

KENNEDY ROESCH | NORTHWESTERN SOCCER

Hi I'm Kennedy Roche I go to Northwestern University and I I'm on the women's soccer team here Some of the best advice that I've been given fortunately through my years is one to always have fun and I think that often gets neglected a lot of times in sports in school is the art of having fun And going back to why we why I started why I started playing soccer in the first place was because I just had a blast playing it and having so much fun with my teammates And to never lose sight of that because I think when you lose sight of that is when it becomes more like stressful and just not as fun and you could I'm a big believer you could only play your best and do your best when you're having a good time playing and having fun And another piece of piece that I've received is just like hard work and your work ethic and a lot of the times talent When you're from a young age talent takes off right away but at the end of the day it's hard work gets you to where you are now and I think a big part of that is what has led me here and led me down the path today In my training regimen I I think sleep nutrition hydration are very key components to any person and any athlete especially playing at a high level and if you don't do those right then it's very hard to excel on the field And in the classroom especially too is like those things are fundamental to how we live on a daily basis and are huge so I think those help me Do well both on the field and just as a person as well but also putting in extra hours when people aren't watching and just simple things like recovery stretching taking care of your body because at the end of the day we can only play our sport for so long and at some point we're gonna wish we could play it longer and Uh trying to lengthen our longevity in our sport and in my sport as long as I can because it is a very exhausting and physically taxing sport Some challenges I faced I think there's a lot of adversity in collegiate soccer but also in youth soccer Youth soccer is a very tough thing where Sometimes you're going to get coaches you don't necessarily agree with 100% of the time and I was very fortunate to play on a really good club team growing up and had a lot of like national attention And I was very fortunate also to play with some youth national teams And when youth national teams weren't necessarily I wasn't getting called up that was very deflating and very um not not it was for a young person that's You start to go into a bunch of confidence issues and like why like what am I doing wrong Why not me Like is it something I'm doing what am I not doing And then it just you start to be like well am I even good So you start to question everything So it's just

overall confidence and you have to realize that If you keep going on the right path doing the right thing staying true to who you are you will get to the place you're meant to be and get to college because at the end of the day that was my goal and just keep working hard and saying who you staying true to who you are and just being no one else but yourself My recruitment process I was also very just fortunate Um I had a lot of support behind me with my family and my coaches in my club And I was able to go on a lot of different visits and visit schools that were very different from Northwestern and I got to compare and contrast schools of what I liked schools that were in big cities schools that were in suburbs schools that were in college towns very very high academic schools because that was also a very important thing to me is that was a non-negotiable that I needed to be at a Top tier academic institution for just the degree but also just to be surrounded by like-minded people being at a school where there's good coaches that are going to help me grow as a human being as a student And as a player so going through all those and being able to talk to a bunch a lot of different schools hear what their priorities were hear how they thought of me as a person but also as a player and ultimately came to Northwestern for a multitude of reasons with the academics the soccer and the overall culture here in the athletic department but also on campus as well So I picked Northwestern and I love answering this question I like love when people like ask me this It was a school that I think a lot of people I got I remember committing here and a lot of people questioned my decision and we're like why I had a lot of club teammates that were like are you sure And they were also like it gets cold Like I'm from San Diego so coming here and Having the winter they're like are you sure you can handle that And I was like yes and I saw it as an opportunity not necessarily as a challenge like there's challenges everywhere you go and this was a different one but I wanted to help be a part of something and I wanted other schools I was talking to I could have gone and just been Just another it would have been stereotypical and it would have been normal for me to go there and it would have been expected and I didn't want to do the expectation I wanted to do something else And I always felt like I was meant to do something and be a face of something and not like and build something and I think the coaches here we had that like-minded understanding Uh this is in the Big 10 conference playing at a school that has so much potential you can be a part of it And I just had so much like-mindedness around that The academics obviously speak for themselves like I don't even need to touch on that They're just phenomenal And that was huge

