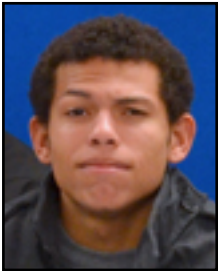


Soccer over the past 13 years has kept me pretty well grounded and, most of all, out of trouble. I have gone from a wee one and playing in the Meridian PAL organization as an extra-curricular activity to believing soccer was my sport, which led me to Idaho Rush for club ball. Joining the Rush club allowed me to expand my knowledge and abilities as well as form life-time friendships with my teammates over the last four years. The benefit of joining a club not only shows loyalty but allows for a team to strive for perfection, our higher level of play made us able to compete with the best.



High school ball took our club team in different directions for the fall season with many of us attending opposing schools. However, once high school ended our differences were set aside and a united team we became again. I truly miss my club brothers as I have started my college soccer career; I will never forget the memories Idaho Rush competitive soccer has given me.

I went to Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming. The soccer program has only been around for three years. We have an English coach, who is a fantastic coach. It was great playing under him and I think I have grown better as a player. Playing in my first college game was not bad at all. College is a lot different than club, with more intensity, faster pace and players that are just so big. We had a guy in our first game break his leg. After that I was shocked because I have never seen something like that.

College soccer is very intense; you do not have to be the best player on the field but if you work hard and show you want to play, you will play. I got the chance to play against some teams that played some ugly soccer. I thought college soccer would be pretty but most of the time it is not. I even got the chance to score a goal; not just one, but a hat trick. Definitely one for the books. I scored another goal in our region final game. Scoring goals in college is the best; you actually get to celebrate because the referees do not care.

Having to go to school and play soccer all at the same time can be difficult if you do not manage your time right. Always being on the road and trying to focus on soccer but having to do your homework is the most challenging thing. When the coach tells you, "We are here for business" your mind is focused on the game, but it is hard when you have to do homework. For me I never had homework because I am a Physical Education major. Studying Physical Education is a blast; I get to learn about different workout plans and different diets that will help me during soccer season. Having good nutrition during soccer is the key; you have to keep your body at top shape to be able to perform at your best day in and day out.

The long bus rides were never the best. I would always try to sleep but I could never get

comfortable. I would always be on my phone or watching movies with some of the guys. The guys would try and pull pranks on some of the other players by pouring water on them or even put food in their mouth. Some of the guys on the team were not the nicest at the start but throughout the season we became one big family.

The best bus ride I will always remember is when we were driving to Colorado and we stopped to stay the night. The bus driver thought he could make it around this corner and he hit the side of the bus against the wall. The funniest part is he did not stop; he tried to keep going and tore off the back bumper. The bus driver got out, looked at the damage, and kept walking to McDonald's.

Soccer has its ups and downs with winning or losing games. The worst is losing to a team that you know you could beat. However, the best is beating a team that no one thought you had a chance to beat. You learn to take winning in stride so that you do not become over-confident for the next game and taking a loss with your heads held high so that the negativity is not taken into the next game. You capitalize on your strengths and learn from your mistakes and weaknesses to become a better player.