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By: Matt Harness | mharness@pioneerlocal.com | [@harnesspreps](https://twitter.com/harnesspreps)

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Pappalardo looking to help Colorado more on offense



Olivia Pappalardo, a 2012 Maine South graduate, was a key contributor on the Colorado women's soccer team that finished with a .500 record during her freshman season. | Photo courtesy University of Colorado

Olivia Pappalardo and Danny Sanchez are linked together because they're in the midst of an ongoing attempt to turn around the Colorado women's soccer program.

"I expect us to continue to improve," said Pappalardo, a 2012 graduate of Maine South and soon-to-be sophomore on the Buffaloes club.

Pappalardo is optimistic because of the six other sophomores on the team.

“I think my class is a really good class,” she said. “I think we were timid last year, but now we have a year under our belt. We know the coaches, and they know us.”

Colorado, which opens its season Aug. 23 against Northern Colorado in Denver, went 8-8-4 in Sanchez’s first season last fall. The Buffaloes finished 2-7-2 in the Pac-12, but they were in every game. Six of their conference losses came by one goal. The other Pac-12 loss came by two goals.

Sanchez inherited a program that went 4-13-2 overall and 1-9-1 in the Pac-12 in 2011. He said he expects Pappalardo, a midfielder, to “break out” this fall.

“She has the potential to be an impact player for us,” he said. “She already is a very good two-way player, being able to defend and be dangerous on the attack.

“But there is plenty of room for improvement.”

A native of Niles, Pappalardo played in 19 of the team’s 20 games last season, starting 16 of them. She logged the most minutes of any freshman and also took the most shots of any player in her class. But she finished the season with zero goals and two assists.

“We expect more production from her in front of the goal,” Sanchez said. “The next stage for her is to have the mentality of a finisher and someone who can create scoring opportunities for others.”

Pappalardo said she accepted her coach’s challenge.

“I think it was a confidence thing,” she said of her lack of offensive production as a freshman. “I needed to believe I could score. That’s something I figured out in the spring season.”

Pappalardo has continued to train in the offseason. She’s been on campus since the start of July, spending her time running and working on her conditioning for the upcoming season.

“I’m looking forward to actually playing soccer and practicing soccer,” she said.

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