



Ana Valeria Rivas (first from left to right, wearing a white jersey)

Women's Soccer is Also Cherry and White

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Currently, a group of 27 female players between the ages of 16 and 24 make up the women's soccer team of the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (IPN) in the open category.

They are students from both upper secondary and higher education levels. This team has access to a professional synthetic turf soccer field measuring 105 meters in length by 68 meters in width, located next to the Burros Blancos American football team facilities in Zacatenco.

They are trained by Professor Enrique Aguilar Ortiz, who played as a right-back for the América and Cruz Azul teams and holds a master's degree in Sports Science from the Escuela Nacional de Entrenadores Deportivos (ENED).

The maroon and white women's team trains three days a week—Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday—from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Since last January, they have been practicing at the new sports facilities.

Ana Valeria Rivas Serrano, a student in the Biology program at the Escuela Nacional de Ciencias Biológicas (ENCB), plays as a lateral midfielder and admits that her defining trait within the team is discipline.

The 22-year-old student mentioned that the most challenging position in soccer is being on the bench. "Sitting on the bench is tough, and no one wants to be there, but enduring it and knowing how to stay in that position pushes you to do better when you step



onto the field. If you've already made the sacrifice of waking up early, you have to make the most of it. That's something our coach instills in the whole team."

Coach Enrique Aguilar agreed on the dislike for the bench: "No one wants to be there," which is why he encourages the women's team to strive for better results during training so they can develop character, technique, and good soccer skills.

A graduate of the Escuela Superior de Ingeniería y Arquitectura (ESIA), Unidad Zacatenco, the coach has been planning, designing, and building a sports project since September 2024. His goal is to enhance each player's technical skills. He aims to instill the importance of teamwork, motivate the players, and teach them clear strategies. He promotes diversity and assigns each Politécnica the position that best suits her physique, technical abilities, and soccer skills.

During training, the players practice first-touch plays, passing, zigzag dribbling drills, and continuous ball control. Their instructor explains how to strike the ball efficiently with power and technique using the inside or outside of the foot. Ana Valeria shared that since joining the team in September 2024, she has understood that soccer is not about individualism or rivalry. "I've learned the importance of teamwork because I interact with 27 players to strengthen my character."

The coach revealed that one of his key strategies is sacrifice, and that is part of his advice to the players. As he walks under the sun, sweating before the end of the day's practice, he also remembers another golden rule for success: mentality.

"I tell them that in soccer, there are always leaders, and being a leader will make it easier for them to make difficult decisions and practice their profession with greater maturity. This, combined with the ability to work as a team in different situations on the field and in life, will help them succeed."

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