Soccer

Natalie Belva

As the fall sports approach their mid-season mark, teams begin to peak and put the pieces together to achieving their goals. Virginia Wesleyan Soccer has challenged themselves with tough competition early on and is now looking to make their usual successful mark in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference.

Despite each team losing a solid amount of key players from last season, both the men’s and women’s teams have brought in a large amount of strong freshmen to add to solid groups of upperclassmen.

Men’s Head Coach Mike McFarland stated that they brought in a recruiting class of twelve freshmen.

“This freshmen class is very talented,” said McFarland. “They are a good combo to go with the upperclassmen and they are a lot like the 2008 freshmen class we brought in.”

With five freshmen consistently starting for the men’s team, college game experience is something the team is learning.

“With the youth there are always some growing pains,” said McFarland, “But on top of that youth there is good guidance from the experienced teammates.”

The men’s team is currently 4-3-2, 2-1-0 in the ODAC, and on a current three game winning streak with a big overtime win against North Carolina Wesleyan and a win against conference school Washington & Lee.

“We are a tight group,” said senior Justin Naramore. “We have really come together recently and are playing well.”

Looking forward to the next half of the season, Coach McFarland is confident about the outlook.

“Our guys have a real spirit and fight about them,” said McFarland, “And that is going to reward us with more wins and success as a team.”

The women’s team brought in nine first years, and are seeing strength from freshmen Danielle Stephens, Angel Horowitz, and goal keeper Erica Keil.

The Marlins started the season off facing tough opponents such as nationally ranked No. 1 Messiah College and California Lutheran University that have allowed them to grow and gave them great competition for tough ODAC opponents ahead.

Sophomore Jessica Edelman stated, “We have had some disappointing ties and losses, but we have so much talent and potential to be great.”

“We are creating opportunities and good chances, but we need to finish,” said Head Coach Jeff Bowers.

With a thirty-one man roster, the team remains competitive in fighting for time.

“With that many people, it gets competitive,” said Bowers.

Regardless of the competitive atmosphere for playing time, the team remains a strong unit as Bowers states that “the chemistry is very good.”

Currently 5-2-2, the women’s team is ranked No. 7 in the South Atlantic Region. Sophomore Christina Fernandes was recently named ODAC Athlete of the Week for her game-winner against Salisbury and her efforts in VWC’s win against Eastern Mennonite University.

“The only team getting in the way of us winning the ODAC Championship is ourselves,” said Edelman. “We need to work through any adversity we face.” The Marlin’s approach their season by looking at the game in front of them and nothing more.

“We just have to take every game one at a time,” said Bowers. “We need to translate now, and score now.”