

## **How Soccer has Empowered Me**

By: Kaitlyn Riggleman

Many people can say that they've played soccer when they were young but how many people can truly say that soccer has changed their entire life? I can say without a doubt I would not be the person I am today if I didn't have soccer in my life. Soccer isn't just a game to me or a thing I do on the side, to me soccer is my life and it has molded me into the young woman I am today. Soccer has empowered me in numerous ways and provided me with an outlet to explore all aspects of myself. This sport has provided me with so many valuable skills such as my ability to lead, organize, and communicate effectively.

As a center defender communication is vital, without it your team is lost. You have to be willing to give guidance and direction to players in front of you and also be positive to keep morale up so everyone can play to the best of their ability and not worry about disappointing their team. Playing this position has taught me how to communicate with others in the sense that I am mindful of my tone despite being frustrated at times and also the language I use when having a conversation. I believe that if I didn't have soccer in my life to have taught me this skill, I wouldn't be as effective communicating with all the types of personalities I face on a day to day basis both on and off the field.

Another skill that soccer has taught me is my ability to organize. Being a teenager in high school can become really stressful with coursework, practices, and finding time to just be a kid like many of my other peers. That's when the need for organization comes in, every Sunday I make a schedule for what I have to accomplish during the week ahead and I make sure I have time for, homework, lifting time, practice times and time for my friends and myself. Without this

skill acquired by being a student athlete I would be a nervous wreck who didn't have a sense of direction. With the ability to organize and plan properly it has given me the opportunity to set goals and purpose for my present and future self.

Finally, soccer has presented me with one skill I will always value, the ability to be a leader. I don't believe that I would've acquired this skill unless I played a team sport such as soccer because it wasn't in my nature; however, soccer allowed me to develop a voice to guide, and hopefully inspire, other's pursuit of a common goal. Not everyone has the ability to gather a group of people, or girls for that matter, and lead them in an effective way that benefits everyone but soccer has given me the opportunity to explore that and become the young woman I am today.