

Malorie Harris and Holy Cross hoping to make history on home soil

Holy Cross Avalon Ford is looking forward to the chance to play a national tournament at home in front of friends and family. For some, the honour of representing the province might be enough to be satisfied at the end of the tournament. For this Holy Cross team, expectations for nationals are clearly higher than just participating according to some of their senior players.

“Gold is definitely what we’re aiming for,” said veteran player Paula Whitten after a recent training session. “Having come so close last year, it was in our reach and so we know we’ve got a chance this year and we’re certainly aiming for first.”

The last time St. John’s hosted the tournament in 2016, Holy Cross was a much younger, more inexperienced squad at the national level than this 2019 edition. Having finished 3rd and 4th in 2017 and 2018 respectively, the Crusaders believe they’ve made important strides on the field in the past three years, while also making key additions to the team since their last nationals at home.

“I definitely do think our own experience has helped, but we have also picked up a few extra players that are going to be a big benefit for us such as Mal (Malorie Harris), and some additional senior players whose experience, I think, will also help us in the long run,” said Whitten.

Malorie Harris or “Mal” as her teammates call her, is a relatively new addition to the squad and brings added firepower to an already potent side. Having previously played at the national level with Kirby United, Harris already admired what Cross has accomplished and hopes she can help the team improve even more.

“In joining this Holy Cross team from Kirby, I’m hoping my experience can add just that tiny bit more, to get us that tiny bit closer to gold,” said Harris. Like Whitten, Harris is quite clear on what the team’s goal is for 2019. “No question even there: a gold medal for sure,” Harris said.

With 29 goals in her nationals career, Harris is just two shy of the all-time record at the competition. While the focus remains, first and foremost, on winning the tournament, she hopes achieving her personal goals might help the whole group as a result.

“The focus is on team success, but obviously I have my own individual goals as well. I’ve always been a team player and that will always be my No.1 priority... thinking about the record is just more pressure so I’m going to focus on the team success and moving the ball around,” said Harris. But, if I happen to be at the right place at the right time and I finish it then great.”

For Harris and Holy Cross, the ambitions for first are sincere. While the core of the team remains relatively young, Harris is viewing 2019 as her last kick at the can for both a national title and the scoring record: "I'm saying this is my last shot at this, Paula (Whitten) is saying this is hers as well, so if we don't get gold we are going to be devastated."

Holy Cross begins their quest for Gold at KGV on October 9th at 3:30 versus Edmonton Northwest United. The remaining round-robin schedule is as follows:

October 10th, 4:30 pm vs. Feildians (NL2) @ Topsail Field

October 12th, 12:00 pm vs. Scarborough (ON) @ Smallwood Turf