

Lessons from college football



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Growing up I played all kinds of sports, but soccer, basketball, and volleyball were always my top three favorite. Those are the three that I can remember loving from the second I got into them, and the three that I stuck with throughout high school. In Wyoming we did not really have club sports so choosing to play soccer, basketball, and volleyball in high school basically meant that it would be one of those three sports that I would continue to play at the collegiate level. I knew that choosing between my three favorites would not be easy, but now looking back on it I would not change my decision to play college soccer at all.

It was sometime during the fall semester of my junior year that I was contacted by coach Tim Barrera from the University of Northern Colorado about coming to play soccer there. At the time, I was still in volleyball season so I kind of just kept the idea in the back of my head and thought that I would not have to act on it any time soon. However, as the year went on and I got through basketball season and into soccer season, I began to realize that the time to make my decision was approaching faster than I thought. The end of the recruiting season for my class in every sport I was looking to play was the end of junior year.

Throughout the school year I continued to talk to not only the coach from Northern Colorado about soccer, but also coaches from other schools who were interested in having me for volleyball or basketball. As soccer season went on and the end of junior year crept closer and closer, my team found our way into the state championship game. It was at the end of this game that I knew which sport I would choose to play in college. We did not win that championship game that day, but the excitement that I felt before and

during the game and the heartbreak that I felt after it led me to know that soccer was the sport I loved the most. I had won and lost in state championships for basketball and volleyball, but neither had ever evoked the same amount of emotion in me as that state championship game my junior year.

I took some time to get over the hard loss because I knew it would come up in the conversation that I would have later that week with coach Barrera. When the time finally came, I had to call every coach that I was talking to across all three sports and let them know that I had made my decision. I was so nervous for every single call because I did not like the idea of calling these people who were so invested in me and believed in me enough to want me to play for them and telling them that I could not do that. I felt like I was really letting them down, but it was a part of the process that had to get done. The call that I was most nervous about though, was the one that I would make to coach Barrera to tell him that I had decided that I was going to play soccer collegiately and that it would be for him.

My palms were all sweaty and I knew for a fact that my voice would shake as soon as I tried to speak. The phone rang almost so many times that I thought he would just not pick up, and a wave of relieve came over me. I thought that maybe I could just put the call off for one more day, but then through the phone, in a calm and somewhat quiet voice, I heard a hello. For a moment I panicked but I knew I had to say something. I told him that it was me and that I had decided to take his offer to play soccer for him at the University of Northern Colorado. As the conversation went on and we discussed more of the specifics, my nervousness turned to excitement. By

the end of the call I had my visits planned, my scholarship offer, and the feeling in my heart that I had absolutely made the right decision.

Today, I still have that same feeling because that one decision to play college soccer has played a huge role in making me into the adult I am currently becoming. College soccer has taught me a lot that has helped me mature from being a high school girl into being a young woman. I have learned how to put others before myself because the team is more important than the individual. It has also taught me time management because in order to play you not only have to be academically sound but also physically sound. Most importantly though, college soccer has taught me commitment because without commitment there is no real love for the sport, its just another thing you have to do.

This year my team made history by winning the conference championship and playing in the NCAA tournament. Personally, I was able to take the things that college soccer has taught me and use them to do my part in getting us to where we were. There was a lot of time management involved due to the amount of travel we had to do, and a lot of putting the team before the individual. Winning was not something that anyone could do alone, it took the whole team. Commitment to achieving our goals of making history and having a winning season though is really what I think gave us the season that we had. Preseason two-a days, early morning lifts, extra workouts, and late nights of making up for missed classes was not easy or even likeable at all, but it was the kind of commitment that was nothing but worth it to feel the success, joy, and excitement that myself and my

teammates were able to feel when we won that trophy and got the NCAA tournament bid