

Maddy Williams – Commitment Leads to Success

By Mike Aubry

Maddy Williams is a Perrysburg, Ohio native who spent a large portion of her career at GTFC. Maddy joined the club as a U13 player and played through her senior year as a U18 including two years of Fall Club before heading off to Purdue University where she continues to perplex Big Ten defenses with her amazing attacking play and uncanny ability around the goal. As a freshman Maddy tied a school record with 10 goals and this season, as a junior she already has 5 goals and an assist in the first 4 games.

Throughout the years I have had the fortune to coach a lot of talented players. I've had former players at all levels of college soccer, playing professionally in Europe and even in the NWSL. I've coached some truly great forwards but I've never coached a single kid with the talent to create goals like Maddy. Her ability to completely destroy defenses is truly innate.

It's been a few years since I've coached Maddy but she has stayed in touch as she continues her career as a Boilermaker whether it's for a little advice, to talk about the women's national team or just to talk about how the season is going. As with a lot of our alumni, Maddy remains connected to her club and her club continues to share their pride in her at every opportunity.

A week or so ago we were discussing her preseason goal scoring streak and her new coach and I seized the opportunity to do a little impromptu interview. One of the things that I always admired about Maddy was the sacrifices she made to get where she is today. We discussed those sacrifices, her regrets and a few other things in the interview below.

Mike Aubry (MA): How do you feel about doing a little interview for an article for the club? Just a quick question and answer before you get back to the books.

Maddy Williams (MW): What could you ask me about my career that you don't already know?
Haha..sure ask away.

MA: Ok, let's start easy. When you were playing for the club I remember you were obsessed with those Reeses Eggs at Easter. What's your guilty pleasure now?

MW: Well I try to eat a lot healthier now than I did back then. However, if I get to choose a snack it's definitely Hot Cheetos!

MA: I remember we were playing an MRL game in Ft. Wayne for the league championship against some Illinois team. We were winning 4-3 and you had the 4 goals. The keeper was screaming at her defense to just force you to your left because you couldn't shoot with your left and in the middle of this you cut to your left and buried goal number 5 from 30 yards out. She just stopped mid word and dug the ball out of the back of the net. What's your favorite GTFC memory?

MW: Tough question. My favorite finish was probably when we gave up a goal to the Hawks late in a game to go down by one in Wixom and I took the kickoff through everyone and scored to tie it up.

My favorite game hands down was state cup when I was a junior. We had that huge rivalry game against Pacesetter after a bunch of our team had gone there to play and we hated each other. We destroyed them 4-1 in front of a huge crowd at Pacesetter Park. That was so much fun.

My favorite non-soccer memory was when Aubrie Kreft's cat died and we bought her a kitten to cheer her up. I played with the kitten the entire time Aubrie was practicing!

MA: Wow those are some good ones! I did love that Pacesetter game though. Ok, so when you were with the club you were kind of a crazy person about training. You would train with older teams in the club on your days off, you got up in the morning before school to work out at the Y and every day after school you were down at Rivercrest shooting with a bag of balls. You made a lot of sacrifices, missed dances, missed vacations and probably missed a ton of other social stuff. Do you have any regrets?

MW: You would think I would have regrets on those sacrifices I made, but I have absolutely 0. It may not have seemed like it at the time, but I told myself one day I would be doing things others wouldn't be able to because of all the hard work I put in when no one was watching. I worked out before school every day, alternating between lifting and cardio. Then I took cones to the park and did agility every morning, and followed that with foot skills or kicking the ball against the river crest park wall to work on my first touch. Every single morning I did that. Then I still had practice at night, and many times I would go for runs after practice. I am not one to brag and you know that, but one major reason why I am enjoying college soccer so much and why I even was granted the wonderful opportunity to play at a school like Purdue in the Big Ten is because I put in work that no one else did when I was in high school. So no, I have no regrets. So far I have started every game I have played in since I got to Purdue, and I like to think I earned it by my hard work before coming here.

MA: I have no doubt you are where you are because of those sacrifices. We have lots of talented kids come through the club but a lot of them don't accomplish all that they could because a lot of that stuff is hard to say no to. I'm glad to be able to share this with the club more than the rest of this interview. I think it's important for the youngsters to hear an accomplished player like yourself talk about the path to success.

MW: It's true. I wouldn't change anything.

MA: So the club is a lot bigger than it was back in the day. I attribute a lot of this growth to the great success the alumni like yourself have had. Little girls want to play at the club that Maddy Williams played at. Do you feel any pressure knowing that?

MW: Haha maybe just a little pressure. Seriously though I didn't realize how important hard work was until I came to GTFC and played for you. Yes, there were days (A LOT OF DAYS) where I hated you but I realize now that I'm older and wiser that, I had bad habits and that you knew they had to be broken for me to succeed. You pushed me almost to my breaking point a lot but I was so much better of a player because of that. I also am a much better person off the field thanks to the club and you. I hope all the little girls realize how great they have it and don't fight you quite as much as I did!

MA: Haha, kind words, thank you! I'm not sure that will make the article though. A little too nice. Ok, I'm dying to ask. How are you dealing with One Direction taking a break? Devastated?

MW: HAHA I am not a 1D follower but my best friend and roommate is, and when I walked in the house the other day I walked into her room and she was sobbing on her bed, crying hysterically because 1D is breaking up.

MA: Ok, last two questions and then I'll let you go. First, tell me about your game day ritual.

MW: My game day ritual depends on whether we are home or away. But, I will always wake up and have team breakfast. Then about an hour and a half before game time I will have half my head cornrowed by one of the keepers on my team. Right before warm up I will listen to the Nike rise and shine video on you tube that gets me in the right mind set before every game. If we are away I will listen to my music and picture myself finishing my chances and finish with the same Nike rise and shine video. We have a team chat an hour before game time, and then we warm up with 50 minutes left. From there on out it's all about getting my body warm and ready to go and getting focused on the task at hand.

MA: Interesting. I'll have to watch that video now. Ok, so last question. If I know you at all I know you have plans beyond Purdue. Want to share any of your goals?

MW: I never really liked to talk about my goals because I think part of me never truly believed I could achieve them, and I didn't want people to know them so they never had to see me fail. But ever since we got a new coach, he brought up playing after college to me first, and that made me feel much more confident in my abilities. My goal is to get drafted once I am done playing college ball, and to play in the NWSL. My biggest goal is to play for the USWNT one day. Hopefully before my college career is even over, but if not then definitely once I join the NWSL. It's an exciting time to be playing.

MA: Great stuff Maddy! As always I'm super proud of you. I love that you're a great student and a great role model. I'm bringing a carload to your next home game. Hat trick please! Any final words of advice to the girls in the club?

MW: Thank you so much. I appreciate it! Advice...? If I had to pass on any advice it would be to never give up on your dreams. My first two years of college I doubted myself and had no confidence, and now that I have finally relaxed and believed in myself, I am playing the best soccer I have ever played. Believe in yourself. I have set a few records at Purdue and if I keep it up these next two years I should be the forward with the most goals scored to ever have come through Purdue. It's all about confidence and believing in yourself. Once I started to believe in myself and my abilities everyone else saw in me, I became a different player. Plus, I am enjoying the game much more. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF. Believe that one lone voice in your head that says you can run a little faster or try a little harder when 100 other voices are telling you that you can't. Work hard, both in soccer and in life. Something I am known for here at Purdue is being a good person, student, and leader. Not just for my play.

MA: Great advice Madison. Thanks again for the time. I really appreciate it and I think there is a lot in here to guide the youth of the club.

MW: I hope so! See you at the game!

