

August 17, 2009

Preseason Journal - Allison Stallard

Freshman defender highlights early practices

Allison Stallard

Tuesday, August 4, 2009

Today was the first official day of preseason. I was a little nervous going in, not knowing what to expect, but it wasn't bad. We had a meeting at seven o'clock in the morning; however, we just had to fill out some paperwork. Then, the freshmen went and got their physicals and got an orthopedic evaluation to make sure their muscles were healing correctly. After that, we went and got our new equipment - it was like Christmas! During our six o'clock meeting, Aston (Rhoden) went through the player handbook and we got our food journals from Katie (Abundiz). After dinner, we had finished our first official day of preseason.

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

Today we had an agility test at 8:00 A.M. It wasn't too hard, just two quick agility sprints. I felt pretty good afterward. Then we went to the weight room and had our weight, height and body fat recorded. After this, we tested in push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, vertical jump and broad jump. We had a meeting with the soccer academic advisor. It wasn't bad, very informative. We were told about our study hall times and how it all works. That night we had our speed and endurance test. It wasn't too hard, just a little hot and humid. Lunch and dinner are really fun. We're all together eating and getting to know each other...and it's free!



Allison Stallard (Athletic Communications)

Thursday, August 6, 2009

We had the Beep test at 8 o'clock this morning. I did ok. I felt like I could have gone longer but my legs wouldn't carry me anymore. Some of the girls did extremely well though and completely dominated the test. Practice that night was really fun; we just played for over an hour. It was really nice to just play again. We started out with possession drills and then moved into 11 on 11. We played three 25 minute periods. I was tired but it was really fun. My legs are really tired so I took an ice bath that night.

Friday, August 7, 2009

We took the Cooper test today. It was really hard. We had to run a mile in seven minutes and were then given a five minute break and then had to run another mile in seven minutes. I'm not very good at long distances so I was really not looking forward to this test. After the second mile we ran one more lap in two minutes for overtime. I really hate distance races but I'm glad it's over. We had pictures that afternoon and it was weird seeing all the girls with makeup on and their hair down, but it was cool. Practice that night was a lot like the night before, but our focus was on simplicity. We did possession then scrimmaged 11 on 11 again. We finished with a finishing drill. My legs were really tired so the ice bath after practice felt really good.

Saturday, August 8, 2009

This morning we had practice at nine and it was good. We worked on technical skills. We did a short pass test where we had to pass it through two small gates. Then we did longer passes in the air and had to trap them for a point. After doing that, we had an eight on eight on eight game. When we finished, I felt pretty good and my feet hurt a little, but overall not a bad practice. Practice tonight was focused on closing down the space at an attacker. We played handball at the beginning and that was really fun. After the scrimmage and possession we finished with shooting. Lunch and dinner were fun today. We all wrote down random facts about ourselves and we put them in a cup and tried to guess who it was. It was good team bonding.

Sunday, August 9, 2009

This morning we went for a jog around campus at seven in the morning. It was really early so I was kind of tired but it was fine, just an easy jog. Then at lunch Aston told us that he was giving us the rest of the day off which was so nice. It felt so good to just relax and hang out.

Monday, August 10, 2009

This morning we worked on our defensive shape. We played some short-sided games like 5 v 5 which was really fun. I love playing small games. We are working on closing down the space of an attacker quickly, so they don't have time to play around us or behind us. Today, Aston had the strikers and goalies stay later to work on shooting. I'm so happy that I didn't have to stay longer. We

always take ice baths after the morning practices and those help so much. My legs don't feel as heavy and tired then. After lunch, we had a meeting. Aston just gave us like a Powerpoint of different scenarios of where we would shift to when they ball is somewhere. It was kind of long but helpful. Practice that night that was just a continuation of the morning, still working on closing down the space quickly and not allowing the attacking team any time or space. Aston will stop the game every once in a while and help the defense in their shifting movements. We did a full field scrimmage at the end of practice which was really fun. It is always fun when we just play 11 v 11; the only restriction we had was two touches in our half of the field, which helped to emphasize to the opposing team to close down the space quick because they only have two touches. After practice, I was so tired I fell asleep like right when I laid down.

