



INTERVIEW: USWNT DEFENDER TIERNA DAVIDSON SHOWING AGE IS ONLY A NUMBER

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The last few months of Tierna Davidson's career have been a whirlwind journey. Only a few months ago, she guided Stanford to one of the best defensive records in the NCAA and hoisted the College Cup.

Now, three appearances into her United States National Team career, she has already been tasked with marking some of the most dangerous attacking players in the world in Nadia Nadim, Dzenifer Marozsan and Eugenie Le Sommer. But the 19-year old center back has handled the challenges and opportunity and taken them in her stride.

"It's definitely been a big task [playing in these matches] but nothing that I can't take on," said Davidson. "I've been training with this team for a few camps now, so I'm getting comfortable with the girls and the assignments that



are given to me. So anything that Jill [Ellis] gives me or another teammate gives me, I'll do the best I can with it.”

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With injuries hampering the current state of the US back line, Davidson earned her third senior team camp call up this past January, prior to their match against Denmark in San Diego. She had already been training with the Under-20's prior to competing at the CONCACAF Under-20 Women's World Cup qualification tournament in Trinidad & Tobago, but due to her performance in previous senior camps and the U-20 camp, USA Head Coach Jill Ellis brought her in to see what she could bring to the unit.

After three consecutive quality appearances, Ellis had nothing but high praise for the Cardinal defender after the US drew 1-1 with France on Sunday at the SheBelieves Cup.

“Her timing to come across from the weak side and snuff out chances inside the box, her aerial presence, her composure on the ball, I think she is a very solid player and her end point is going to be very high,” said Ellis.

“Already I like where she is, she's got a left foot from the left side and I think Tierna was very good today, with a lot to deal with.”

With Becky Sauerbrunn missing the SheBelieves Cup due to injury, Davidson paired up with Abby Dahlkemper as the last line of defense in front of Alyssa Naeher in goal. Despite having only limited time to build a partnership that

would be effective on the field, the two have looked as close to being in sync as possible.

“Our partnership has definitely grown a lot. As two center backs, you have to be close with your other center back as well as your goalkeeper and your outside back and I think it’s grown a lot. There’s definitely still room to grow, since we have only played together for a couple of games, but I definitely think there is a real partnership there that is forming. We are getting our communication down, where exactly each other wants the ball, where we want players in between us and where we are comfortable with, so I think it’s growing.”

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There is also a wealth of support that she has felt since joining the team back in January. And with having a steady amount of familiar faces to help her along, that has made the process easier.

It also helps having the opportunity to play at the National Team level with someone that you have been teammates with at the college level for the last two seasons. And with having the chance to pick the brain of someone like Andi Sullivan to help with the transition, that can only benefit someone like Davidson even more.

“[Andi] has definitely helped me both on and off the field. Back in college, she was a great calming presence for not only me but for the entire team. So it’s definitely good to have a familiar face on the field with me to know how I can and she can play off of that. And off the field with getting to know the players, she has helped me with that as well. And if I ever have a bad practice, she’s like ‘hey, pick your head up, don’t worry about it.’”

There is no doubt that it can be a daunting task for any new player at the international stage to be thrown into the line of fire like Davidson has, but the one thing that has kept her calm under the pressure is the belief in herself after stringing together good performances. She stated that “if you can play against some of the best players and teams in the world, like the US has done recently, then you can play against anyone out there.”

She’s more than just played against some of the best teams in the world. She’s rose to the opportunity and shined on big stage, perhaps planting a seed into the back of Ellis’ mind that she could be on the roster for World Cup qualifying later this year.

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