



The many years I have been a part of this tremendous soccer club I hold very dear, while they have taught me many life lessons and have shaped me into the person I am today. The uncountable amount of hours, sweat, and blood I have put in for the sport I love and my teammates I now call best friends will always be something I cherish. As a left midfielder for an extremely competitive Idaho team I have encountered every possible situation. With all the hard-earned victories there were losses as well, losses that taught us all that there will be bumps on the journey to a bigger successful picture. With a loss at your feet people find themselves with choices to quit, join another club, or the one I chose my eight years of playing the sport. I chose to crank out more hours of practice, dial my mindset into one with extreme focus, and to encourage my teammates and I, and most of all to believe. It's crazy what those four simple things can do. For example, my first year winning State Cup and qualifying for Far West Regionals, where we got matched up against Las Vegas Surf. While we were the best in our state we got blown away with a devastating 12-0 loss. This kind of loss is one to steal your pride and drive, but not for my Rush team. Four years later we got another shot but this time we played as one and took Goliath down. We upset the confident team and advanced to the quarterfinals.

Being a part of a team that demands your best and full dedication I found myself working harder outside of the soccer world. I challenged myself all through high school taking multiple advanced and AP classes and getting exceptional grades in them as well. I don't consider myself a super-intelligent individual, but because soccer taught me to be on time and to be hardworking and motivated, I had work in on time and took up any extra credit available. Time management and work ethic is something very difficult to teach; it's something you can't learn in school and something that can't be instantly obtained. When times got hard for the team I was taught to never give up and to keep fighting and that's exactly how I approach conflicts thrown at me by life today.

I always looked up to my coaches Bekim, Brian, Lee, and Jens. They gave me the extra boost when I needed it most. Their passion they showed for the game and for their team is something I will always remember. They weren't there to earn a paycheck, they were out there at 6 a.m. in the freezing weather for the team and to better the team, because they truly cared about the teams progress. My coaches always did a great job of pulling me aside when I was doing something wrong or when they could tell I wasn't giving my 100 percent. With a gentle but stern intention they always straightened me out. For example in the final weeks of my soccer career at a Seattle tournament Jens noticed I was no longer giving my all and said, "You're not playing like the Jake I know, where's your fighting spirit? Do you want to keep your starting spot? Do this for yourself. Do this for your team." I remember this conversation as clear as can be and I could even explain the setting because it was such a moving moment for me. I began to get mad with myself and I instantly turned up the intensity on the field. I played a tremendous game and tournament thanks to Jens and I often remember his speech when I find myself behind in school or other commitments.

These are just a few of the incredible things soccer taught me that I believe you can't get anywhere else. Although I chose to focus on school in college, I look back on my soccer years as the best times of my life. I am so grateful for the skills and values Idaho Rush has taught me, for my teammates, coaches, and experiences.