

Upper Perk Grads Playing in Women's Professional Football League

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The Upper Perkiomen High School athletics program has been the birthplace of numerous successful student-athletes. Many of these athletes have gone on to play their respective sports at the collegiate level, but very few have made it to the professionals.

When it comes to the largely male-dominated sport of football, none of Upper Perk's female population had gone on to play in college, let alone become professionals. Until now that is. Since its 2009 inaugural season, three Upper Perk graduates have been showing the Legends Football League, formally the Lingerie Football League, that women can play football, too.

Adopting the league's slogan, "Women of the Gridiron," Saige Steinmetz (Class of 2007), Sammi Nevin (Class of 2009) and Tiffany Sullivan (Class of 2012) have all successfully tried out for and made teams within the LFL. Steinmetz and Nevin reside in Florida playing together for the Jacksonville Breeze (formally the Tampa Breeze), while Sullivan represents the more local Philadelphia Passion.

"I feel honored to play for the best team in the Eastern Conference. Out of the hundreds of girls that tried out, I was chosen. It's a great feeling," said Sullivan, the Passion's cornerback.

During their high school years, Steinmetz and Nevin were soccer standouts for the Tribe. Nevin played a crucial role in the Tribe's 2008 PAC-10 championship, and after an outstanding career with the Tribe, Steinmetz continued to play soccer and softball at the Community College of Baltimore County in Catonsville, Md., and soccer for the University of Tampa. Steinmetz also played basketball at UP.

"Being a three sport athlete at Upper Perk made me who I am today as an athlete. It opened up the doors for me to be able to play, not only one but, two sports in college," Steinmetz, who plays both running back and left defensive end for the Breeze, said. "Being an all-around athlete at Upper Perk helps me during every game on the football field."

Sullivan also excelled in athletics during her high school years. She participated in lacrosse and was the only female member of the football team her junior year.

Different from the average high school football game, which consists of 11 players versus 11 players, the LFL is a 7-on-7 tackle American football league, closer to what other indoor arena football teams are like. There are also no field goals or punts, only a kick off to start the game and the second half, and teams must attempt a first down after every fourth down.

"The LFL has put me in the best shape of my life. My coach, Yo Murphy, owns the Performance Compound in Tampa, and takes really good care of us. I am very thankful to be working with the best trainers and nutritionists in Southwest Florida," said Nevin, who fills the position of either tight end or outside linebacker for the Breeze.

Although LFL games used to be played during the traditional fall football season, as of this year, the league now holds its games in the spring and summer months. This is in an attempt to expand the league's popularity and success.

While the Jacksonville Breeze has ended its 2013 season, the Passion will play its final game against the Cleveland Crush on Saturday, July 27, at 8 p.m. The game can be viewed online at www.YouTube.com/MyLFL.