

Soccer has been one of the most influential parts of my life ever since I was about 6 years old, and it has taught me lessons about myself and life that are unlike any taught by other experiences I've had. Soccer has taught me the importance of teamwork, problem solving, leadership and grit, among many other things, and I'm so much better off because of it. However, while soccer itself is an incredibly influential force, it is also the people I was surrounded with that made soccer one of the most meaningful aspects of my life. I have been fortunate enough to play for Rush my entire life, and there is no other club that I would rather have grown up with. From the very beginning, my teammates and the club as a whole felt like family. I never felt like I was an outsider or just a player, I was so lucky to always be surrounded by coaches, teammates and parents who were nothing but supportive and had my back no matter what. I had countless practices, trainings, games and events in every corner of the treasure valley over the years, and I loved the soccer, but it was always the people who made every single minute of it so worth it.

Not only did soccer introduce me to some of the most amazing people in my life, but it helped me grow as a person and a player in ways far beyond what I thought possible for myself. The values that Rush stands for, such as empathy and respect, were so often practiced on and off the field, that they became traits exemplified in everyday life by anyone who spent time around them. I saw those traits grow in my teammates, coaches and even in myself. It made me realize that the beautiful game stands for so much more than just the soccer itself. Events such as Rake Up Boise, the One World Soccer camp and just all the acts of sheer kindness I saw performed by my soccer family over the years exemplify the character that soccer instills in people. Love for the beautiful game brought so many amazing people together, who quickly grew to love each other like family. I was so incredibly lucky to be surrounded by my Rush family, and they were often the first people to be there for me when things went well and when they were hard. My teammates and the rest of the Rush community were there for me and my family through multiple concussions, two ACL surgeries, two battles with cancer and many other miscellaneous obstacles. All of them showed endless love and support, and were often the first ones to ask how they could help and let us know that we were not alone. The amazing thing about this, is that it's not uncommon in the Rush community. This happens all the time, the Rush family is always there for each other to celebrate the highs and to help heal from the lows, and that is truly incredible.

Soccer can cause the most euphoric feelings and memories, but it can also be heart-breaking and disappointing. Losing an important game, having a bad practice, not making a certain team or having a poor season can make it so hard to continue on, but these heart breaks and disappointments are often what allow us to grow. These heart-wrenching moments have helped me love the challenges. Whether it's a hard practice, physical therapy, a tough game or any other challenge, I have been able to embrace it with the knowledge that it's not easy but it is so worth it. Loving the challenge and the grind allows me to realize that you either succeed or you learn, and has helped me establish a growth mindset. Embracing the challenge can be so difficult, but being able to do it on the field has helped me do it off of the field as well. I find myself applying the values and characteristics I learned from soccer and from my Rush community to my academics, job and everyday life. I value the heart breaks and

disappointments just as much as the highlights, because I learn equally important lessons from both.

Soccer has become an instrumental factor in the shaping of my identity, and I would not trade the experiences I had and the lessons I learned for anything. Soccer is my passion and I would not be the same without it. The people I have met and the experiences I have had are incredibly meaningful to me, and I will forever cherish them. I am incredibly grateful to be able to continue to play soccer at Linfield College, and I will never forget the experiences and the people who helped me get there.

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