

REDSHIRT FRESHMAN YEAR NOT A SETBACK FOR BAILEY

Decision best for FFC standout's future

BY TOM LEISS

FFC Media Director

Email: tleiss@fredericksburgfc.org



FREDERICKSBURG, Va. (January 6, 2019)—Trent Bailey entered school a semester early at James Madison University in the spring of 2018 with the full intent of getting an early start on his career with the men's soccer program in the fall.

As the the fall season approached and the preseason played out the decision was made that Bailey would be taking a redshirt for his first season.

For those that don't know what that means, here's a basic definition via dictionary.com: *"A college athlete kept out of varsity competition for one year to develop and extend eligibility."*

Bailey expanded on that in relation to his particular situation: "You do the same as everyone else as far as the demands of being part of a team. The only difference is you save a year of eligibility and cannot play in games or travel. I still have four years to play with JMU men's soccer."

The decision was not a surprise to Bailey who said the thought of taking a redshirt in his first year had already been in is mind.

"I already had previous conversations [with head coach Paul Zazenski] before where I told him I'd like to be a redshirt.," Bailey said. "I wasn't disappointed at all, it was a decision I made myself having seen the talent we had on the roster. I figured the best thing for my career at JMU was to save a year of eligibility."

The rising sophomore said he never had a second thought about the choice as the season went on as "every person in a program has their role and being a redshirt was where I needed to be."



That thinking even held out as the Dukes, who are a perennially strong team, won the Colonial Athletic Association tournament title and made a deep run into the Elite 8 of the NCAA Division I men's soccer tournament, falling 2-1 at Michigan State.

Bailey's advice to players at any level:

"The best thing I can say to someone is to keep your head up and nothing is given to you, you must go and earn it. If you find yourself not playing, look in the mirror and ask yourself, are you checking off all the boxes? If not, do so and your time will come."

As stated earlier, redshirts don't get to travel with the team for away games during the regular season or post-season. After the Elite 8 though, that changes and a team's entire roster is able to travel and be able to take in the experience of a Final Four. An experience that would have been pretty exciting, but that Bailey will hopefully help the team to reach in the future.

"I expect the program to remain in the top 25 and make the NCAA tournament year in and year out," he said about the years to come at JMU.

Though Bailey didn't get to play in any games in the fall, starting early allowed him to see some game action with his teammates during the spring

season . . . and that helped stoke his anticipation for his future playing career.

"Last spring I was able to play against Campbell and Radford. I can't wait to get back with the team and have a fun spring season," he expressed.

As for now, Bailey is working hard training on his own during the winter to be able to hit the ground running for that spring season and start making his case for playing time when the games become real again in the fall.

After the spring, he will do the same over the summer, training hard and most likely playing for a summer team to have himself in game shape to hit the ground running in the fall.

"In order to put yourself in the best position to be an integral part of a team, you have to be doing the right things off the field," he said. "You must train [between seasons] to stay in shape and get touches on the ball. That is the only way to try and be successful."

