

BREAKING BARRIERS: Ambruso becomes Southwestern's first female varsity football kicker

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PIASA – Southwestern’s Sydney Ambruso is likely about to go where no other female student has gone before for the Piasa Birds: to a starting varsity position on the football field.

Ambruso, a senior, is known in Southwestern football practices for her leg strength and will kick points after touchdowns for the Piasa Birds. When she is not playing football, she is busy with other sports. She has been an excellent volleyball player for the Birds through her high school career and is a softball star. She can play any position in softball and wants to pursue that in college.

Ambruso knows she is breaking into some uncharted waters for the Piasa Birds and wants to make the most of it this season as a kicker. She also sees the opportunity to stand strong as a mentor and role model for other girls.

“It means a lot to me being the only girl on this team,” she said. “I want to show other girls they can do the same thing if they want it.”

See Ambruso Video Below:

Last year, Ambruso was a field goal kicker for Southwestern's junior varsity team. In her first game, she made two of her first four attempts and she said she wants to stay close to perfect this year.

Southwestern Coach Aaron Fricke said Ambruso is a very competitive athlete and with her junior varsity experience last year he expects her to be solid this season.

"She has been working at kicking all summer," he said. "We anticipate her being our field goal kicker this year."

While playing on the junior varsity squad last season, Ambruso became the first Southwestern JV football female player to ever score a point in a game.

"With the kind of athlete she is she wants to prove she can do these things," Fricke said. "She has a soccer background and she was pretty good last year right off the bat putting the ball through the uprights.

Fricke said the boys are used to her being around and no one treats her any different than any other team member.

"She had a four-hour volleyball practice last night and then did everything the boys did in conditioning," Fricke said. "She wants to be a part of it and the boys make sure she is."

Ambruso has nothing but respect for how the Southwestern football boys have treated her at practices.

"The boys have treated me like family," she said. "I grew up with a lot of the seniors and all the football boys have been respectful to me."