**Narrative**

Syracuse played a 17-game slate and finished 12–5—an honest record for a group that could pop in bunches and grind late when it mattered. The signature blow-out was a 21–5 win over Harvard, while the tightest finish was a one-goal nail-biter against Maryland (11–10). Even in losses, the team kept games within reach, with three decided by three or fewer goals. That profile—dominant highs, competitive lows—speaks to a team that was almost always one or two possessions from flipping the script.

The stars showed up. Emma Muchnick paced the goals column (34), Emma Ward drove the offense both as a scorer and creator (best points-per-game at 5.43 and a team-leading 46 assists), and Olivia Adamson brought steady scoring night after night (about 3.33 goals per game). When your top line produces like that, the floor rises, and so does the margin for tactical tweaks rather than wholesale change.

Structurally, the offense tilted toward a few primary engines—great for set plays and late-clock shot creation, but it also hands opponents a clearer scouting report. The analysis explicitly measured that concentration using Gini and HHI, reinforcing the case to broaden initiation and get the second unit more purposeful touches so defenses can’t sit on your A-options.

Under the hood, the workbench benchmarked results against Pythagorean expectation (GF/GA with an exponent of 2.2) to separate luck from repeatable process; broke out one- and two-goal games; profiled opponents by average margin and win rate; tracked three-game rolling momentum; and even checked the pace lens with a scores correlation and a simple OLS fit. Together, those cuts explain *why* the season looked like it did—and where small, controllable edges live.

**Interview Script**

**HOST:** Yo, quick Orange check-in? Promise it’s a two-minute sidewalk chat.

**GUEST:** Alright, hit me, my rideshare’s almost here.

**HOST:** First gut check, season felt pretty true to who the team is. Not broken, just a little wobble from luck here and there. Fair?

**GUEST:** Fair. The foundation’s solid. Clean up a few possessions and those coin-flip endings lean our way.

**HOST:** Real talk, did defenses figure us out a bit?

**GUEST:** They keyed on the usual suspects. Our top options delivered, but the scoring clustered. Next step is spreading touches so the second wave can punch, too.

**HOST:** So, more paint on the palette less “just give it to the star and pray.”

**GUEST:** Exactly. Add weak-side actions, a couple counters off our favorite look, and suddenly the primary gets cleaner shots.

**HOST:** Those tight finishes, felt like little things, not big problems.

**GUEST:** Totally. Line management, special-teams sequences, end-clock execution trainable margins. You flip a couple details and the final column looks different.

**HOST:** And when games went full track-meet?

**GUEST:** That’s where possession value spikes. We don’t need to win a sprint every night. Slow it just enough, choose better shots, protect the ball.

**HOST:** Give me the bus-stop plan in three beats.

**GUEST:** One, diversify who initiates. Two, rehearse late-game packages until they’re automatic. Three, control tempo when the pace gets silly. Same crew, smarter levers.

**HOST:** Love it. Shoutouts before you dip?

**GUEST:** Top line carried like pros; now it’s on the depth to raise the floor. When that happens, everybody’s life gets easier.

**HOST:** Say less. Appreciate the curbside download.

**GUEST:** Anytime, see you on Marshall.