

Carson Reef Signs To Play Golf At LC, He Is Midwest Members Credit Union Male Athlete Of Month For Oilers

by Christian Blaney
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WOOD RIVER - Carson Reef, a senior varsity athlete at East Alton-Wood River High School, recently signed on to the Lewis and Clark Community College's golf team during a school assembly.

Reef has been a varsity athlete all four years of his high school experience, and it's starting to pay off. While Carson also excelled at soccer and played "more sports than anyone in recent memory," according to his athletic director, Mark Beatty, he was awarded two years of free college for his exceptional golfing performance. Reef is being recognized as the Midwest Members Credit Union Male Athlete of the Month for East Alton-Wood River High School.

In an interview with Riverbender.com, Reef recounted his progression in the sport, "I started playing when I was little but I didn't start taking it seriously until my freshman year and then I probably noticed my most improvement from sophomore year to junior year, that's where I kind of shot up the numbers."

Reef's choice of golf, as a sport to pour his hours into, was catalyzed by his ability to play it without the necessity for a team, "I have a lot more fun playing golf because I can play individually, which I always did instead of relying on a full team. Now that I'm going to LC, I'm very happy with the team they have now, and what our team will be like in the future."

During a soccer game, Reef tore his ACL, only to play 18 holes of golf soon afterward. Reef's mother explained, "He tore his ACL on a Tuesday and then went and golfed at regional on a Wednesday. He didn't take . He had a full meniscus tear, a complete ACL tear, and had an impact fracture on his femur." Reef was able to use a golf cart for the entire tournament, which enabled him to finish. After he played in the regional, he advanced to the sectional, just missing state by 6 strokes.

Mrs. Kara Reef explained that Carson played these holes with a form that may be considered sub-optimal, with his front toe pointing towards the hole he was driving towards. A necessary adjustment that allowed him to complete the task at hand.

"On the day of his soccer ACL injury, what he said to me was 'Mom, no matter what, I'm golfing in regionals my senior year.' "We had to get it all cleared from the surgeon and school after his MRI results. We literally found out the day before regionals that he could play. Most people looking at him never would know as he was just wearing a compression sleeve."

In terms of his goals, the graduating senior is balancing his future between the short and long term, "Right now it's getting through the season, hope I do real good and see if another college would be interested in picking me up to further where I'm at."

However, Carson Reef isn't just a stellar athlete. He's an honor roll student who has trade ambitions as he looks toward career options. "I've looked into the trade programs that I've been trying to get into, in case golf doesn't work out in the end."

As an aspiring electrician/auto mechanic, he comes from a background of working under the hood of his family's cars, "For working auto body, I've always worked on cars with always fixed it up, never took it to the dealership to get anything fixed...for an electrician, I take a class in Collinsville, a vocational class through SWIC (Southwestern Illinois College). I've learned a lot from that, and it piqued my interest."