

Athlete Spotlight: Kellen Okerson



BISMARCK – Senior Kellen Okerson adjusted to a position change on Legacy boys' soccer team about the midway point of last season.

"His ball control and passing seemed to really fit that role (in the middle of the field), but his contributions really accelerated when he moved to an outside position," said Saber coach Thomas Marcis.

It was in that new spot where Kellen was able to put his speed, ball control and high soccer IQ on display.

Pretty soon the opposition was having all it could handle to contain him. "Because of his speed, the outside defender must over play his position so not to get burned," Marcis said. "That opens space and lanes for other players. He is consistently able to take the ball to the endline and then play it back to the attacking players in the middle of the field."

The love of the game came early for Kellen. "Ever since I understood how to kick a ball I loved the sport," he said. "I knew it was the sport I wanted to play."

Kellen's father coached the sport, so he learned some valuable insight also at a young age. That would translate to his quick development in youth and club soccer and earning a varsity spot as a sophomore. The game demands strong team play and getting to play alongside his friends on and share in the comradery was another plus of the sport. He has become stronger physically and mentally on the field. "Starting out I was never the player who could out and put a body on someone or try and lead the team," he said. "But these last two season I've developed into a strong player and try and be as much of a leader as I can be."

Kellen plays with high level of intensity and confidence, says coach Marcis. Over time, he's emerged as a leader. "As a coach, it's always interesting to watch the growth of a player over time," he said. "As a sophomore, he was very quiet on the pitch. Now, he is one of the loudest players out there."

Kellen has developed into a tall, strong athlete who is certainly stands out on the pitch. He's currently second on the team in total points (13) and first in assists (8). His main goal is to either get the ball to someone else's feet to score, or to get the ball at his feet to score.

At first glance, soccer seems a simple game to grasp: get the ball into the goal. However, to accomplish that takes precision, skill and perhaps most of all, communication.

"I think the biggest thing that a novice fan wouldn't really see is how big communication plays on the field," Kellen said. "It's what moves the ball from one end to the other."

Legacy has steadily built a winning culture and tradition in boys soccer. The team was third at state in 2022; runner-up in 2023 and state champions last year.

The 2024 team was not the favorite entering the state tournament, but put together three impressive matches. "First, I give credit to the coaching staff, and secondly, the resiliency of last year's starting 11," Okerson said. "We had a mindset going into the state tournament where we couldn't lose."

The success has continued into this season and Legacy has already clinched a state tournament berth and the WDA regular season title. In a few weeks, it will set sights on defending its state crown.

No doubt No. 19 in the Saber uniform will do everything he can to help the squad.