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Cowgirls soccer signs six recruits

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Corie Wilkinson

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By Jared Emerson Sports Reporter | [0 comments](#)

Despite a season below the Cowgirls' usual standards, coach Colin Carmichael and the women's soccer team had success on the recruiting trail.

Oklahoma State signed the No. 8 recruiting class, according to [TopDrawerSoccer.com](#), one spot above the rank the Cowgirls achieved a year ago. Of the six recruits, [TopDrawerSoccer.com](#) ranks five in the top 150.

Carmichael said the 2012 recruiting class was talented but young, and its members were forced to take on too much responsibility too quickly thanks to injuries and other circumstances.

Now a year older and experienced, the Cowgirls will use the incoming recruits to strengthen the squad, rather than having to rely on them.

"The kids coming in this year are very talented," Carmichael said. "A couple of them are going to be ready to play at our level immediately, and for some it's going to take a little bit of time.

"We are very excited about the level of player we're bringing in, but we also know there's a lot of adjustments and adapting that has to be done before we say we're ready to make that jump back to the Elite Eight or beyond."

Broken Arrow native Krissy Killion heads the OSU recruiting class. Killion, a forward, is No. 14 on the [TopDrawerSoccer.com](#) Girls IMG Academy 150, and is listed as the No. 4 forward.

At Broken Arrow High School, she was named to the All-Metro first team in 2011 and was a Gatorade Oklahoma Player of the Year nominee during her junior and senior seasons. Killion was named to the Best 11 all-star team at the 2011 United States Youth Soccer National Championships.

"Probably our highest rated recruit by most publications," Carmichael said. "Tremendous forward, competitive kid and scores a lot of goals. I think you can see in her bio that that kid knows where the goal is. She's a very good athlete and she is a kid who can really make an impact right off the bat."

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Joining her at the forward position is another Oklahoman, Courtney Dike, from Edmond. Dike, pronounced Dee-kay, played for Oklahoma Football Club '95. She helped her squad to five state semifinals appearances, and was playing for the '94 team when it won an Oklahoma State championship, scoring six goals to help the team reach the finals.

As a member of the Edmond North High School Huskies, Dike scored 76 goals and had 27 assists, as well as led her team to 6A state championships in 2010 and 2011.

"Courtney is physically ready to play at this level today," Carmichael said, "and you can't say that about all freshman. We've brought in freshman before that are really nice players, but they're 18 and they're playing against 22-year-old women. Courtney, I think, is a kid that could come in right now as an 18-year-old and play against 22-year-old women with no problem."

This coming season presents a problem Cowgirl fans have been dreading: replacing All-American AD Franch. Rosa Medina is the only goalkeeper on the team and has proven she can start for most colleges when she stepped in for an injured Franch in 2011.

The Cowgirls also signed Ashton Hierholzer from Heath, Texas to strengthen depth. Carmichael said Franch's impact goes well beyond the playing field.

"It's actually a little bit easier (recruiting) now that AD is gone," Carmichael said. "We're trying to sell kids on, 'come on and become the next AD.' If you're a big-time goalkeeper, we've proven we can help you get on the road to the national team, and we've proven we can help you get to the professional level."

Hierholzer is 93rd on the top 150, and is listed as the No. 7 goalkeeper. Carmichael said he thinks Hierholzer can come in and challenge Medina for the starting spot, which will benefit both players.

Niki McKnight, from Rockwell, Texas, is an interesting recruit for the Cowgirls because she can play almost any position on the field. McKnight is a member of the U.S. U-17 national squad, and won back-to-back USYS national championships for Sting '95 in 2010 and 2011. TopDrawerSoccer.com puts her at No. 93.

Teammate Natalie Calhoun, a defender, is also in TopDrawerSoccer.com's top 150. She comes in at No. 52. Carmichael mentioned both women as people who could come in and make an immediate impact.

Joanna Robertson, a midfielder from Klien, Texas, rounds out the Cowgirls' recruiting class. Robertson is a three-time Texas state champion, and is a member of the Region III Olympic Development Program team. She is ranked No. 61 on the TopDrawerSoccer.com IMG Academy top 150.

"This class is very good," Carmichael said. "We aren't going to get too carried away, because they are going to be young, they are going to have some growing pains like every freshman does. But the sky is the limit."

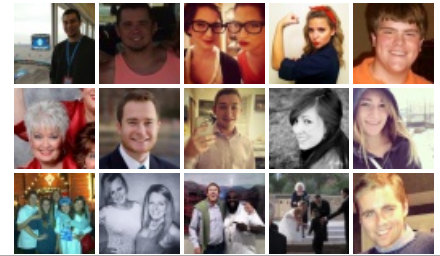
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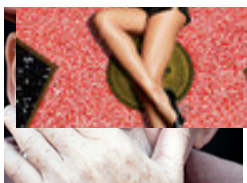
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