

**SCHNEIDER,
CONTINUED**

Schneider adapted to the busy life of working as a professional both on and off the pitch.

"It takes a lot out of you," Schneider said. "I was working a full time job when I first got there and then going to practice during the night and then games on the weekends. It's really tiring. I've moved to part time and I'm getting paid a little more for soccer now so that has helped out. So I'm able to focus on fitness and my game a little bit more. Men are just able to play soccer all day and get better and continue to grow and work out. They don't really have to worry about doing anything else. We have to have something to take care of ourselves, so it's hard."

In the women's game today, pay gaps and variances in wages between men's and women's soccer is a hot topic. How the women's game moves forward in terms of building leagues and clubs is also a discussion in today's game.

"When proper resources are put into (women's soccer), it's profitable," Dooley said. "So you look at the women's World Cup, at the highest level, to the point that FIFA was even throwing the idea of trying to have the women's World Cup every two years, which is ridiculous. But, someone's realized we can make money. So, that's always going to drive the development of the sport: how can the big people make money? How can the sponsors get their moneys' worth? That's been proven at the highest level. In turn, has that filtered down to where it should to where the women's players are compensated properly? Absolutely not."

This variance in pay and the arguments along with it are evident on the highest level of women's soccer as seen in the US women's national team's ongoing fight in an equal pay



Image Courtesy of Taylor Schneider | A dominant force Taylor Schneider challenges a Coastal Carolina Chanticleer for a ball in the air during an A-State match at home. Julianna Coates, a friend of Schneider on and off the pitch, looks on in the background.

lawsuit with the US Soccer Federation. However, talks about pay and resources in women's professional leagues like the National Women's Soccer League in the US are also conversations starting to pop up around the country.

"I think collectively the game has more popularity," Dooley said. "The women's national team is an event. The NWSL is not, except maybe in Portland where they average almost 17,000 people to a game. I think Utah has a pretty good attendance as well. North Carolina, who has won the league the last two years in a row, is still growing. If people put resources in, it'll continue to improve. And if it continues to improve, those resources will eventually filter to the players."

Although working a job and playing professionally is tough, Schneider said living in

Melbourne is amazing. Living in Melbourne also meant being closer to places Schneider had always wanted to travel.

"I love this city," Schneider said. "Ever since I first got here it has felt like home. It's just very different than what I'm used to but I think it's also why I love it. There's a lot more cultures and they're more forward thinking. A lot of the companies or people here think outside the box. They're open pretty much to anything. It's one of those cities you go to and you have the vibe you can be whoever you want to be and you're accepted for it."

Schneider works for Tennis Australia and got the opportunity to work at

the Australian Open as she furthered her professional career off the pitch.

"Outside of playing soccer, I've always wanted to work in sports," Schneider said. "(Tennis Australia) basically puts on the Australian Open and I got to work the entire tournament. We're hosting people and hosting clients. I'm in the sales team so we do corporate hospitality for the Australian Open. It's been exciting and I've learned so much. The Australian Open is obviously so huge and amazing and it takes over Melbourne. It's just part of living in Melbourne and being Australian."

Back on the pitch, Schneider had to adapt to a position change. The collegiate defensive

midfielder spent a lot of time at center back in her first year as a professional. In today's game players are more flexible and excelling at one position then moving to another is not necessarily uncommon. USWNT player Crystal Dunn excelled as a forward and midfielder early in her career and then went on to be a star left-back for the USWNT.

Olivia Smith illustrated flexibility in the Red Wolves' 2019 season as the junior mainly played left-back and right-back, but she also contributed in the midfield and at forward.

"I think in Taylor's case moving to the professional level it didn't surprise me they could see her playing as a center back because of her dominance in the air and her ability to distribute," Dooley said. "Those are skills that are necessary there. As a player, certainly when you go

into a new environment, you want to get on the field as fast as you can. Your skill set based on the system of the team might allow you to play other roles."

The A-State soccer team competed in an outstanding 2019 season as the Red Wolves finished third in the Sun Belt Conference and played in the championship game of the SBC Tournament. The Red Wolves can also boast the fact the program has produced a professional player.

"Taylor is a unique individual because she had aspirations to play at the next level even before she came here," Dooley said. "I think what it does for A-State soccer is it shows we're a viable path for people that have those same goals."

