



NEWS RELEASE -- For Immediate Release

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**Paying it forward through a lifelong passion for soccer:
Army Second Lieutenant Kyle Wolfenbarger got his soccer start in Murfreesboro
and is still playing soccer for the United States Army**

Wolfenbarger: "I want to give back to the Murfreesboro soccer community and help coach soccer there. In leadership development in the Army, we're taught that you're growing the next leader you want to be. If you have a job position, you're training that next person to fill your spot. I want to train younger goalkeepers and help them with their ball skills, because that's the key to making progress."

Murfreesboro, Tenn. ---- June 7, 2017 --- Kyle Wolfenbarger started playing soccer with Murfreesboro Soccer Club when he was five years old. Today, at age 23, he's on the All-Army Soccer Team.

"I started with rec soccer and my mom was our coach," he said. "She focused on hard work and doing the right thing on the field and off the field. That was how I got started in soccer."

Fast forward to his years at Central Middle School and Kyle was still playing soccer as a defender and he added football. At Riverdale High School, he expanded to add rugby and swimming, along with football and soccer.

Then, Coach Ali Arman tapped him to goalkeeper his sophomore year. Arman is the boys' soccer coach at Riverdale High School and also the Director of Coaching for Murfreesboro Soccer Club.

"It was good for me to make the change, because I was really physically fit. I could keep up but I didn't have the skill set and that's what I needed work on," Wolfenbarger said. "I had never played Select soccer before then. In high school, I made some new friends who were in the Murfreesboro Soccer Club Strikers League and I got picked up as a goalkeeper. That really helped me develop my skills."

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He also started going to soccer camps, first at a World Cup Soccer camp in California and a Nike ID camp at Lipscomb University.

Wolfenbarger then stopped the rest of his sports to focus solely on soccer. "I had to choose at that point," he said. "Coach Arman and I talked about it, and the way I was developing, I had a chance to get a soccer scholarship, if I put the hard work and time in. That did it for me."

"I love soccer," Wolfenbarger said. "It keeps me physically fit, I meet a lot of great teammates from different backgrounds, and I love the team camaraderie. I like the goalkeeper position because I'm the last line of defense. If it gets by me, then it's a goal. Everything becomes magnified, and I really like that."

After high school, he accepted an academic and athletic soccer scholarship at Martin Methodist University. At the midpoint of his sophomore year in college, Wolfenbarger decided to join the Army.

"Both my parents were Combat Medics in the Army," he said. "I felt the need to serve my country so I took a six-month break from school in 2013 and trained to become a Combat Medic like my parents."

Wolfenbarger attended basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Then he returned to Tennessee to continue his service in the Tennessee Army National Guard at Smyrna, and was awarded the Simultaneous Membership Program at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). While at MTSU he balanced his Biology-intensive courses and ROTC requirements, and went back to soccer, playing at MTSU with the MTSU Men's Club Team and reserves with Nashville Football Club and National Premier Soccer League, until his graduation in 2016. Then, Wolfenbarger was commissioned as an Army Second Lieutenant and began training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, as a Chemical Officer, and responder to possible chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks.

While at Fort Leonard Wood he returned to soccer, playing for the post team there. Then, Wolfenbarger was given a unique opportunity to play in the Defender's Cup, the largest military open soccer championship in the nation.

"Everybody from all of the different military branches and bases comes to San Antonio, TX, and we all play in a big tournament," he said. "Our team ended up being ranked." And, Wolfenbarger was chosen as one of 25 players from a large pool of experienced and talented soccer players. He trained with his team for two weeks at Fort Benning, Georgia, and then was selected as one of the top 18 to continue. Once selected, the team traveled around Georgia and surrounding states playing college and semi-professional teams. He has continued his development as a soccer player, working with a goalkeeper who coaches area colleges in San Antonio. "He's also offering me opportunities to help train other goalkeepers," Wolfenbarger said.

"I know when you're in high school in the South, most kids want to play football. I did too, but in the end I chose soccer because that provided me a good pathway for the future," he said.

Wolfenbarger's long-term goals include becoming a Physician Assistant and moving back to Tennessee.

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Wolfenbarger wants to help younger soccer players like he was helped. "Coach Arman has really been a strong influence in my life," he said. "He taught me to dig in, work real hard, prepare, trust your teammates and develop your skills. I also had two other great coaches, Daniel Campbell and Paul Thompson in Select soccer, who were both very skilled."

And it was also about the team. "Teammates are really important," he said. "I'm a very big relationship person. You can be good at your position, but if you don't have people around you who care about you, sometimes the overall success just doesn't happen. If Coach Arman hadn't pushed me to try Select soccer, and paved the way for me, I wouldn't be here doing this today."

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About Murfreesboro Soccer Club: The focus of the Murfreesboro Soccer Club (MSC), in existence as a non-profit organization since 1977, is the development of each individual player. MSC maximizes the development of the individual through programming that challenges each player, a coaching staff that adheres to the highest standards. MSC is resolute in dedicating its time and resources to the technical, tactical, physical and psychological aspects of playing soccer.

MSC offers three primary programs: Recreational (ages 4 through 18), focusing on helping players learn the game of soccer in a fun and stimulating environment to be the best soccer players they can be; Select (ages 8 through 18), focusing on helping players master higher level technical skills and fundamentals with a rigorous fall and spring schedule; and TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer), a new, free soccer program for Murfreesboro-area children and youth with special needs.

Our beliefs: The pursuit of excellence in the areas of academics and soccer helps develop maturity and self-confidence in young people. The experiences a player has with MSC will be beneficial throughout his or her lifetime.

Our approach and commitment the soccer community: The MSC staff and volunteers work hard to develop each and every player to his or her highest potential. This means that as players grow and learn new skills, they will have different opportunities to practice together, and play in games and tournaments. MSC constantly assesses each player's skill levels and adjusts each player's opportunities in an engaging, supportive, instructive environment.

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