Boilers' injury report grows

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Playing from Indiana to India

**Friday, October 12, 2023**

**Sports**

**Playing from Indiana to India**

A Mexican citizen, a gymnast and a soccer phenom. That’s not a beat-up to say it’s a bad joke — it’s freshman soccer phenomenon Lauren Omholt in a nutshell.

There are hidden depths to this Texan, but you’ll likely never see them. Her deceptive formality is too hard of a shell. For instance, Omholt was a committed gymnast until middle school. She didn’t quit because she couldn’t keep up, quite the opposite.

“For a while I was more of a gymnast than a soccer player,” she told the Exponent.

“But leaving gymnastics for soccer was very shocking for a lot of people because I actually left gymnastics the year after I won a national championship. So it’s kind of funny, I went out too.”

Omholt comes from a family of athletes. More specifically, a family of Boilermaker athletes.

“Purdue definitely was the nostalgic choice,” she said. “Both of my sisters went here, and my dad played baseball here.”

In fact, Purdue is not the only athletic connection Omholt has through her dad. “I don’t really look the part, but my dad was born in Muncie City, which is why I have the opportunity to have dual nation-als.”

This past summer, her dual national paperwork allowed Omholt to leverage her soccer to the highest stage in the world. She traveled to India to play in the U17 Women’s World Cup against the Mexican national team.

“Once I got to India, it was the most incredible experience,” she said. “I felt such pride to have everyone in the country supporting me. Wearing that crest on my jersey was a really cool experi-ence.”

Practicing in a high level environment wasn’t the only thing Omholt took from her time playing for Mexico; the experience allowed her to grow at a rapid pace. “I learned that my national-ity like never before,” Omholt said.

She engaged with supporters of the Mexican national team and spent time with players in the Mexican national team to leverage that experience.

“I had a lot of supporters that would follow me and comment on my things,” she said. “When we won in California and played USC, a couple of people drove people to the game and I got to sign autographs on the field.”

Off the pitch, Omholt retains her mild-mannered attitude. But according to head coach Drew Roff, it’s a different story on the field.

“She wants to win,” she’s competitive,” he said. “Everyone wants to win, wants to be good, but some people take it to that next level. Once she gets around you, she’s gonna go to the goal, and you’re gonna have to make a save or she’s gonna get a shot off.”

Freeman has a uniquely strong work compared to her teammates, a skill that Roff emphasizes the value of. “She’s so versatile, we can look at the other team and say, ‘maybe there’s this back in the box a little weaker than their right.’ They can go play there and that’s a matchup we can utilize.”

Roff said. “But her ability to go with either the left or right foot is far from the only elite fea-ture of Omholt’s around.”

“There’s a lot of college soccer players who are athletic and fast, but I think it’s her quickness, her first three or four steps that really separate her from the rest,” Roff said.

She’s already adjusting to the Big Ten pace of play, shifting from playing nations to playing colleges. “The biggest difference between club and playing at a Power Five school is the speed of play,” she said. “Everyone’s touches are perfect. But I’d say that really matches up with my experience playing internationally.”

“I got to see that when I played against Colombia and Spain, so I think that helped me prepare, and put me in a position to make an important early on.”

But like everything else about her, there’s more to Omholt than just her athletic talent. She wants to make her career out of speech pathology, a field she was inspired to pursue after her grandmother suffered a stroke.

“My grandparents had Aphasia after suffering a stroke,” she said. “Then my aunt had can-cer in her mouth, so she had to see a speech therapist. So I thought that helping me real-ize what I wanted to pursue.”

**PARKING**

**Gardell free F Ajax**

On game day, most lots near Ross-Ade are available to John Purdue Club members only. All lots near Purdue Fields are full of the parking. By the time we get to a month or two before the season, has already been spoken for because the donors to the John Purdue Club have received their parking,” said as-sistant athletic director Patrick Crawford. “We have other lots that are available for purchase from a public standpoint.”

Those lots become available for a $30 parking pass purchase on July 18 every year. Because they are always available for sale, spots in these lots are subject to the demand specific to that time of year.

“I wouldn’t say they necessarily sell out for every game,” Crawford said. “But let’s say we’re not having a game against Ohio State this year: that’s typically high traffic. A really game against Indiana would also be a situation where a lot of people would be able to see the game.”

The Ohio State game is Saturday and the Hoosiers come to town for the first time in 2023.

For those seeking last minute accommodations, Crawford has tips for you:

“The week leading up to a game, you can purchase through our website,” he said. “A parking pass is $30. On the day of the game, you could drive up to go, one of the garages or the intramural lot and spend $40 and buy a spot if it’s still avail-able.”

Traffic

Traffic is a concern. The public worker director for West Lafayette, said Purdue football game days present obstacles that extend into the city as well.

“You get 50-plus thousand people coming into town, it defi-nitely is going to cause some challenges,” he said.

When we were in California and playing USC, a couple of people drove up to go, one of the garages or the intramural lot and spend $40 and buy a spot if it’s still avail-able.”

At Purdue, the police department works in combination with the fire department to handle roadways near campus. Anderson said there is a police foot patrol and Purdue Grounds, into Lafayette and even on the interstates.

“People have to have all the stuff cleaned up and not work-ing by noon on Fridays,” Anderson said. “We’re always writing things into contracts based off football season.”

Construction projects throughout the city create additional obstacles that the thousands in West Lafayette each weekend have to get around. Anderson said. The city time to have these projects completed in the summer, but unpredictable circum-stances can make it difficult to set an end date.

“It’s super hard to say ‘hey, we want to have it by this date’ because I can’t tell you what the weather’s gonna do,” he said.

When projects do extend into the school year, restrictions on working hours are often written into the contracts.

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