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

We started the day with practice at 8:30. We began practice with agility type fitness, just a lot of short sprint stuff. Short passes, dribbling and skills over and over again. It was tiring but not too bad. We got a pretty good rest. We continued to focus on closing down the space of an attacker quickly and what to do if you can't get there in time. This week, Aston has been concentrating on the movement of the defense, so during the scrimmages, he will stop it and tell the defense the correct movement we should make. We had another meeting after lunch, but this time we were in teams and we were playing a game answering questions of different situations what to do and what problems would present with difficult conditions, like having a man up or being a goal down. Practice tonight was moved inside because it was storming outside. We did a lot of skill work at the beginning because there isn't a lot of room in the indoor field. We worked on passing, heading, volleys and other different skills necessary for a successful team. We continued to work on the defense and their shape. We did 2 v 1 and 3 v 2 situations and had the defense working for like 15 or 25 seconds to contain the offense. We would then move into 3 v 3 games where the third defender had to track back and get into position before the offense could penetrate the other two defenders. My feet hurt really bad in the turf shoes, so by the end of practice my feet were numb. Lunch and dinner here are really nice. We all eat together and the food is not that bad, but the best part is that it is free. All the fall sports athletes are on campus now so there are a lot more people here and eating with us.

Wednesday, August 12, 2009

Practice this morning was at 8:30. We are still working on our defensive shape and closing down the space quickly. We did some short sided games again, like 4 v 4 then we moved into offense against defense. Aston sometimes would stop the game and tell the defense what to do when something happens. He had the strikers and midfielders stay later to work on shooting and combining together to get the shot. After all that, my legs were pretty tired so I went straight into the ice bath. Aston gave us the afternoon off, so we didn't have our usual meeting, which was extremely nice. It allowed me to get some a nice nap in the afternoon and be able to clean my apartment pretty easily. Practice tonight was later than usual, and it started out really slow. We were just doing possession and no one was really focused, so the play was slow and our passes did not have any pace on them or make them reach to our intended target. Aston was getting pretty frustrated with us. After doing some sprints, we started another scrimmage which I felt like we picked up and actually started playing good again. Then we went into a full field game for 20 minutes, and then went to finishing. The finishing did not go as well as we had hoped. We all started to get tired and weren't finishing the crosses that we received and the defense was clearing all the balls served in. We were staying later because we couldn't finish. Aston was not pleased with us.

Thursday, August 13, 2009

Aston graciously gave us the morning practice off to help rest our legs and help the people that were hurt to recover. So for the first time since I arrived on campus I was able to sleep in. It felt really good to just rest and relax. After lunch we were required to go the student-athlete orientation. The meeting was about how we represent our college and team and to step up if we ever witness a problematic situation. Mrs. (Debbie) Carroll talked to us about getting our books from the bookstore. Then the head over women's athletics talked to us about our expectations this year and how we are to represent the university properly. Then the MTSU athletic director talked to us all about the school's athletic accomplishments from the previous year, and encouraged us to overcome their accomplishments. Practice that night was on the game field; it is always nice to practice on there to get use to playing on there and it is a really nice field. We worked on possession and our defensive shape. After scrimmaging 8 v 8 for a little while we worked on 1 v 1 and then cooled down. Aston is starting to back off a little to save our legs for the scrimmage on Sunday. It was a good practice. We just got to play a lot and shoot.

Friday, August 14, 2009

Practice this morning got moved back to 9, and we only stayed for an hour. We just worked on shooting the entire time. It was really fun to just work solely on shooting. We finished exactly at one hour after we started, just as Aston had said we would. Every year the university puts on a middle school soccer tournament that is played on our practice field. So tonight, the first games were played so we did not have practice, but everyone is in charge of different responsibilities. We help out with parking, admissions, concessions, keeping scores and field marshalling. I was in charge of parking. Me and Erynn (Murray) sat by the road blockers telling people to park across the street. The team was split into three different groups and we were all scheduled for different times throughout the weekend. The three seniors are the leaders of each different group; there is a nutrition, fashion and entertainment. I am in Erynn's group and we are in the entertainment group.

Saturday, August 15, 2009

The middle school tournament is still going on today, so the different groups meet at their scheduled times and help out again. Once again, Erynn and I sat at the entrance and made sure that no unauthorized cars went inside. All the parents had to park in the appropriate parking lot. The tournament lasted most of the day; I believe the last game was around 4. Our practice tonight was pretty light since we have a game tomorrow. We did some possession drills and did a little shooting. We practiced what our warm-up for the games is going to be.

Sunday, August 16, 2009

Today was our first game! We played Jacksonville State and won 2-1. Although it was only the exhibition game it was good to start the season with a win. We played the game in 3 30 minute periods. It was really fun to play other people besides our own team. I think that we played really good. We didn't score until the third period but we dominated the other two. After the game, we did penalty kicks, even though we did win, and the whole team took one each. That was good just to see what everyone can do. I feel like we are going to have a very successful season if we play like I know we can. After our game we had dinner at the JUB (James Union Building) again. It is really nice to have those free meals. It really helps us not to spend too much money and they monitor what we eat which helps a lot. I am so glad that our season is finally here, and can't wait to get into it and win the Sun Belt Championship.

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