

MELHS' goalkeeper Harmon signs letter of intent to Southwest Baptist University

by Brent Feeney, Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – To reach the top, soccer players have been know to begin playing at a very young age and worked to develop their skills to advance through the ranks – ranks that can include Major League Soccer, the U.S. National Team and even the top European leagues.

Reed Harmon is an exception to the rule; he only began playing soccer at the start of his sophomore year at **Metro East Lutheran**, beginning as a field player before switching to goalkeeper for his junior year.

His all-around athleticism has served him well, though – he's played several sports for the Knights. And now, it's paid off for him in a way he never thought it would as Harmon signed a letter of intent to attend Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., near Springfield, Mo. The Bearcat program is a NCAA Division II program that plays in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association.

"As a kid, everyone's dream is to play at the collegiate level," Harmon said. "Personally, I never thought soccer was a possibility. I didn't think I'd be good at it; when I started, I couldn't even kick a ball, and then, to have this opportunity, I'm just grateful for it."

Some of the goalkeeper's duties on a soccer pitch, including stopping shots on goal, include organizing the team's defense in front of him when the opposing team is coming upfield and making sure they're accountable for the players that are being defended, or marked. It's a position that Harmon concedes that has much pressure to it.

Harmon, however, credits his the teammates that have played with him with plenty of support and help. "It's a lot of pressure, but I've had guys around me that encouraged me," Harmon said. "I had seniors, back when I was a sophomore, who showed me the ropes."

"He came to me pretty much a fresh newbie," said **Knight coach Noah Enke**. "He was really raw when it came to soccer, but Reed was already an athletically gifted kid; he picked it up pretty fast. As far as soccer goes, it was pretty rough (Harmon's first few days on the field), but I remember on day, I told him 'it's going to be really fun to watch you play goalie because there's going to be times you're going to make a save – I'm not sure how – and you're going to do it in a way where I'm not even sure what you were thinking."

"It's just going to be fun watching him develop."

Being an all-around athlete helped Harmon in the goal, Enke feels. "He plays baseball as well; just swinging the bat and getting his reflexes up and quickness from that really helps," Enke said, "moving side-to-side and just reaching to the ball when it's kicked right off the foot.

“His quickness and agility were definitely strong from the get-go; we just played off that.”

Harmon modeled his game off his coach, who played at Concordia (University in Seward, Neb.). “I try to model my game after his,” Harmon said. “He was pretty successful.”

Harmon will be enrolling at SBU because of their physical therapy program,” Harmon said. “Yes, I could have played somewhere else and maybe be more successful, but you also have to think long-term career-wise. Physical therapy is what I want to do with my life, and Southwest Baptist gives me the best opportunity of both worlds.”