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Dynamic duo powers Boston College

By Graham Hays
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CHAPEL HILL, N.C. -- Without replays, and often at a considerable distance from the far flung corners of the pitch, it's all too easy to miss the set-up pass or the number of the player who delivered it. But when it comes to Boston College, there's an easy cheat. If Victoria DiMartino or Kristen Mewis put foot or head to ball for the finish, it's generally safe to assume the other one had a hand in setting it up.

From Long Island to Massachusetts, Chestnut Hill to Chapel Hill and Germany to New Zealand, the two have been friends for the better part of a decade, traveling the globe and leaving a trail of goals behind them.

"I think they have a great chemistry," Boston College coach Alison Foley said before the season. "You say sometimes players are telepathic; I think those two have that type of connection."

The Eagles scored four goals in beating North Carolina and NC State 3-2 and 1-0, respectively, to open ACC play, and DiMartino and Mewis combined on three of them (two by Mewis, one by DiMartino). For the season, DiMartino, a sophomore forward from Long Island, leads the Eagles with nine goals and is second with six assists. Mewis, a sophomore midfielder from an hour south of Boston, leads the team with eight assists and is second with six goals.

Mewis has assists on four of DiMartino's goals; DiMartino has assists on four of Mewis' goals.

The two have played together on big stages before, helping the United States to the Under-17 World Cup title in New Zealand in 2008 and making the trip to Germany this past summer to play in the Under-20 World Cup. But they haven't combined for many goals more important than the one Mewis headed home in the 60th minute against North Carolina.

The defending national champions had just seized a 1-0 lead when, 63 seconds later, DiMartino picked out Mewis at the far post and launched a perfect cross that her friend headed home to tie the score. The Eagles had to rally from another one-goal deficit later before DiMartino put home the eventual winner on an assist from Mewis, but for a program that had never earned so much as a draw against the Tar Heels -- let alone a win in Chapel Hill -- the initial instant answer set the tone for a team with national championship aspirations.

"I heard her screaming my name and I took an extra touch and she was wide open," DiMartino recalled. "I knew it was going in from the second I crossed it. I asked her and she goes, 'I knew you were going to cross that right to my head.'"



Kristie Mewis led Boston College to an upset of No.1 UNC.

That mind meld is not an uncommon occurrence, just as its not uncommon to see them walking onto the field together before a game or to see DiMartino, with the well-honed exasperation only a friend can muster, confirm that, no, she still doesn't know where Mewis left her warmup shirt.

You don't need to be friends with your teammates. Perhaps you don't even need to like them all that much. But it doesn't hurt when a team's two best field players are as inseparable off the field as they are unstoppable on it. Mewis has had the pleasure of playing with plenty of talent in her club and international career, but nothing ever clicked quite like playing with DiMartino.

"I've played with some really great players, really great forwards, that I've tried to work with, but sometimes we're not always on the same page," Mewis said. "It might just be they play a different style of play or our minds don't really fit together or something like that."



Victoria DiMartino's chemistry with Mewis on the field is evident.

Around the nation

- Kelley O'Hara had one of the great seasons in recent times en route to the Hermann Trophy and Stanford's first appearance in an NCAA championship game last year. And yet great as it was, that effort is rapidly starting to look like the prelude in Palo Alto. In the weekend's other potential College Cup preview, Stanford knocked off Portland 2-1 to remain unbeaten on the season at 8-0-2. Senior forward Christen Press provided what turned out to be the winner in the 36th minute, her 13th goal in 10 games this season. That effort also gave her 153 career points, breaking the program record established in 1993 by Sara Rafanelli.

A year ago, O'Hara scored 10 goals in Stanford's first 10 games, going without a goal in just three of those games, a feat remarkable for both its prolificness and consistency. Yet Press has not only 13 goals in the same number of games but came up empty just once, a 4-0 win against Pacific in which she had two assists. And without taking anything from O'Hara, Press is doing it without having Press around to divert any of the attention from opposing defenders and against a schedule that included not just Portland but North Carolina and Boston College.

October won't arrive until the end of the week, but the Hermann already belongs to Press if she wants it.

- Stanford has one win against a top-10 team this season. The same goes for Boston College, Notre Dame and Portland. But two wins against teams ranked in the top 10 at the time of the game? Well, North Carolina can make that claim with its wins against Florida and Texas A&M. But so can a rather more surprising team. And Colorado did it in the span of six days.

Fresh off a 1-0 upset win against UCLA at home the previous weekend, the Buffaloes scored an even bigger upset by going on the road for a 2-1 overtime win against Texas A&M on Friday. Despite coming off the bench in both games and playing a total of just 51 minutes, freshman Lizzy Herzl made the time count with the winners against both the Bruins and Aggies -- the first two goals of her college career. Even Sunday's 0-0 draw at home against Texas was hardly a momentum killer. Colorado is a modest 5-4-1 on the season, but with four points out of a tough opening weekend of Big 12 play and what look like its toughest remaining tests in Boulder, there is more than soccer life after Nikki Marshall. There might just be an NCAA tournament berth.

- North Carolina isn't going to get a lot of sympathy from beyond the borders of Tar Heel country after giving up three goals in a half for the first time since 1999 in the loss to Boston College, but they don't need the tears. With as many as eight new starters at times this season, it's a team that finds itself needing to grow up fast. Fortunately for Anson Dorrance, this group may actually be even faster than last season's champions.

And while the sheer volume of players North Carolina lost from last season's title-winning group has been chronicled, the Tar Heels are starting to get some experience coming the other way. After coming off the bench since returning from injury five games ago, senior Ali Hawkins made her first start since the season opener in Sunday's 2-1 win against Virginia Tech. Playing as one of North Carolina's three forwards instead of her more familiar midfield haunts, she brings another veteran hand alongside Courtney Jones in an otherwise youthful attack. And out of action since the opener, senior defender Rachel Givan may return as early as this week, adding stability to a back line that has played remarkably well for an untested group but showed its youth at times against the Eagles.

Quick hits

So much for offensive issues at Notre Dame. The Fighting Irish blanked Cincinnati and Louisville by 4-0 and 5-0 scores, respectively to open Big East play. The nine goals are more than they scored in any regular-season weekend last season. ... USC faces San Diego for the second time this season this weekend to close out conference play, a scheduling oddity that gives the Women of Troy a chance to cancel out their lone loss of the season. Six players already have multiple goals for USC, compared to seven all of last season. ... UTEP's 2-1 win against Memphis went a long way toward validating a run of much greater margin of victory for the Miners against a soft nonconference schedule. The eighth win a row for UTEP, the third longest streak in program history, was also the second win in as many seasons against Conference USA powerhouse Memphis. ... With shutout wins against Mississippi and Mississippi State, buoyed by SEC Defensive Player of the Week Justine Bernier in net, Alabama is 2-0 against SEC competition for the first time since 1995.

Graham Hays covers women's college soccer for ESPN.com. E-mail him at Graham.Hays@espn.com. Follow him on Twitter: [@grahamhays](https://twitter.com/grahamhays).

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