

Welsh To Attend Meredith College

Written by Mike Kelly
Sunday, 23 March 2014 16:37

Watauga High senior Katherine Welsh has announced that she will attend Meredith College, a Division III school located in Raleigh, N.C., and a member of the USA South Conference.

Welsh was going to sign her national letter of intent last week, but inclement weather and schedule changes forced Welsh to put her signing date on hold for the moment. But while many might fret about getting it done, Welsh is taking things in stride.

"It may be in a big city, but the school is its own little sanctuary," said Welsh, a three-year varsity player. "The academics there are incredible. I fell in love with the campus, and I want to major in biology and their research opportunities are out of this world. I spoke with the biology chair and she told me how the coaches and professors work together to benefit the athletes. It's a great choice for me, both academically and athletically."

Welsh and her teammates are off to a blistering start. The Pioneers (6-0-2 overall; 2-0 Northwestern 3A/4A Conference) are currently undefeated. They knocked off Hibriten 5-1 Friday night at Jack Groce Stadium, and Welsh picked up a goal and an assist in that game.

That win leaves WHS in contention for the NW3A/4A Conference championship, something the wHS girls haven't done since 2006.

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"(Head coach Brittany) Bolick knows how to prepare us for a game," Welsh said. "She's always talking to us about playing for our school, our community, ourselves. She knows how to bring out the best in us. I've really enjoyed playing for her."

But Welsh isn't a stranger to WHS soccer. Her older brother played for Doug Kidd.

"I really wanted to be a part of this program when I was growing up," she said. "I always looked up to the players. I saw the close bond between the coaches and players, and I saw the possibilities of growing up as a player and a person while playing the game I love."

And the Pioneers are certainly playing with a passion this season. They've only given up two goals all year. But according to Bolick, the Pioneers haven't really been fully tested just yet.

"Not really," Bolick said. "We have to contend with Hickory and St. Stephens. Every year, those teams just keep reloading. I'm anxious to play them, and I know the girls are. We have a solid senior group. This could be a special season."

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"It would be nice to win a conference championship," Welsh said. "We're playing with a lot of confidence right now. And coach Bolick has a lot to do with it. But I love it. It's great being a student-athlete. I'm personally a very good student. Coach Bolick is so good about balancing our schooling and soccer. It's a full-time job, but I'm glad to have the chance to do it."

And Welsh admits she does play with a chip on her shoulder. She's extremely vocal on the pitch. Welsh isn't afraid to communicate with her teammates during a match.

"And a lot that comes from coach Bolick," Welsh said. "She's a firecracker on the sidelines. She won't accept anything less than perfect. She strives for us to do our best. And our team is a big communication center on the field. I talk all the time. I yell and scream in a powerful, creative way. Girls aren't observant visually, so if I want the ball in a certain area of the field, I'm going to call for it."

And Welsh knows she's still a senior at WHS, but she's anxious to play at the next level this fall.

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"I've watched Meredith play," Welsh said. "They're very physical. I'm nervous, but I'm also excited. Coach Paul Smith said there's no drama on the team, and they're a very close unit. I can't wait to get there.

"And it's heart warming to be a role model. I'm always talking to younger girls about being a student athlete. I take a lot of pride in being a female athlete. And I'm proud to be a member of (WHS) program. And I'm tired of guys saying their games are more competitive. Our game is just as rough, if not rougher."

Welsh and her teammates take on Patton at home Tuesday night, weather permitting. The junior varsity match begins at 5 p.m.; the varsity match starts at 6:30 p.m. WHS plays Hickory Friday night.

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