for me Team culture was huge for me It felt like a family when I came on my visit here The coaches here were great and they also were like you're a student and a human being and they want to develop you as a person and not just see you for what you got recruited as which I think a lot of times that can get taken away in the recruiting process and coaches just like well you're a soccer player Yes I am but I'm also a person and again have like values and that that's also how I want to be treated and recognized in the coaches here were had no doubt about that and it was just a perfect fit for me It's amazing I think scoring I'm a forward so I love scoring It's my favorite thing to do It's the hardest thing to do in the sport and it's just a one it's a wonderful feeling to score a lid goal cause I think you don't understand like the magnitude of it until you actually it actually happens And I think part of myself was surprised I was like oh my gosh that just happened like what And I remember watching it back and was like OK I probably reacted really weirdly and I most definitely probably did and didn't know exactly how to react in the right way but it was it was just amazing and I was just like I want to do it again And throughout the whole season I was just wanted to score but if it meant assisting people or passing if people were in better spaces that's what it meant But it was yeah it was just a cool feeling I'm like speechless and I don't know how to put it into words how that felt and I hope that there's more to come in the future with that The shift from playing club to college is different and you don't really know until you're in it And I think I was very overwhelmed at first I was like oh my gosh like College that's so much different from club because club you play the same age but then you come here and I was 17 when I first got here and I'm playing against 5th years and 6th years that are 22 23 years old and like they've been in college forever They've been lifting for 4 years more than I have These are like strong female like woman athletes that I'm playing against like wow how am I going to compete And There's like the physicality difference between youth and like club soccer to college but I think realizing what Why I came here like I'm not going to be the fastest player and realizing what I bring to the table and what I bring as a player that's gonna that's gonna be what separates me and that's gonna be what's my like addition to the team and how I'm gonna be my best self and help the team in a way is realizing my strengths And I think that's something that I learned through through my first season here The older girls I absolutely adore them I love them so much They've definitely been like it goes by fast Your college playing years and college years go by so fast so take take so much out of it and soak in every moment

because it does go by in a blink of an eye and It's so crazy that my first whole year is already almost in the books and like they weren't joking when they say it goes by quickly and every practice everything you do every day it matters in the long run and those add up big time And before you know it you're going to be looking back and reminiscing on the days where you were in college and playing with some of your best friends And that is I think one of the biggest things that they have told me but they've also Told me that from like a more gracious like a gratitude standpoint and they've also said start leading like be a leader you can be a leader at any in any grade at any point and just use that but also use it and be a good teammate cause that's first and foremost I balance academics and soccer kind of very similar to how I did it in high school and it's I think it's a tough thing I think I still struggle with it to this day of how do I be able to stay in contact with my friends and family from home also get to know my teammates and the friends that I've made here at Northwestern and also Keep up with academics keep up with sports like that is all like a tough tough thing to and I think you I never do it perfectly and I still struggle with it to this day of what is like enough balance and sometimes I think the balance requires sacrifice and sacrificing hey I can't Go out to dinner today cause I really have this exam that I need to study for in 2 days' time and really realizing your priorities in the given moment and sometimes your priorities will shift Sometimes you're like I have practice at 6:30 next morning I can't go to a movie tonight or something like that and sometimes I think we I committed knowing that this was the life I wanted and the College experience I wanted to have just going back to why I committed and realizing this is this is my reason why and this is why I wanted to play a Division One sport and in a big conference as well because it's it's never easy and the balance act is never easy and I still struggle with it to this day but realizing sometimes you need to Relax a little bit and not always be like this ball of stress because that's also not a very healthy thing either You need to be able to talk with your friends talk with your family and keep those strong connections from home as well There's so much opportunity for our voices to be heard and for us to connect with people and inspire the next generation And at the end of the day that is what I've always tried to tried to do is that's your mark Like you could have all the goals You ever want and score so many goals and win so many games but at the end of the day are you what is your impact and legacy that you're leaving on these people that you've come in contact with or people that are seeing your story and I think the idea behind influencers such a I I love the idea of

inspiring the next generation and leaving a legacy for other people to see and for people to follow behind Obviously the brands that people post on Instagram with like the products I think that's a really cool idea And I also think just representing Like companies are really strong ideas because if you have people representing your companies that means that they align that you have values that align with each other I think that's important and I think it's a really cool thing to see and I again I'm very new to the NIL space and All that there is and I still want to get more into it and I have yet to like I've dipped my toe in the pond a little bit but I want to do it more because I think this is the time where you can maximize those opportunities and really see what people you could connect with because those connections can help you throughout life and later on in college I love like again connecting with people and like mentoring people and I've gotten done a little bit of that Um with like NIL and stuff and I think that's a huge spot where I'd like to go into more because I think again I love inspiring the next generation and doing that more with is something that I aspire to do My advice for younger athletes is to not it's a very hard thing to do is not compare yourself to other people Everyone's story is so uniquely different My story is never going to be the same as someone else's and the only thing I could hope is that someone hears from it and takes Even 1% of what I'm saying to heart and like that will be a success for me And to really work hard because I know as a young athlete it can be very daunting if someone has more talent than you but that's really not the end goal is have that work ethic and back that up because that's gonna take you in school very far It's going to take you in sports and just in general in life very far and to never forget to have fun because I think That's something I still struggle with is fun fundamental just like to enjoy it more and never let a moment go and slip you by because you're before before you know it you're going to be graduating and you're going to be done with the sport and you're gonna look back and wish you had 11 last opportunity with some of your favorite people I'm Kennedy Roche I go to Northwestern University I'm on the women's soccer team here and you can check me out on Next Level Prep