

Lafayette Leopards Field Hockey Team Records Two-win Weekend

By Grace Sanborn, Lafayette Sports Editor

The field hockey team (2-1 Patriot League, 7-4 overall) secured back-to-back wins last weekend, earning a 2-0 shutout victory at Bucknell University (2-1 Patriot League, 5-6 overall) on Friday, then gutting out a 2-1 non-conference win against Providence College (5-7 overall) at home on Sunday.

Coming off two straight losses, the Leopards were looking to get their season back on track this weekend, starting against Patriot League opponent Bucknell on Friday night.

After a scoreless first half, sophomore defender Katie Gibb scored for the Maroon and White off a penalty corner with under three minutes to play in the quarter. Gibb cleaned up the goal after two shots from sophomore defender Lena Thedrian and junior midfielder Josephine van Wijk were deflected.

Despite leading the Leopards in shots and shots on goal, van Wijk has yet to tally a goal this season.

“I have to get a little bit quicker in the circle, a little bit relaxed for big changes to come,” van Wijk said.

“I’m confident that they will grow,” she added about her goal numbers.

Senior forward Alex Darrah added an insurance goal for the Leopards in the fourth quarter off a reset from another penalty corner. Despite a few Bucknell penalty corner-scoring opportunities in the closing minutes, the Maroon and White held on for the shutout.

The Leopards returned home to Rappolt Field on Sunday afternoon to face out-of-conference opponent Providence.

The Maroon and White controlled the momentum in the first half, forcing eight saves from the Providence goalkeeper and rarely allowing the Friars opportunities to go on the attack.

“Defense is the best attack,” Darrah said. “Being able to press hard and press heavy, and then come up with good balls and automatically threaten forward, is something that we’ve been working on and something that really works for our team.”



Senior forward Lineke Spaans battles with several Providence defenders for the ball in Sunday’s home win. (Photo by Hannah Ally for GoLeopards)

Small Business Spotlight: ‘Not Your Garden Variety Botanical Store’

The Banana Tree To Branch Out, Change Hands

By Allison Stein, Lafayette Staff Writer

The Banana Tree seeks to welcome all plant lovers, regardless of plant experience.

Photo by Austin Carey for The Lafayette

The Banana Tree seeks to welcome all plant lovers, regardless of plant experience.

The Banana Tree, a botanical shop in Easton’s West Ward that specializes in tropical plants, is expanding, blossoming and will soon be seeing a new owner.

As tropical plants become commonplace at brand-name stores like Aldi, incoming owner Karen Waters wants to be sure The Banana Tree can branch out and offer unique options, like coffee plants, monkey puzzles and miniature pomegranates.

A College Hill resident, Waters will soon buy the shop from current owner and friend Fred Saleet, who opened The Banana Tree 60 years ago.

Waters met Saleet through his wife, Lori Kolb, because they both walk their dogs near Lafayette College.

“Late last year, we started talking about, ‘What are you doing with the business and the building?’” Waters said. “It just evolved. It’s become more than a business transaction.”

Waters believes that she brought to the table a “passion for plants.”

“Other people were interested in the building, not so much the business,” Waters said. “I didn’t take it lightly.”

As she guides the business forward, Waters said she hopes to “pay homage” to Saleet’s “global seed and plant emporium,” growing the mission of The Banana Tree alongside the store itself.

She is also translating her years of experience in advertising into a business plan. She established The Banana Tree’s Instagram and is collaborating with other local businesses. She held a pop-up at Spectracolor Coffee Roasters in July and a pop-up at Mojo’s last Friday.

“We get it up and running to be like The Banana Tree 2.0, which will be certainly plants, but more of a community center, where we’ll do classes all rooted in botanically-rooted subject matter,” Waters said. “I’d love to also have it be a place that other businesses can incubate.”

Waters also seeks to emphasize the importance of personal wellness with her work.

Five years ago, she was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes, challenging her to think about her fulfillment and ways she could “give back” and “be a bigger contributor.”

“Your cortisol levels when you’re around plants are lowered,” Waters said. “When you think about well-being, it’s eating healthy, it’s exercising, but then it’s having those moments and havi□

“I want it to be a place that everybody can feel comfortable and that we have price points that are accessible,” she continued. “We’ve had lawyers come in to buy for their offices or students buying for their dorm.”

Those who feel they lack a “green thumb” are still plenty welcome at The Banana Tree, where hours are largely by appointment for the time being.

“Get plants even if you’re afraid to kill them,” said Melanie Acosta ‘25, a Lafayette student who helped arrange a The Banana Tree pop-up at Mojo 516 Café. “You can talk to Karen or me about plant care and she would be more than happy to give advice.”

Acosta worked alongside Waters and Francine Galanos, the manager of Mojo, to bring the pop-up to life.

