

# Charge tries youth movement

BY DEAN CAPARAZ

**M**ark Krikorian is building with youth.

Not including players chosen through local tryouts, his Philadelphia Charge has the most recent collegians on its roster. Of those players, eight finished their college careers last fall and eight finished the year before.

Only the Carolina Courage has as many 2000 collegians.

The Charge has its share of vets, including 29-year-old goalkeeper Saskia Webber and 33-year-old Chinese midfielder Liu Ailing.

The Charge's nucleus is young. Krikorian started out with U.S. midfielder Lorrie Fair and former Santa Clara star Mandy Clemens, both 22, as two of three U.S. allocations. Webber was the



third. He also drafted England striker Kelly Smith, 22, along with German defender Doris Fitschen, 32, in the foreign draft.

Fair's, Clemens' and Smith's college careers ended in 1999.

**CONDITIONING VS. MATURITY.** "The philosophy we chose was that these players are the ones that are among the best-conditioned players," Krikorian said. "Most all of them come out of very 'professional' college situations, whether playing at Nebraska or North Carolina or Florida or wherever it might've been. They had full strength and conditioning programs, were well-coached and very well-disciplined."

"Our goal is to come out and compete and be a damn good team, and I think we will be. By drafting these younger players, it might take a little bit of time to put them together. We do have a good nucleus of players who will have a bit of experience and be the anchors of team."

"It's shortsighted to say, 'We have all these experienced players, we'll be very good this year.' In a year or two, some of those players will be retired."

Krikorian, the former University of Hartford coach, may have been more inclined to draft recent collegians than most of his colleagues. The same might be true of Marcia McDermott, who left Northwestern to coach the Courage.

"The coaches' picks reflected their pools of previous knowledge," Atlanta Beat coach Tom Stone said. "I was very familiar with the veteran pool due to my exposure to the U.S. national team and the W-League. ... With Philly, I think their picks reflected Mark's pool of previous knowledge."



**CHEMISTRY.** Fair, who won three NCAA championships at North Carolina, has already won a World Cup and an Olympic silver medal in her short U.S. career. Clemens won the 1999 Hermann Trophy and MAC Award over Fair and Smith.

While Clemens is a creative player who could play up front or in midfield, Smith is the better goalscorer. The Seton Hall graduate is the NCAA's all-time leader in points per game (3.41) and goals per game (1.49).

Philadelphia's eight 2000 collegians are Stanford goalkeeper Carly Smolak, North Carolina midfielders Raven McDonald and Laurie Schwoy and defender Kalli Kamholz, Nebraska defender Jenny Benson, Cal Poly Pomona forward Ruth Van't Land-Parkes, Boston University forward Deidre Enos and Mississippi midfielder Jennifer Soileau.

"Off the field, we'll have a really fun team and get along great," Fair said. "It's beneficial that we're not all spread over the age range."

*(Dean Caparaz is an associate editor at Soccer America)*

Finding players with post-collegiate experience wasn't as important to Mark Krikorian as finding players with talent. As a result, the Philadelphia coach has the most recent collegians on his roster.

**Twenty-somethings Lorrie Fair and Mandy Clemens (above) are a big part of a young nucleus in Philadelphia.**

**Charge striker Kelly Smith (left) scored 76 goals in three seasons at Seton Hall.**



SETON HALL