hat trick in a 3-1 win over No. 4 Penn State on Aug. 29.

Weeks later, Gustafson tied the school record for goals in a game with four against Howard on Oct. 11.

"Gus is just great with her back to the goal," said Higgins-Cirovski. "And she plays with so much pride and has an incredible desire to win and do anything she can for Maryland soccer."

Joining Gustafson up front will be four players that could also see time at midfield: senior **Courtney Beirne**, junior **Kim King**, sophomore **Katie Ludwig** and freshman **Melissa Anderson**.

Ludwig (13 points), Beirne (9) and King (8) finished second, third and fourth on the team in points last season and all return with another season under their belts.

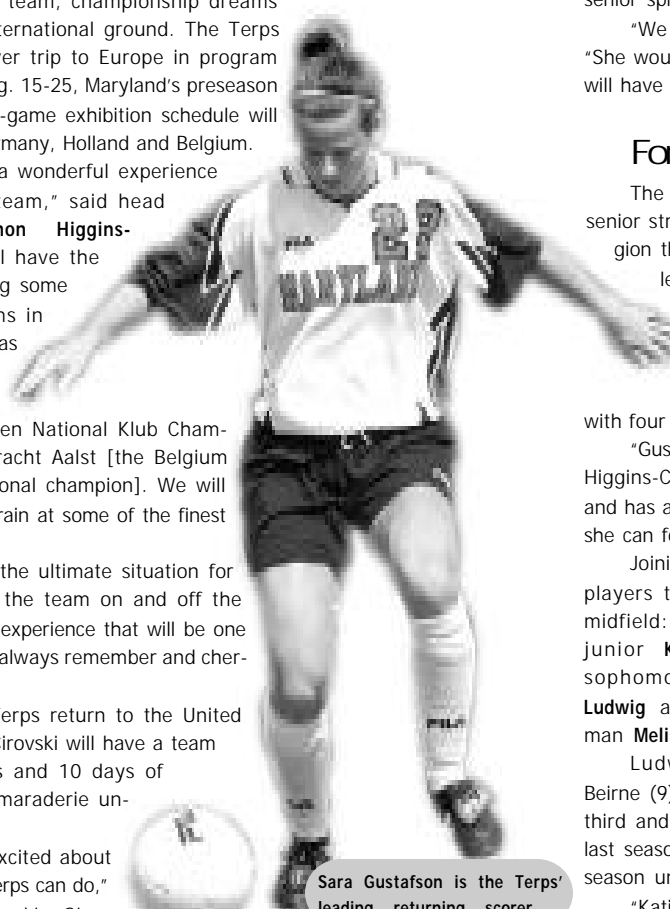
"Katie is really coming into her own on the offensive end," said Higgins-Cirovski. "She has the ability to shred defenses and has continued to develop since the end of her first collegiate season."

"When you think of Courtney, you think fast, fast and fast," said the coach. "She has continued to improve tactically and combined with her speed she is able to get in behind defenses."

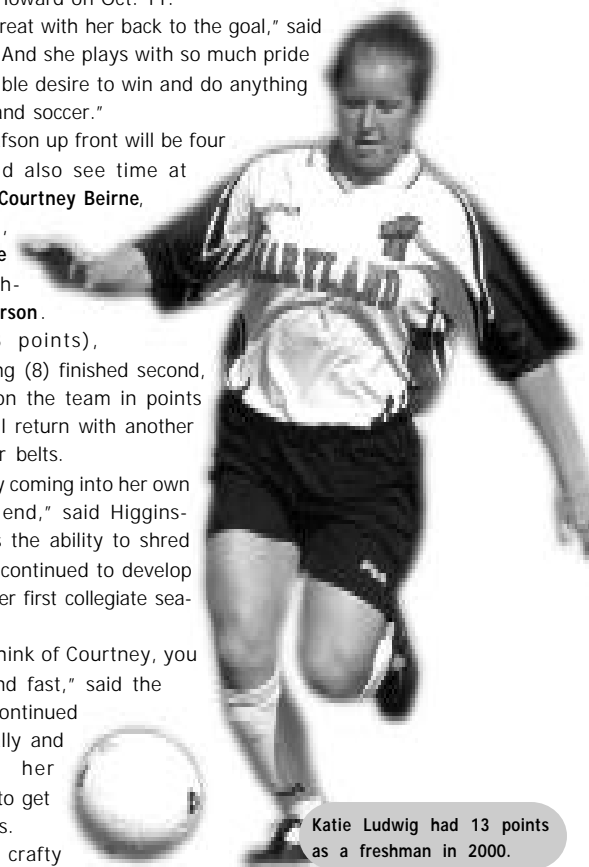
"Kim is very crafty when she gets inside the box and has a great shot when she's in close," said Higgins-Cirovski. "She is a real weapon for our offense."

Joining these returnees is the highly-touted Anderson, who enters her first college season after a standout career at St. Mary's High School in Annapolis.

"Melissa will have an immediate impact on our team," said the coach. "She is very explosive off her first few touches and will help us greatly."



Sara Gustafson is the Terps' leading returning scorer.



Katie Ludwig had 13 points as a freshman in 2000.

Audra Poulin was an ACC All-Freshman selection in 2000 >>> The Terps face five teams in Europe to open the season >>> Lindsay Givens returns with her powerful throw-ins



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Midfield

Joining the quartet of Ludwig, Beirne, King and Anderson — all of whom will be utilized at both forward and midfield — are full-time midfielders **Jen Biscoe**, **Dana Jarzyniecki** and **Audra Poulin**.