Coates said she also sees herself as a professional soccer player after her time at A-State. Much like Schneider, any Red Wolf looking to the pros after college might not land first in the NWSL, but instead somewhere overseas. Countries like Australia, Finland, Japan, Sweden, Germany, Iceland and England all provide potential opportunities for future pro Red Wolves.

Hannah Godfrey, a former SBC and South Alabama standout, currently plays for Tottenham in the FA Women's Super League in England.

Schneider said she does not exactly know where her soccer career is heading next. She plans to see how this season goes with Heidelberg United and if she progresses soccerwise, a move to another league in Australia or even Europe could be on the cards. One thing is for certain, Schneider has an intense passion for the game and the former Red Wolf's engine will not be running out anytime soon.

"Ideally, I'll be playing soccer until my legs fall off."

"Ever since I first got here it has felt like home" -Schneider

**DEAN,
CONTINUED**

"Because we are reconstituting the graduate school, for my first year I won't be teaching," Jones-Branch said. "I'll still be a tenured history professor. For this first year all of my energies really need to go into talking to different graduate programs, talking to graduate students and also meeting with graduate deans both on campus and graduate deans across the state and even the country. So there's got to be a lot of time that goes into that."

Jones-Branch has experience in Graduate School matters already, just on a smaller scale.

"I reached a place where when the discussions about

reconstituting the Graduate School began, I realized increasingly that this was something I could do and in many ways I was doing it on a much smaller scale anyway," Jones-Branch said. "I've sat on these committees, I've chaired these committees, and dissertation committees. I've written tons of letters of recommendations for people to go to graduate school. I've got former students in some really good programs."

Jones-Branch emphasized A-State students can succeed in graduate programs both on campus and anywhere else.

"That's one of the things

that's so important about doing this kind of job at Arkansas State University, is helping students who come from underrepresented backgrounds whether it be in terms of gender, race or economic circumstances," Jones-Branch said. "Helping those students to realize they are just as smart, just as talented and just as gifted as students anywhere else and that they can go to some of the best programs in the country."

Provost Alan Utter announced Jones-Branch accepted the dean position.

"I am extremely pleased that Dr. Jones-Branch has accepted our offer," Utter said.

"I was very impressed with her scholarly record as a faculty member, and her experience in research and mentoring students speaks for itself. She has tremendous leadership skills and the respect of her colleagues on campus, and she has received a number of scholarly honors and awards. During the process, I was impressed with her communication skills."

Jones-Branch also served in the U.S. Army and is a Persian Gulf War veteran.

"Her military background is an additional strength as she can relate to our large number of active duty and veteran students," Utter said. "At the

same time, her communication skills and background makes her extremely relatable to the student body. She has a track record of service that meets the needs of the university above all and understands the needs of our graduate students."

Jones-Branch said she was anxious to get to work right away.

She is not just setting goals for her first year as dean, but she is setting goals for her first six months as dean.

A major part of the job will be talking to graduate students and other graduate programs.

"I think that's the thing that's exciting about this," Jones-

Branch said. "The opportunity to work with people in areas that are very far removed from what I've been doing for the past 17 years excites me. I'm a huge proponent of people working together across disciplines. I want to explore where those opportunities are possible. I'm very excited about just the multiple conversations I'm going to have to have for at least the first few months on the job."

The Graduate School will be located on the sixth floor of the Dean B. Ellis Library.

**TRACK,
CONTINUED**

While Beauchamp and the team do care about the points, it's their individual pride in their sport that fuels them to perform, rather than opening up a big lead and taking it easy.

"We wouldn't perform to the best of our ability," Beauchamp said. "We are all just really competitive and want to be at our best. Going in that was our mindset. All of the coaches

say to perform the best we can that day. So we can't really let up it's just up to us to see what we can do and make it happen. We think about the points and know what we are supposed

to do and I was pretty nervous going in, but I had to trust that I knew what I was doing and to just breathe and stay calm."

Ultimately, the love for the sport and Arkansas State has

allowed Beauchamp and many others the ability to continue improving and winning gold.

"I just want to say I'm super thankful to be here," Beauchamp said. "This time last year, I had

no idea that I would be here so I'm so thankful for the coaches and the teammates. Arkansas State is the best."