

# THE NEW JERSEY SOCCER GROUP

## Press Release

Pride Leads to Select's Fall in Maryland  
Columbia, MD—June 5th, 2010



Despite a particularly strong second-half performance by the Jersey Select, the visiting squad was unable to overturn a two-goal deficit against TSC Maryland Pride, as the latter sealed all three points in Columbia.

Aiming to make amends for their defeat to the Magic during the week at Burlington County College, the Select were up against strong opposition who quickly forced them onto the back foot through a number of impressive advances, resulting in no fewer than 13 shots in the first half for the home team. The first chances fell to Brittane Gourdine, whose lightning pace proved to be instrumental in the opening ten minutes. Testing Select and US U20s keeper Sara Keane, her acrobatic leaps were able to push many shots away from danger.

Meanwhile, Mount St Mary forward Karyn Farrar also moved the ball forward, though strong defending from Loyola's Gianna Garfall managed to contain these. Veronica Rhea (right), the Rowan forward, carried on her tradition of fighting hard to pressure the opposing goalkeeper, though Pride and Towson keeper Jocelyn Papciak dealt with the challenges well.

First blood would soon go to the Pride. Anabel Jimenez fired home from the right-hand side after an inspired pass by Amy O'Sullivan on the far left. Selfless work from Gourdine, who peeled away from the pack in the center of goalmouth, saw the forward step over the cross even though she could have had a great opportunity to convert. Following this work up with turn-and-shoot chances, Gourdine was later routed by the Select's Garfall and Brenna Rubino, who focused well to bring about good clearances.

Emily Hansinger, one of the Select's younger players fresh from Real NJ Power, kept a close watch of Gourdine, forcing the striker to shoot from distance. One chance came from a right-footed strike, bringing about another dive from Keane to pick the ball out of the air. Hansinger remained on hand to feed the ball back to the keeper and block Keane as she cleared, alleviating pressure on the Select.

Before the half-time whistle went, the Select's best chance of the first 45 minutes came when Rowan's Linda Sierra had her shot cleared off the line. A free kick handed the visitors yet another opportunity to capitalize for an equalizer, and while it was not converted, the Pride were given a reminder to remain on guard for swift counters.

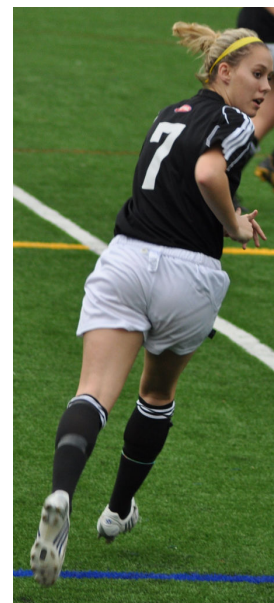
"We knew that we needed to change the strategy to make the most of our chances," said co-head coach Erwin van Bennekom. "We knew we had more to offer. We just had to consider the best way to apply it, so we changed our formation."

The Pride were again quick to assert their style of play against the reinvigorated 3-4-3 formation of the Select. However, Erika Theisen, the Maryland defensive midfielder, found space in the forward third of the field to slot home a goal into the bottom-right. 2-0 down, the Select continued to hold their heads high and soldier on, looking for the goal needed to get them back in the game.

Florida Gator Natalia Torosian upped the ante for the Select with a blistering shot that forced the Pride to clear quickly, while Veronica Rhea used an excellent piece of skill to turn the ball around defenders with her left foot before unleashing a thunderous shot on target with her right. Karyn Farrar continued to bother Keane with more powerful speculative kicks, though the keeper continued to prove her US Soccer heritage with punched clearances that removed the possibility of a rebound.

Urgency from players was reflected on the flanks and Shannon Westhead, another Real NJ Power member, galloped up the right to force clearances and hand the Select a number of throw-ins in the attacking third. Despite more challenging drives from the Pride's Sara Tankard and Christen Karniski, the Select would get the breakthrough they deserved as a handball in the box gifted Rhea with a penalty, which she fired into the left of the goal, just beating Papciak.

Hansinger and Westhead continued to bother the home defense, while a forced corner nearly saw a second goal for the Select through Nicolette De Laurentis, turned over the bar by the keeper.



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Gourdine tested Keane once more before a defense-to-defense game closed the tie, as midfield battles dominated the last ten minutes, denying the Select of a second goal to equal the scores.

Speaking after the game, van Bennekom said: “The Pride were great at keeping hold of possession, though we challenged them more in the second half as our formation responded to their threats. We showed a lot of energy on the field and stepped it up after the goal in particular.”

van Bennekom continued: “From a defensive standpoint, we were covering angles a lot better than we did earlier in the week and the mid-field kept hold of the ball well. While we’re going to work on going forward during the next few days to improve our attacking game a little more, we’re going in the right direction and the tenacity we showed is good for the team.”

Emphasising the age diversity on the squad, he concluded: “The younger girls complemented the older players extremely well. Sara Keane kept us in the game many times with numerous great saves and Veronica was an asset up front, though we played as a unit throughout and everyone deserves credit for their performance tonight.

“We ended the game in the way we wanted to play and we’ll be ready for our next game against Philadelphia Independence on Tuesday following some good training sessions prior to the match.”

Meanwhile, Steve Knapman, the head coach of the Pride, was happy with the result. “While the Select were a solid team, we seized on our chances early through some experienced players and we dictated the opening plays. Our centre-back Megan Watson, alongside central midfielder Amy O’Sullivan, allowed us to press forward and back-up attacks through the middle as we weren’t looking to use the wide game so much.”

Commenting on the Select’s style of play, he added: “Changing their tactics to put three up front confused our team and stopped us playing as well at the back of the field. It forced us to make a couple of mistakes and kept the game close for the Jersey girls.

“They’ve taught us a lot tonight and we’ll move forward from this game with more confidence. We have to learn to stick with what works for us and not get too flustered by any changes put forward by our opponents.”

The [Jersey Select](#) are members of the [Women’s Premier Soccer League](#), the highest level of women’s amateur soccer in the United States. They are part of the [New Jersey Soccer Group](#), a management company for a family of soccer based organizations offering a full range of soccer services in New Jersey.