

Athletics With A Purpose: The Central Christian School Soccer Program

By: Aaron Miedel

Central Christian soccer has been a huge part of my childhood. My first impressions of the Central soccer program came as a young spectator, sitting in the bleachers on cold November nights and watching guys I idolized make deep state tournament runs. After all, playing soccer into November *is* a big part of Central's program—we've celebrated 8 district titles in the last decade and 5 state appearances since 2000. What I've learned from three years of playing varsity soccer in Central's program, though, is that success for us is more than continued tournament wins; it is a commitment to character development.

The greatest evidence of our program's emphasis on individual development comes from the five program principles we establish for ourselves. Our principles are not a certain number of goals to score or a number of teams to beat. Those stats are our season goals. Instead, our program principles are expectations for behavior that play a vital role in all that we do both on and off the field. The five program principles are:

1. **Thrive In Adversity:** Adversity is inevitable. It could be a frustrating call, a difficult away game environment, or an unexpected injury. Regardless, in whatever form adversity takes, we work to not only survive—just get through—but to thrive, allowing adverse conditions to make us better.
2. **Get Better Every Day:** Every other team is improving throughout the season, so to win in November, our rate of development has to be higher than everyone else's.
3. **Do the Right Thing For the Right Reason:** Don't do good because it makes you look good in front of someone else. Do good because it's the right thing to do.

4. **No BCD:** No blaming others, complaining about your circumstances, or defending yourself from blame. We hold one another to No BCD a lot in practice.
5. **Do Ordinary Things Extraordinarily Well:** 90% of great soccer is a mastery of the little things. Game-winning goals are memorable, but without clinical off-ball movement, a quality first touch, and a quick awareness of positioning, those goals never happen.

These principles make Central soccer special. They lead to a positive player culture and success on the field. More importantly, this framework can be applied into any area of life and will help us become helpful members of our community. When you come to watch our team play, think about the principles that underlie our performance on the soccer field. If we are playing successfully, they won't be too difficult to notice.