

ASU Women's Soccer Signs Eight New Players

Written by Paul Blascovich

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Appalachian State University women's soccer head coach Sarah Strickland has announced eight new additions to the ASU squad. These student athletes have signed National Letters of Intent/grant-in-aid agreements and will become valuable

assets to the program.

"This is a really exciting class to be adding," explains Strickland. "Each player has unique aspects that will add new dimensions to our team. The work ethic of these players is sure to have an immediate impact, and I can't wait to work with them and help them grow as players."

Merlin Beckwith - Rochester Adams HS - Rochester Hills, Mich.

Beckwith was named all-district, all-league, all-region, all-county and all-state as a sophomore and received similar honors, including all-state as a junior. With her club team, Michigan Gators, she was a 2011 Michigan State Cup finalist and was named to the Olympic Development Program Region II team.

Strickland on Beckwith: "Merlin is a great defender that constantly looks to go forward. She leads both vocally and by example in everything she does. We expect her to be a dominant defender in our back line."

Samantha Childress - East Forsyth HS - Kernersville, N.C.

Childress has been named all-county, all-conference and all-region in each of her first three seasons in addition to an all-state selection after her junior year. She has averaged over 25 goals and nearly seven assists per season. With her NC Fusion club team, she won the 2011-12 N.C. state cup and 2010-11 Disney Soccer Showcase. Childress was also a part of the ODP Region III Championships and participated in multiple U.S. National Team camps.

Strickland on Childress: "Sam's a very creative forward that scores goals. Her timing is great and she is always in front of the net ready to tuck away a service. Sam's experience at the Regional and National level will also bring experience to our team."

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Kebrina Keys - Ashe County HS - Jefferson, N.C.

Keys comes to ASU after a successful high school career and three years as a member of the Boone-based High Country Soccer Association (HCSA), including one season as team captain. She opted out of playing with her high school team during her freshman and sophomore years to train with the HCSA boys' team. Keys tallied 49 goals and 40 assists in 59 games with the HCSA squads.

Strickland on Keys: "We are proud to add a hometown hero to our team. Kebrina has grown up in the High Country and has always aspired to play collegiate soccer. She is a true competitor and has a passion for the game that is obvious every time she steps on the field. Kebrina will definitely find her way onto the field through her fierce competitive nature and her skilled set pieces."

Jenni Loveless - Whitewater HS - Fayetteville, Ga.

Loveless played on the Georgia Olympic Development Program team from 2005 to 2011 and competed in the Region III Championships and U.S. Youth National Championships. She has started every season for her high school team, receiving honorable-mention all-region 5 AAAA honors as part of her state-finalist squad.

Strickland on Loveless: "Jenni is going to add a lot to our team this fall. Her vision is great, and she is tough defensively. We expect Jenni to make an immediate impact on our midfield next fall."

Lindsay McVeigh - Charlotte Catholic HS - Charlotte, N.C.

McVeigh is a three-time all-conference selection and was named all-state after her sophomore season. She was a key part of the school's 2011 3A N.C. state championship. She is a three-time captain of her Charlotte Soccer Academy ECNL team, three time N.C. state champions and four-time state finalists.

Strickland on McVeigh: "We are excited to add another McVeigh to the Appalachian Soccer Family. It isn't often that you are blessed to play with a sibling in college, but this fall we will have both Sam and Lindsay McVeigh on team. Lindsay is a strong defensive midfielder that reads the game very well. Her tactical awareness is her special quality that will help us in the

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midfield next year.”

Abbey Nolte - Kennesaw Mountain HS - Kennesaw, Ga.

Nolte received honorable-mention all-county honors as a junior and was named her team's offensive MVP in 2009 and '11 after racking up 42 goals in her first three seasons. Her Cobb FC team was ranked as the No. 3 squad in Georgia in 2012 and won the 2010 Score Showcase and 2010 Georgia Athena A tournament while advancing to the finals of the Georgia State Cup in 2011.

Strickland on Nolte “Abbey is a fast, raw forward that looks to immediately go to goal as quickly as possible. She is tenacious in the final third and her mentality will definitely help our front line.”

Megan Roberson - East Forsyth HS - Kernersville, N.C.

Roberson was named all-state and all-area as a junior in addition to three-time selections as all-region and all-conference. As a goalkeeper, she has a combined record of 57-11-5 in three seasons. Her club team, NC Soccer Fusion, is the reigning N.C. State Cup champion and won the 2010-11 Disney Soccer Showcase. Roberson was also a three-year member of the N.C. Olympic Development Program (ODP) team, which competed in the ODP Region III Championships. She participated in the 2009 Inter-Regional National Camp in California.

Strickland on Roberson: “The situation in the net will be very competitive next fall and Megan will be battling for the job. Megan has Regional and National level experience and is a true perfectionist. She is a leader that is vocal from the net and isn't afraid to come off her line.”

Kate Ward - St. Pius X Catholic HS - Atlanta, Ga.

Ward contributed 27 goals in helping St. Pius X to three state championships in her first three years of high-school competition. In addition to competing with her Tophat 12 Gold club team, Ward is a member of the U.S. Deaf National Women's Soccer Team. She was a starter on the 2009 squad that won gold at the 2009 Deaflympics in Taiwan.

Strickland on Ward: “Kate has an unbelievable touch and has the ability to play a great final

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pass. Kate's international experience will also benefit our team. She is a fantastic young woman that we expect to see grow tremendously at Appalachian."