Black and Gold Player Spotlight: Soccer's Groothuis the total team player

By Nick Phillips

Editor

What are your expectations for yourself and the team as you go through the season?

My expectations for myself are to have some playing time each game since I'm a second stringer. Maybe to score some more goals. But this is a team sport; it's all about the team. If the team has success, I'm a happy player. But getting playing time always feels good. I believe the team will make it to the Peach Belt Tournament and, hopefully, we will be going to the National Tournament again.

Describe your experience as a UNCP student athlete.

I love being a UNCP student-athlete. Competing for your school feels good. Being an athlete gives me motivation to do good in school because if I don't get good grades, I won't be playing soccer so it's really good for me to be a student-athlete. There are only 18 players who can call themselves a UNCP women's soccer player, and I feel honored that I am one of those 18 players.

What is your most exciting soccer moment?

Winning against Columbus State (1-0 on Sept. 9). I didn't get to play, but just seeing the team scoring the golden goal against a team we haven't won against since 2005 is just a great feeling overall. It makes me proud to be a part of the team.

Who/what are your biggest inspirations, in soccer and life?

When I was little, Dennis Bergkamp was my all-time hero in soccer. Since women's soccer became a sport, I look up to Carli Lloyd. In life, my inspirations are my parents and my sister. They are always there for me even when I'm 3,000 miles away.

Talk a bit about what goes on in the locker room before a game.

The team talks about the game we are going to play and what we have to do and not do. We put on our jerseys and leave the locker room as soon as possible so we can enter the field and get 100 percent focused. Our coaches talk to us 10 minutes before the game starts, at the game field when we have an away game, and when we play at home our coaches talk to us in the locker room.

2011 Stats - Through Sept. 23
Six games played, one goal, one assist and three total points on five shots

Outside the Lines: Britt doesn’t let his height hold him back

By Nick Phillips

Editor

In any sport, an athlete looks for whatever advantage they can find over their opponent. Generally, a player’s height is one of those advantages that are noticeable on the fields of play. For Donald Britt, his height, or lack of it, has not held him back on the football field. The UNCP junior stands at just 5 feet 7 inches tall, which is at Britt’s height, as both are listed at 5 foot 7 inches on the UNCP roster that’s littered with players in the six-foot height range. Being shorter than the player lining up defensively across from him, Britt has heard some interesting comments.

“Everyone that likes to joke around,” Britt laughed, adding that his size makes him quicker than a lot of the other players on the field and that allows him to avoid getting caught up in big hits.

To be exact, only one other Brave, sophomore running back Elliott Powell, is at Britt’s height, as both are listed at 5 foot 7 inches on the UNCP roster that’s littered with players in the six-foot height range. Type 1 diabetes, which is when the body produces little or no insulin.

Athletes with diabetes require intensive diabetes management to balance insulin, carbohydrate intake and the effects of exercise.

“Britt has it to constantly watch what I eat and keep tabs on my blood sugars. And depending on my blood sugar I can make my performance on the field so I have to make sure my sugar isn’t too high or low so I can be 100 percent on game day.” Britt said.

Big three

Britt left his mark on the North Carolina record books as a quarter back at Western Alamance High School during the three years of varsity action. Britt received all-state honors twice and led his team to a perfect 16-0 record and a state championship as a junior.

Britt’s biggest and most lasting mark may be that he ranks third in the state of North Carolina’s touchdown responsibility chart after tallying 148 total touchdowns as his three-year prep career. Those touchdowns numbers, 30 of which were passing and 68 of which were rushing, sit only behind a pair of players who are that picked a bell for fans – Chris Leak and T.A. McLendon.

Leak prepped at Independence High School in Charlotte before becoming the quarterback at the University of Florida, while McLendon prepped at Albermarle High School in Albemarle, N.C., before playing at N.C. State University.

“Britt is just a great kid,” Britt said of the high school honor.

“If it’s not every day you get a guy my size accomplishing things like that. I’m very proud of myself and I’m very proud of the coaching staff for putting me in situations to make plays,” he added.

Continual improvements

As a freshman, Britt caught 14 passes for 116 yards as he opened 11 receptions for 187 yards and returned five punts for 39 yards and nine kickoffs for 175 yards in 10 games.

In his sophomore campaign, Britt caught 14 passes for 116 yards and returned two punt returns for 18 total yards as he played in just seven games.

Throughout three games in 2011, Britt has already grabbed 11 receptions for 187 yards and returned five punts for 21 yards.

Just a regular guy

Off the football field, Britt is just like the average college student. He likes to travel around to the beach or other college campuses to catch up with his high school friends.

“I also like to spend time with my family, especially my two nieces,” Britt added.

Describing himself as funny, laid back and easy to get along with, Britt said he’s just a “laid back dude that likes to joke around.”

Combine that with his height, and Britt blends right into the UNCP student body.

Bio of the week

Elke Groothuis

Year - Junior

Sport - Soccer

Position - Forward

Hometown - Alkmaar, Noord-Holland, The Netherlands

Major - Mass Communication