

May 22, 2008

NORTHRIDGE, Calif. - Cal State Northridge women' soccer head coach **Keith West** announced the signing of eight high school seniors to National Letters of Intent to play their collegiate soccer for the Matadors. According to West, Nicole Cruz, Emily Geckle, Christina Herrera, Marie Hirsch, Marissa Miller, Katie Russ, Brielle Slepicoff and Sinead Vaughan represent a recruiting class capable of making an immediate impact while improving the depth of the program.

"I am extremely excited about the quality of players we have coming in for the 2008 season," said West. "All of these girls are very talented and athletically gifted and I am eager to mesh their abilities with our returning players."

Cruz and Geckle arrive at Northridge after enjoying successful four-year careers at Thousand Oaks High School, including a runner-up finish at the CIF Division I Southern California Soccer Championships in 2008. Both also played for the Camarillo Eagles and West expects both of them to make an immediate impact with the Matadors.

Cruz was a standout sweeper for the Lancers and added three goals and seven assists in her senior season. She was honored as the Division II Defensive Player of the Year and was a first-team All-Marmonte League choice. Geckle made the AILA84 Division II First Team and had a goal and an assist in her senior season as the Lancers finished 21-5-2.

"Nicole Cruz is a versatile player who is capable of playing anywhere on the pitch, and she is capable of making an immediate impact in 2008" said West. "Emily Geckle is a hard-working, tough-minded defender who I believe should compete for time in her freshman season right away."

Herrera is a goal keeper and comes to Northridge after a successful four-year career at Pasadena High School. She earned All-Pacific League Honors in 2006 and 2007 and was a member of the 2005 league champions. West believes she is capable of competing with the current crop of Matador goalies for playing time in 2007-08.

"Christine has tremendous talent and ability," West added. "She definitely could see the field in her freshman season and greatly

improves our goaltending depth for the future."

Katie Russ and Brielle Slepicoff all come to Cal State Northridge after competing for the Real SoCal Soccer Club, while Marie Hirsch joins the Matadors after competing for the Conejo Valley United Club.

Hirsch spent her high school career at Notre Dame High School, and is another defender West is adding to the Northridge back line. She is a four-year varsity starter and was honored as an All-Mission League first-team selection last season.

Russ hails from Canyon High School, was a captain in 2008 and earned an All-Foothill League Honorable Mention in 2007. Slepicoff comes to Northridge from Saugus HS and will be counted upon for her skill and speed in the midfield. She was named an All-Foothill League Player in 2008 and 2007 and was an All-L84 DII First Team Selection in 2008.

"Marie Hirsch is a great athlete whose power and strength and will immediately make her a strong candidate for playing time," West said. "Katie Russ is a big, physical defender who will shore up our defense from the center back position. Brielle Slepicoff is a fast and athletic player who has tremendous technical abilities and provides us with depth on the outside.

Marissa Miller was a four-year starter for Righetti High School and was a First Team Pac17 member in 2006 and earned Second Team Honors following her senior season. She racked up four goals and 16 assists her junior season and scored three goals and had six assists in 2007.

"I see Marissa playing in the midfield for us," West said. "She is a gifted, technical soccer player who will improve our depth because she is an offensive threat."

Sinead Vaughan prepped at Royal High School and was an All-Marmonte League First Team selection in 2008. She also brings some speed to the pitch, having participated in track at Royal also. Like Emily Geckle and Nicole Cruz, Vaughan was a member of the Camarillo Eagles.

"Sinead is a quick, gifted player who I believe could contribute minutes to the Matadors in the midfield in her freshman season," West said.

The Matadors and West open the 2008 season on Aug. 22 when they host San Diego State at the Matador Soccer Field. Kickoff is slated for 4:30 p.m.