

AD Franch set to finish off unbelievable career at Oklahoma State

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KT King

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By Jared Emerson Sports Reporter | 0 comments

The only time most Cowgirl soccer fans see AD Franch, she is between the posts making another save or vocally leading her team from the back.

People might describe her as fierce, competitive, or possibly the greatest Cowgirl soccer player of all time.

She describes herself as young at heart.

"I'm like a really big kid. I have a ton of DVD's and a whole case of cartoons," Franch said. "When I go home, my mom has all of the VHS movies, so I love to sit down and watch some of those. The Disney classics, obviously Lion King, Oliver and Company, you got Anastasia; you got Aristocats, all down the line.

"Not a big fan of the princess ones, but I still enjoy them, but they're not my favorite."

Her love for Disney movies and artistic ability helped make her decision to become a studio art major at OSU. Her dream is to work for Pixar, and she hasn't forgotten about it.

"It all kind of changes as you go through things, and there had to be decisions made," Franch said. "(Pixar) was always a goal of mine, and any of my goals I never completely give up on."

Franch's teammates describe her as funny, loud and someone who loves to pull pranks. It's not always about the complicated prank—Franch said she likes to see which tricks she can pull that have already been done. Her favorite is to scare people after the team goes to get dinner on road trips.

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When someone tries to pull pranks as often as Franch, sometimes it can go wrong. One time, Senior Carson Michalowski said Franch hid between the seats on the bus after a game in an attempt to scare someone. The two ended up stuck there for 30 minutes waiting.

Senior forward Megan Marchesano recalled one of her favorite Franch pranks.

"The best prank that happened this year was when we were coming out of this restaurant," Marchesano said. "It started a couple of years ago with players going up and pantsing each other, and one of the freshman was standing in front of the bus driver and AD went up and pantsed her. She turned and mooned him, so it was pretty funny."

The Salina, Kan. native's fun-loving attitude is only matched by her intensity on the field, as Franch is recognized as one of the best athletes in the nation.

Her mother, Raqual Franch, put her in the YMCA as soon as possible.

"My first word was ball," Franch said, "So as soon as I could start playing sports, at 4 or 5, I started playing three-on-three soccer."

Franch started as a field player, but then one of her friend's mom put together a club team and Franch was asked to play. At practice one day, she stood in as a goalkeeper.

"At that time we were little kids, so they kicked it right at me and I looked like a really good keeper," Franch said. "I was asked to play goal a couple of times. At the beginning I didn't like it because our team was good, so I was really bored.

"Once the action started building, we got older and there was more on the line, I think I really thrived off of those adrenaline rushes."

From there, Franch became a star athlete. She won awards on the soccer field and basketball courts. She began to pick up the attention of schools and OSU was on her list. She had already visited the campus during one of the late Kurt Budke's basketball camps and fell in love with the environment.

Franch said she looked at the soccer team and saw how it was a growing program, which was what she wanted.

She made an immediate impact for the Cowgirls, starting all 23 games she appeared in during her freshman year, and set a single-season OSU record with 11 shutouts. When she leaves, she'll hold the career shutout record. More importantly, she has helped the Cowgirls reach new heights.

"When she came, our team was good," Coach Colin Carmichael said. "And she has taken our team to a whole new level. Having her back there, you can't say how many wins that's worth, but you gotta say it's worth at least a couple a season."

Of course, it's not only her on the field presence the team is losing. Marchesano and Franch joined the team together in 2009 and have been a part of the most successful Cowgirl teams in program history.

"It's been great, she's such a tough and strong individual teammate on the field," Marchesano said. "I've learned a lot from her and we have learned a lot from each other, we have definitely grown as people."

Sunday is senior day and possibly the last time Franch will play in front of the Cowgirl fans. She said she's not sure it's hit her yet and it probably won't until after the game.

A future in soccer seems likely, as there are talks of another women's professional league in the United States and Franch is becoming a regular among the National teams' camps.

But no matter what, Franch says she has no regrets.

"Just being able to come here and go to this school and grow as a person," Franch said. "I chose-I would still choose, to this day-to go to OSU. I'm happy with the decision I made."

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