

As the 2005 season approaches for the VMI women's soccer team, a new era is set to begin in only the program's third season of competition as a varsity sport. Bryan Williams comes to Lexington with a wealth of local knowledge, having been a standout player at Washington & Lee across town, and six years of coaching experience at the collegiate level, in addition to scholastic coaching as well.

"I feel honored and excited to be given the opportunity to help women's soccer evolve at VMI," said Williams upon his hiring. "The chance to be involved with such a famous institution during what I'm sure will be viewed as a dynamic period of its history is a privilege."

The new coach will bring in a new, possession-oriented system and a faster pace of play to the Institute to help the Keydets grow a program that has suffered from numerous growing pains in its first two seasons.

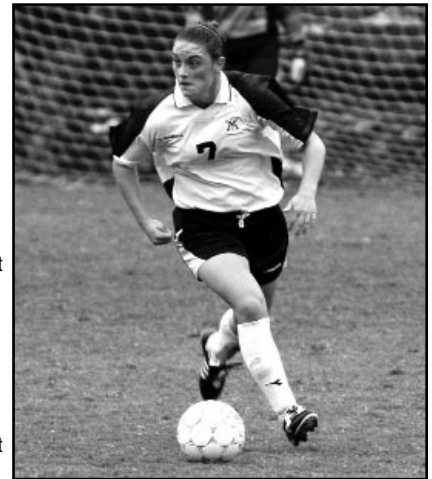
Joining Williams in Lexington as an assistant is Tressy Ross. The 2004 graduate of Austin College in Sherman, Texas is not only the American Southwest Conference all-time leading scorer and points-holder, but was also named the conference's Offensive Player of the Year all four years. She was twice named Austin College's Most Outstanding Female Athlete and scored 73 goals and 17 assists for 163 points in only 79 contests. She graduated with a double major in Chemistry and Exercise and Sport Science, and has since begun work on a Masters degree in Wellness Management.

Williams and Ross have hit the ground running since their charges returned on August 9. Helping to ease the transition are 12 players returning that have played VMI soccer before, the largest number in the program's young history. Add to those 12 a recruiting class of five newcomers, and the Keydets will be entering this season with the largest roster the program has yet seen.

Leading the charge of returnees is second team All-Big South selection Colleen Redmond, who scored all but one of the team's goals last season. In her career, she has now tallied 19 goals and 39 points in only 31 games at VMI. Also returning is sophomore goalkeeper Jessica Rheinlander, who may again play every minute of every game as she did last season. Rheinlander gained notoriety last year while ranking in the top five in country in saves per game, averaging an impressive 8.56 per contest.

"I'm very much looking forward to this season and seeing what these ladies can do on the field," said Williams. "I'll be trying to bring a faster pace of play and focus more on possession-oriented soccer, which will probably incorporate either a 4-4-2 or 3-5-2 system. But don't expect us not to adapt to our opponents or the obstacles that we will face this season."

"I have enjoyed my time coming to the Institute so far, and look forward to the days ahead. I appreciate the support that I've received from the Superintendent, the Commandant, the Athletic Director Donny White, the coaches and the entire community. Their help in the first few weeks has helped ease the transition immensely."



Junior Colleen Redmond will be counted on as the team's top offensive threat.

FORWARDS

When talking about forwards for VMI, the conversation must begin with junior **Colleen Redmond** (Brownsburg, Ind./Brebeuf Jesuit). The leading scorer in VMI's women's soccer history enjoyed another outstanding year last year, following her freshman season that saw her named to Soccer Buzz's First-Team for First Year Programs. Last year, while facing heavy pressure and focus from each opponent, she still was able to find the back of the net six times, five of those unassisted.

"Colleen is an exciting, creative player that brings a lot of leadership to the team," Williams said regarding one of the team's tri-captains. "She possesses good speed and excellent ball skills, and I'm looking forward to her maintaining her hold as the team's leading scorer and combining with Alexa Bernas and Karen Bill up front."

Sophomore **Alexa Bernas** (Mechanicsville, Va./Atlee) will again be counted on as a secondary offensive option up front, as she was the only other Keydet to score a goal last season. A talented, technically strong player, Bernas will be asked to provide a scoring threat when teams focus on Redmond on the attack. Junior **Karen Bill** (Yorktown, Va./Tabb), another of the team's tri-captains, will shift between the forward and midfield spots and will be asked to be a playmaker in the center of the field, opening up opportunities for the other Keydet forwards.

"I believe that Alexa has been underrated in her ability to be a scoring threat at VMI," said Williams. "I want to capitalize on what I see as a talented player as a goal scorer and target player for our offensive attack. And Karen is a rock solid, hard working player who anchors the center of our field. Her experience and knowledge of the game will help improve our possession game this season."

