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Lack of soccer wins doesn't take way Torricelli's enthusiasm

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The victories haven't been numerous in Ryne Torricelli's collegiate soccer career.

His freshman year at Springfield College in 2007, the Bulldogs amassed seven wins; last year, they garnered five. This year with the University of Illinois Springfield Prairie Stars, the junior defender has added one win to his collegiate collection, thanks to Blackburn College in the season opener.

"Who would have thought?" said Torricelli, who was named after Chicago Cubs Hall of Fame second baseman Ryne Sandberg. "I take it a game at a time and try my hardest. I play the full 90 minutes. And that's all you can do, keep playing, and keep playing hard. I'm hopeful we can add to that."

Torricelli was a three-year starter at Springfield High School and two years with Springfield College. The Prairie Stars were a natural progression for Torricelli to continue his education while playing the game he loves.

"I've been watching the Prairie Stars since I was a kid," Torricelli said. "I've always wanted to play here. After SCI, I contacted coach (Joe) Eck, and I asked John (Krohe, SCI coach), to call, too.

"This was a dream come true to play here. I'm still in Springfield, my family can watch me play, and I'm getting a good education. I wouldn't change a thing."

Nor would Eck.

"Ryne's had an excellent season," Eck said. "He's a great kid with a great attitude. And he's a tough, hard-nosed defender. He's one of those kids you love having on the team. He won't give up. He gives 110 percent every game."

Torricelli, the second cousin to Springfield College athletic director Steve Torricelli, said the transition to Division II was tougher in the classroom than on the field.

"The difference wasn't that tough to get used to on the field," said Torricelli, a business administration major who is undecided on an emphasis, although he did mention accounting may be in his future.

"It's a higher level of soccer, of course, but I expected that. The players are bigger, stronger and faster. Everybody you play is as good — or better — than you. You have to be on top of your game every night. That's why you have to give it your all. There are no easy games.

"But I think it's harder academically than on the field. I'm making that transition, too. I've picked up my studies since I've been in college."

Torricelli is happy playing soccer at UIS. A family-oriented kid, he's the son the Bill and Tammy and oldest of four siblings: brothers Niall, a freshman at Sacred Heart-Griffin; Zak, a seventh-grader; and Hannah, a freshman at Springfield College.

"I'm very happy they can come out and see me play," Torricelli said. "They haven't missed a game.

"I hope we can get them another win this year. This is a great atmosphere. It's a bigger college, we play night games, it's a nice field and there are always fans in the stands. I'm happy here. I wish we were doing better, but I know things happen, and that's how it goes."

Ron Dickerson can be reached through the sports department at 788-1545.

Lewis 4, UIS 0

Scoring: Kipp Cartwright, 38:01 left; Charlie Bucio (Nathan Groesch), 23:06 left; Mardoche Beya (Nestor Hernandez), 20:24 left; Hernandez (rebound own penalty kick), 15:15 left.

Numbers: Shots: Lewis 25, UIS 3. Corner kicks: Lewis 4, UIS 3. Saves: Lewis (Sebastian Kieruzal) 1; UIS (Jeremy Carnes) 10.

Shining Stars: Dustin Curtis; Juan Perez; Michael Waldo.

Quote: "I thought we gave them a good game, especially in the (scoreless) first half. We moved people around, and (Dustin) Curtis played well up top.

The positives from this game are our lineup and system looked promising, more so than in previous games. But give Lewis credit, they're strong across the field. They're a team I'm confident will get a bid to the national tournament." – UIS coach Joe Eck.

Records: Lewis 11-3-1 (9-3 GLVC); UIS 1-13-1 (0-12-1).

Next game: 7 p.m. Thursday, Millikin at UIS.

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