Biscoe is expected to return early in the season after tearing the ACL in her right knee for the second time this past March.

"She is a tireless worker," said Higgins-Cirovski. "It shows in everything she does; she has worked hard to rehab off the field and worked hard to improve on both the offensive and defensive ends."

Jarzyniecki has been one of the Terps' most consistent players over the past two seasons.

"She is a consummate workhorse, an engine in the midfield," according to Higgins-Cirovski. "She battles hard to win balls and distributes it well."

Her distribution was demonstrated last season as she led the team in assists with five including a school-record three against Howard on Oct. 11.

Poulin was an ACC All-Freshman team selection last season and was honored by *Soccer Buzz* as a third team Freshman All-American, Mid-Atlantic Region third team selection and Mid-Atlantic All-Freshman team member.

"Audra has great ability to find the strikers," said Higgins-Cirovski. "She can really make other players look good and can be a dominant force this fall."

Freshman **Lindsay Niehaus**, out of Cincinnati, will also see some time as a defensive midfielder.

"Lindsay has a similar game to Dana," said the coach. "She's very hard-working and is versatile, allowing us to use her in the midfield and defense."

Rounding out the midfielders are senior **Jenny Boyd**, who returns to the lineup after three injury-plagued seasons, and junior **Sarah McClellan**, who joined the team as a walk-on prior to the 2000 season.

Defense

The defense could be the Terps' most solid area. They return all three starters in juniors **Sally Harrison**, **Valerie Lawrence** and **Carly Viher**. That trio started 56 of a possible 57 games last season. Add to that

the return of 1999 Freshman All-American **Lindsay Givens** and the defense is set for a stellar season.

"We have outstanding leadership and experience in the backfield," said Higgins-Cirovski. "Returning our core defense and getting Givens back gives me the confidence that our defense will be tough to beat."

Higgins-Cirovski also expects the defense to play more of a role in helping to get the offense going.

"I can see Carly and Sally really pushing the ball to the attack this season," she said.

Last season, Viher scored her first collegiate goal in the season opener at Rutgers and added three assists. She was named to the *Soccer Buzz* Mid-Atlantic Region third team.

Two seasons ago, Givens led the Terps in assists with five, many of them off of her sensational corner kicks and incredible throw-ins.

Senior **Debbie Lieberman** is also expected to contribute to the backfield in her final year in College Park. The three-year performer is a technically clean and tactically aware player who could also see time in the midfield as well.

Katie Kruse and **Jen Lovecchio** are also in the mix on defense.

Niehaus is also expected to see time in the back along with fellow freshman **Caitlin Curtis** who was an honorable mention All-Met choice last season.

Goalkeeper

Rarely do you lose an All-ACC keeper and replace her with another All-ACC candidate, but that is case for the Terps with the return of senior captain **Ali Wolff**.

Wolff sat out last season as a redshirt knowing that in 2001 she would fulfill the role.

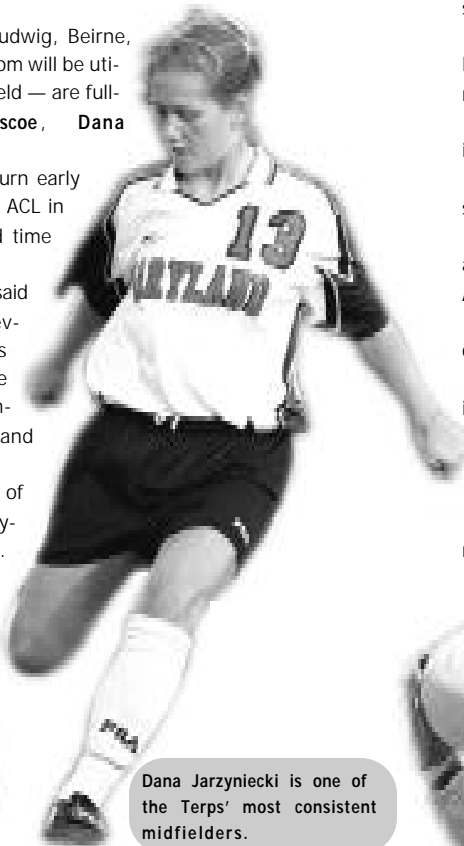
"It was an important decision for Ali and a tough one," said Higgins-Cirovski. "But now that she's ready to begin her senior season, she's ready to go. She really worked hard on her foot work and quickness during her redshirt and I believe she will be an All-ACC candidate this season."

Wolff is among the most prolific goalkeepers in Maryland's soccer history. She ranks in the top four in games played, goals against average and saves.

Another feature about Wolff's game is her personality and leadership. Now in her third year as a captain, Wolff is the vocal leader of the team on and off the field.

"Ali is great for our team," said Higgins-Cirovski. "She really helps direct the defense and gives great direction on the field."

Serving as the backups to the primary keeper for the second straight season will be sophomores **Kristen Barnhill** and **Lynn Scharf**.



Dana Jarzyniecki is one of the Terps' most consistent midfielders.



Three-year team captain Ali Wolff returns for her senior season.

Carly Viher was a *Soccer Buzz* third team regional selection >>> With Testudo looking on, the Terps prepare for action >>> Sally Harrison has started 41 straight games



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