MIDFIELDERS

The Keydets return five quality midfielders, along with Bill, who will see action in the midfield and at forward. Joining Bill in the midfield are sophomores **Gia Bichara** (Chesapeake, Va./Great Bridge), **Erin Squires** (Mechanicsville, Va./Atlee) and juniors **Hatley Clifford** (Plano, Texas/Carrollton Christian), **Anastasia Kovarik** (Clayton, N.C./Wake Christian Academy) and **Raevon Pulliam** (Yorktown, Va./Tabb).



Sophomore Gia Bichara is expected to be a major contributor in the midfield.

Bichara is expected to start at one of the outside midfield positions after starting each game last season. A strong, physical player, she will team with Squires, a tenacious, hard-working player, as the team's two primary outside mids.

"I look forward to Gia's continued success in helping us to create a possession-oriented team," said Williams. "She has the ability to play both strong defense and attacking offense and will be key to our linking the ball out of the back to the attacking players. Erin makes good choices on the field and will also be key to us moving the ball from the back to the attacking third of the field. She is a tenacious player that will be difficult for other teams and players to ignore or get around."

Clifford is expected to contribute as both an outside and defensive midfielder, and is a very gifted endurance player. A crossover athlete at VMI, she is the school's record holder in the 5,000 and 10,000 meter run when she ran track last spring, and is expected to help out the cross country team later this season.

A pair of versatile players will find time all over the field, although primarily in the midfield. Kovarik is expected to play primarily as a defensive midfielder, but is also listed as the team's back-up goalkeeper. Pulliam is listed as a forward, midfielder and a defender, and will most likely be utilized in all three roles.

"Hatley possesses a strong work ethic and work rate that is a great example to her teammates," said Williams. "Anna (Kovarik) has been a very pleasant surprise in returning to this year's team after sitting out last year. She has an ability to command and lead and she will be important to us playing strong defense this year. Raevon possesses a great attitude and is another great example of the hard-working players that make up this team. She has the ability to make great runs on the outside for distributions and has grown as a possession-driven player."

Expected to play in either a midfield or defense role this season is one of two seniors on the team, **Joselyn Wall** (Lancaster, Calif./Desert Christian). Another hard-working player, Wall "brings the dynamic of the corps and what it embodies to the team," says Williams.

Also expected to contribute in the midfield or as a forward are a pair of freshmen in **Alexa Tarbona** (Richmond, Va./Mills Godwin) and **Jackie Alix** (Killingworth, Conn./Haddam-Killingworth). Tarbona is a hard-worker with a lot of desire to help the club, and Alix is a talented player who primarily saw time at the center mid and forward positions in high school.

DEFENDERS

Expected to anchor a very young defensive unit is junior **Vanessa Berrios** (Yorktown, Va./Tabb). Berrios has started each game of her career so far, and will be teamed with as many as three freshmen along the back line, so she will be counted on for her experience more than ever before.

"I'm hoping to be able to play Vanessa as our 'stopper' at the center back position," said Williams. "She is a very strong, talented player whose experience will be counted on. I look forward to her combining with our young defensive corps, giving experience and hopefully us being able to limit the opponents' attacks that have hurt us in the past."

Joining Berrios in the back are freshmen **Celine Ziobro** (Henderson, Nev./Green Valley), **Megan Strand** (Fredericksburg, Va./Stafford) and **Jessica Dick** (Virginia Beach, Va./Kempville). Ziobro may contribute as the team's sweeper this year, and brings a wealth of experience and talent as a club player. Strand is a player with a great amount of talent and ability, while Dick is a very talented athletic player who will see time at the defender and midfield roles this year.

"Celine is a very fast and well-conditioned athlete," said Williams. "She will help support Vanessa and (goalkeeper) Jessica Rheinlander in giving stability to our team's new look along the back. Megan fits into our formation as though the position (outside back) was waiting for her. I look forward to her doing nothing but improving over the season. Jessica is another strong newcomer to the team. She comes from a solid club background and will help us in a variety of roles this season."

Also expected to see time in the back is senior tri-captain **Kathy Aldrich** (Stuart, Va./Patrick County). She continues to work through a foot injury that limited her play last season, but should be able to contribute to the team as the season progresses.

"Kathy has been an invaluable asset to me as an incoming coach," said Williams. "She has helped me with insights as only a veteran of VMI would have. She is a great inspiration to all the players on the team, and I look forward to her return as a player."

