



Celebrating 50 Years of Title IX

50 For 50:

Adrianna Franch – Salina South High School

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Multisport standout for the Cougars. The Kansas-bred, uber-athletic goalkeeper set the record for shut-outs at Oklahoma State with 36—the sixth most in NCAA history. She was the first OSU player to make the U.S. Women's National Team. Having played for the Portland Thorns since 2016, she continues to rack up shutouts.



By Larry Moritz

It's no exaggeration to say [Adrianna Franch](#) has seen a lot of growth in the sport of women's soccer in her lifetime.

Franch, a Salina native and Salina South graduate, has been among the top goalkeepers in this country over the last five years. She has represented the United States in both the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019 and is now on her first Olympic roster as a member of the U.S. team playing in Japan this summer.

Neither event had ever been held when Franch was born in November, 1990. The first Women's World Cup took place a year later. The first women's soccer event at the Olympics was contested in 1996.

The United States has dominated both events, winning four World Cup and four Olympic

titles in that span, with Franch now attempting to leave her mark on the sport she loves.

It's not surprising to those who witnessed her early success. She earned the starting goalkeeper position during her freshman season at Salina South in 2006, where she went on to receive all-league, all-district and all-state recognition.

"Her competitive drive was outstanding," said Trey Crow, who coached Franch during her three seasons with the Cougars. "You hear about athletes who want to go 100 percent every practice, but rarely do you see it.

"It didn't matter whether it was pregame, practice or the game itself, she was going to go all out. She didn't want anything getting by her and that competitiveness was exceptional."

That didn't change after she left South. Franch suffered a knee injury while competing for the Cougar basketball team in February, 2009, forcing her to miss all of her senior season with the South soccer team.

She recovered in time to earn the starting role at Oklahoma State as a freshman that fall, and had a standout four-year career with the Cowgirls. While at Oklahoma State, Franch twice earned All-American honors and set a school record with 38 shutouts.

Franch was a first-round selection in the 2013 National Women's Soccer League college draft and was the first goalkeeper selected that year, signing with the Western New York Flash.

In 2016 she joined the Portland Thorns FC and twice earned the NWSL's Goalkeeper of the Year award in 2017 and 2018. Franch set a league record in 2017 with 11 shutouts in the regular season.



Adrienne Franch with her USWNT. Second row third in red from left. Courtesy USWNT.

Now at age 30, Franch continues to play at a high level despite knee injuries that have led to temporary setbacks. She sat out the entire 2015 NWSL season with an injury, missed nine

games in the 2018 season (and still was named Goalkeeper of the Year), and missed time in the summer of 2020 while recovering from her latest injury.

“For us as athletes, any time we have an injury, it’s tough,” Franch said earlier this year. “It’s a roller coaster because we always want to be back, we always want to be there for our team and be able to play and do what we love.

“But the pandemic, constantly being at home, the injury itself - that was probably one of my worst just because I was non-weightbearing for four weeks and that’s the longest time anybody’s told me to sit down on the couch.”

Franch recovered from that latest injury to help the Thorns win the NWSL Challenge Cup this past spring, making the diving save for the difference-maker on penalty kicks in the championship match.

In June she was one of two goalkeepers selected for the 2021 U.S. Olympic roster and is one of four athletes from Kansas scheduled to compete in this year’s Olympics.

It is another level of recognition added to an already lengthy and impressive list.

“I always thought she would get to this level because of her drive and honestly, that was her goal,” Crow said. “When she was in high school she wanted to be a professional player. The way she fought through after her injury as a senior to get ready to play at Oklahoma State, there was no doubt that she was going to be where she is now.

“We’re extremely proud of her and the fact that she came through South. A lot of really elite players decide not to play high school, but she wanted to be part of her high school team and be a leader for those teams, and that was just amazing.”



Figure 1 Franch playing goalie for Oklahoma State. Courtesy OSU Athletics.

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