

Former B-CC Star Hoping to Help Stanford Win National Championship

By Matt Zenitz, Patch.com

By the time Alex Doll committed to play soccer at Stanford University during her junior year at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, Cardinal coach Paul Ratcliffe already had in mind what kind of player he saw Doll developing into for the Cardinal.

At that point, Ratcliffe, who has been Stanford's head coach since 2003, had already seen Doll play multiple times, including at B-CC as well as with her club team, the Bethesda Dragons, and even with the U.S Under-17 (U-17) Women's National Team.

"I could already tell at that point that she just had a great soccer brain," said Ratcliffe, a two-time national coach of the year at Stanford. "And that's what I look for, that players have the technique as well as the brain for the game, and I was just really impressed with her decision-making and her composure with the ball. And I knew, even at that point, that she could probably help us in any phase of the game."

Doll, who played primarily midfield during her high school career, led B-CC to a 65-4-1 during her four years on the team and helped the Barons win three consecutive Class 4A state championships. During her senior season in 2010, Doll scored 12 goals and dished out 19 assists. After the season, she was named the Washington Post's 2010 All-Metro Player of the Year, the Gatorade Maryland State Player of the Year, for the second straight year, and was even selected as the 2010 Girls High School Scholar-Athlete of the Year by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.

With her club team, meanwhile, Doll, who serves as team captain, is a three-time NSCAA Youth All-American and guided the Dragons to the 2011 Maryland State Cup title and a berth in the Region I tournament.

Doll is also a member of the U.S National Team's U-20 player pool, played for the U.S at the CONCACAF U-17 championship and was also a part of the U.S's U-14 and U-15 national teams.

Now, though, Doll is hoping for continued success at Stanford, extremely eager to begin her first season with the Cardinal.

"I'm really excited," Doll said. "The spring, the summer and now the preseason have all been building up to the first game and I'm just really excited."

Stanford, ranked as the second-best team in the country heading in this season, is 70-4-3 during the last three years, including 26-1-3 in conference play, and has reached the NCAA championship game each of the last two seasons, although it has lost both years and is still in search of the first national title in school history.

Ratcliffe, though, is hopeful Doll, who he believes will make a quick transition to the college game, can help Stanford get over the hump.

He says Doll has been "very impressive" throughout the Cardinal's preseason practice, looking "more like a veteran than a freshman" and has progressively improved with each practice.

Even as just a freshman, he envisions Doll having a major impact in Stanford's midfield, describing her as "a hard-working midfielder that can win tackles, has good one-on-one dribbling skills with the ball, is an intelligent playmaker, a good passer and is also capable of scoring."

"Our goal every year is to win a conference championship and a national championship," Ratcliffe said. "And hopefully Alex can play a big role for us and can have a big impact right away. I think we're going to need her."

Doll, meanwhile, enters her freshman season with relatively modest individual expectations, focused solely on doing whatever she can to help the Cardinal win that elusive first national championship.

"I just hope to help the team out in any way possible," Doll said. "And if I have the chance to contribute, and possibly help win a national championship, that would be amazing."