

KRISTIN LEWIS TO CONTINUE SOCCER CAREER AT DYERSBURG STATE



Above: Kristin was the team's leading scorer in her senior season. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

To hear Doug Wede tell it, the first notice anyone took of a female future college scholarship athlete from Crockett County was... on a FOOTBALL field?!!

Wede, the Crockett County Middle School soccer coach, was watching a youth football game when a large fullback for one team took a handoff and was looking for running room when all of a sudden he was obliterated by a lunging tackler from the defensive side.

"Wow! Who is THAT?" Wede remembers asking.

"Oh, that's Kristin. Kristin Lewis."

"Kristin?" Wede asked. "That's a GIRL? Why isn't she playing soccer?"

Wede told the story Tuesday afternoon as Lewis, surrounded by family, coaches, teammates, and other friends, signed a grant to play soccer at Dyersburg State, much to the delight of her Crockett associates.

Kristin talked with Wede after that first gridiron encounter and agreed to play soccer as long as she didn't have to quit her football exploits. Wede, seeing her athletic potential, made that deal quickly, and the two worked things out until eventually Lewis went with soccer full-time.

In high school, Kristin has not only been a key component of the Lady Cavalier soccer program, but has been a member of two other squads that have competed in the TSSAA State Championships: cross-country and track. She had to jockey her time during the fall to accommodate the simultaneous seasons of soccer and cross-country, while in the spring she's been a valuable member of the state-bound 4x800 relay team.

"Kristin Lewis is the type of player coaches HOPE they get," said Carli Brandon, who coached her at CCHS for her first three seasons. "She is hard-working, determined, and will run through a brick wall if you ask her to, until she knocks that wall down. 'No' is NOT an acceptable answer to her and poor work ethic is unacceptable."

Branson, who stepped down as Crockett's soccer coach to devote more time to her family (and actually meant it!), said that Lewis "maintains her grades first, her soccer skills second, and then holds a job all at the same time." This makes her the epitome of what you'd desire in a student and athlete.

"I'm blessed to know her and Dyersburg State is blessed to be getting her," Branson said. "She has represented Crockett County so well and will always be a CAVALIER at heart."

Stan Jamscek, who coached Kristin for her senior season, was quick to echo Branson's comments.

"Kristin is an incredibly hard worker and was definitely a leader for the other girls on the team," he said. Lewis was one of the captains and paced the club in goals scored.

One of the most interesting – and inspiring – things about Kristin's athletic career in high school has been that she's done it through a myriad of back pain caused by a herniated disc and necessitating a spinal fusion of two of the vertebrae in her lower back. She took up cross-country and track AFTER experiencing the first signs of pain.

"It first started bothering me when I was 15," Lewis said. "But as long as I stay active, I'm able to do what I want. If it flares up from time to time, I just deal with it." Kristin says this matter-of-factly, as if it truly is no big deal.

She chose Dyersburg State because she feels it gives her the best chance to achieve future goals.

"I think it's a place where I can get enough playing time so that I have a chance to be seen by D2 or D1 schools, because I'd love to eventually play at a four-year school," Kristin said. "I also think it's a place where I can have fun and still maintain the levels of study I've set for myself."

Her track and cross-country coach Julie Nass was another optimistic speaker at her signing.

"Kristin was an integral reason why both of these teams have been to the State," Nass said. "She's an inspiration to the other runners who know what she's been through just to compete. I know she'll be a great addition to the Dyersburg State program."

And who knows? She may just find an intramural football fullback to steamroll in her spare time.



Above: Kristin runs in the 4x800 relay in the TSSAA State track championships. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: At the Regional cross-country meet at Martin Westview. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Kristin (center) with her coaches (left to right) Julie Nass, Stan Jamscek, Doug Wede, and Carli Branson. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Kristin Lewis, with CCHS coaches Jamscek and Branson (left) and her parents (right), signs her grant to Dyersburg State. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Lewis was one of the team captains and was a team inspiration, according to her coaches. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Kristin Lewis surrounded by her soccer teammates. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Lewis helped the team to a runner-up finish and a berth to the State meet. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Kristin Lewis joined by her track and cross-country teammates. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Kristin Lewis in a match with Lexington. (Photo by Ron Barry)

