Renegade Revealed: Captain Celia Ochoa

By LOUIS LA VENTURE
Sports editor

A team captain and a vocal and emotional leader, Celia Ochoa is a major factor in the great start for the Ohlone College women’s soccer team. From Pleasanton, the sophomore Ochoa has played the sport since the tender age of 4.

Thanks to one of her mother’s friends, Ochoa was introduced to soccer in the form of the Pleasanton Rage, a youth soccer team.

Nobody else in her family played soccer before—including her two older brothers—so it was a little divine intervention that brought her to the sport that she loves so much.

“My mom had a friend who was a coach and thought it would be good for me to play,” Ochoa said. “The atmosphere and the girls on the team were great. We connected like a family.”

Also on that team of 4-year-olds was Lady Renegade standouts Presley Strother. The two are neighbors and played together on the Rage for seven years.

They attended different high schools despite the close living proximity. Ochoa played four years for the Foothill High School Eagles, mostly at the forward position. Ochoa now plays defense for Ohlone, but has a lot of experience at forward. That gives her insight to all aspects of the game, resulting in two assists on the year for the defender.

Ochoa, who turns 20 years old on Oct. 21, is majoring in child development and would like to become an elementary school teacher once her playing days are done.

She is also interested in transferring to San Jose State University after Ohlone, whether or not soccer is an option.

The leadership and speed of the swift sophomore have not gone unnoticed by her fellow teammates or by coach Larry Heslin.

“She is a verbal leader who always talks to her teammates and motivates the girls leading by example,” Heslin said. “Her speed never slumps and she is tremendous not just as a player but also as a person.”

Another team captain sophomore, Melissa Grey, is well aware and appreciative of the leadership skills that Ochoa has or “C” as Grey called her.

“She is definitely a leader on the field and knows how to stand her ground as a defender,” Grey said. “She is the type of person that won’t give up and will do anything to get a win.”

Ochoa and the Lady Renegades suffered their first loss at home on Saturday but improved to a perfect 2-0 in conference play.

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The Lady Renegades will be on Friday when they travel to Gilroy to take on the Foothill Vikings in another tough conference game.

Team effort leads to strong volleyball win

By LOUIS LAVENTURE
Sports editor

Ohlone rallied back from a 2-0 deficit Wednesday to beat conference rival Chabot College 3-2 at Epler Gymnasium.

The Lady Renegades struggled in the first two sets of the match which allowed the Gladiators to jump out to a two set to none lead. The momentum began to shift to the visitor that was felt by the crowd as well as the players.

“We never freak out but we do feel the momentum, Melissa Grey said. “It was pretty tense out there but we are good enough to figure it out and we did.”

The Gladiators had everything go their way for the first two sets before Ohlone was able to take over. The Lady Renegades won the third set to stay alive in the match 27-25.

Selina Samorano, Jennifer Covey and Brittany Creet factored huge in the victory for Ohlone. All three kept several tough balls alive and displayed tremendous power on strong kills.

Lindsey Calabrese had several digs for Ohlone and Jacqueline Class was all over the floor in the victory for the Lady Renegades.

“Melissa knew what was going on and they tried to motivate themselves before the third set,” coach Jeremy Penafort said. “We never gave up and started playing our style and it really worked.”

The Lady Renegades came out in the fourth set focused and jumped out to a huge 14-6 lead halfway through the set. Chabot was able to mount a comeback but Ohlone stifled it winning the fourth set 25-20 and tied the match 2-2.

“We knew what we were doing wrong and why we were getting beat. I made sure they knew in timeouts,” Penafort said.

“We just have to stick with our system and once we adjusted and bought it, it worked really well.”

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“We just have to stay focused and work together as a team,” Downing said. “We just have to play our game, do our jobs and work together to make things go right.”

The win improved Ohlone to an impressive 12-2 overall and a perfect 2-0 in conference play.

It was a total team effort by Ohlone that also had impressive efforts from Emily Marden, Elise Menicou, Marcella Chinn and Taylor Presley.

Playoffs start in a month with several good teams. Ohlone still has 10 remaining games to ensure them a coveted playoff spot.

The next test for the Lady Renegades will be on Friday when they travel to Gilroy to take on Gavilan College at 6:30 p.m.

The Lady Renegades next home game is on Oct. 19 against the West Valley College Vikings in another tough conference game.

Jennifer Covey goes up for the spike on Wednesday against Ohlone’s conference rival Chabot College at the Epler Gymnasium.

Team captain for the Lady Renegades Celia Ochoa.

Manika Casterline/ Monitor

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