GOALKEEPER

For the second straight season, the team's primary goalkeeper is found in sophomore **Jessica Rheinlander** (Manassas, Va./Forest Park). Last season, she played all 1440 minutes for the Keydets, averaging over 8.5 saves per contest. This year, the team is hoping to cut down on the amount of work that Rheinlander has to do, and she will provide an enormous help as the team transitions to a new style of play.

"J.R. is an outstanding goalkeeper, I've been exceptionally pleased with the talent and technique that I've seen in the first weeks of practice," said Williams. "She possesses all the talent and ability to be an All-Big South player here. Her experience, confidence and ability will help to anchor our defense, give our midfield and attacking players the confidence to go forward and play the aggressive, possession-style that I'm trying to bring to this young program."

BIG SOUTH CONFERENCE

In their second season in the Big South, the team will again be faced with a difficult non-conference and conference schedule, however, a year of experience in the league should definitely help to improve this year's results. Again selected ninth of nine teams in the league, the team feels that this could be the year that they break through with that first league victory. After sitting out last year's conference Championship as the only team not to qualify, the team has a defined goal this season.

"I know that we were selected to be the cellar-dweller again this season, but I hope to make opponents have to rethink that choice by the end of the season," said Williams. "Our goal this year, besides playing the highest level of soccer that has ever been played here, is to be playing in November at the conference championship."

Numerical Roster

No.	Name	Cl.	Pos.	Ht.	Hometown/Previous School
1	Jessica Rheinlander*	So.	GK	5-7	Manassas, Va./Forest Park
2	Megan Strand	Fr.	M/D	5-4	Fredericksburg, Va./Stafford
3	Kathy Aldrich**	Sr.	D/M	5-1	Stuart, Va./Patrick County
4	Jackie Alix	Fr.	M/D	5-1	Killingworth, Conn./Haddam Killingworth
5	Erin Squires*	So.	D/M	5-0	Mechanicsville, Va./Atlee
6	Raevon Pulliam**	Jr.	F/M/D	5-3	Yorktown, Va./Tabb
7	Colleen Redmond**	Jr.	F/M	5-5	Brownsburg, Ind./Brebeuf Jesuit
8	Gia Bichara*	So.	D/M	5-4	Chesapeake, Va./Great Bridge
9	Karen Bill**	Jr.	D/M	5-5	Yorktown, Va./Tabb
10	Jessica Dick	Fr.	D/M	5-5	Virginia Beach, Va./Kempville
11	Vanessa Berrios**	Jr.	M/D	5-6	Yorktown, Va./Tabb
12/0	Anastasia Kovarik*	Jr.	M/GK	5-6	Clayton, N.C./Wake Christian Academy
14	Hatley Clifford**	Jr.	M/D	5-5	Plano, Texas/Carollton Christian
15	Celine Ziobro	Fr.	D	5-6	Henderson, Nev./Green Valley
16	Alexa Bernas*	So.	F/M	5-5	Mechanicsville, Va./Atlee
20	Alexa Tarbona	Fr.	F/M	5-8	Richmond, Va./Mills Godwin
21	Joselyn Wall*	Sr.	M	5-8	Lancaster, Calif./Desert Christian

Head Coach: Bryan Williams (Washington & Lee '81), First Season

Assistant Coach: Tresy Ross (Austin College '04), First Season

Alphabetical Roster

3	Kathy Aldrich	D/M
4	Jackie Alix	M/D
16	Alexa Bernas	F/M
11	Vanessa Berrios	M/D
8	Gia Bichara	D/M
9	Karen Bill	D/M
14	Hatley Clifford	M/D
10	Jessica Dick	D/M
12/0	Anastasia Kovarik	M/GK
6	Raevon Pulliam	F/M/D
7	Colleen Redmond	F/M
0	Jessica Rheinlander	GK
5	Erin Squires	D/M
2	Megan Strand	M/D
20	Alexa Tarbona	F/M
21	Joselyn Wall	M
15	Celine Ziobro	D

By State

Virginia-11
Connecticut, Indiana, North Carolina, Texas,
Nevada, California- 1

By Class

Freshmen (Rats)- 5
Sophomores (Third Classmen)- 4
Juniors (Second Classmen)- 6
Seniors (First Classmen)- 2

By Position (Listed Multiple Times)

Forwards- 4
Midfielders- 15
Defenders- 11
Goalkeepers- 2

Pronunciation Guide

Rheinlander- RHINE-land-er

Alix- A-lix

Raevon- RAY-von

Bichara- buh-CARE-a

Berrios- BEAR-ree-ohs

Ziobro- zee-AH-bro

Bernas- BURN-us

Tarbona- tar-BONE-ah