



JOHN SPERRY / SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

Josh Noonkestar, top row left, with his Lane United team. Head coach John Galas says, "He's a great defender, he's mature and he goes about his training the right way."

FORMER CORBAN PLAYER SPENDS THE SUMMER AT LANE UNITED

LUIS RAMIREZ
STATESMAN JOURNAL

EUGENE- When Josh Noonkestar used up his collegiate soccer eligibility in the spring of 2014, he was unsure if his soccer-playing career was over.

He had just finished a senior year at Corban where he helped lead the Warriors to the Cascade Collegiate Conference Tournament title as well as a berth in the NAIA National Championships.

Following the season, he spent the summer with the Vancouver Victory, a semi-pro team in the Evergreen Premier League and then joined Aaron Lewis' staff at Corban and became a graduate assistant.

"I played with the Victory last spring and that was a little bit different than Corban," Noonkestar said. "That was kind of a first step to see how I played at that level."

After having the successful stint with the Victory, Noonkestar didn't want to stop playing the sport. He knew his best chance at continuing his growth was to take the next step and play in the Premier Development League (top semi-pro amateur league in the country) so he asked around and received a tryout with Lane United.

"I was on a two-week trial in the spring and earned my spot," Noonkestar said. "I'm 24 so I'm a little older than some of the guys here, but I'm just trying to move up the ranks and get experience at every level."

In his first season with Lane United, he saw action in three games and impressed head coach John Galas in his short stint with the team.

"He's a great defender, he's mature and he goes about his training the right way," Galas said. "This is a higher level than he's used to playing and it's taken him a little bit of time to adjust to that."

Noonkestar, a graduate of South Salem high school, started his post high



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Noonkestar shares tips with young players. "The experience and maturation throughout my playing career has helped me out," he says.

school playing career at Chemeketa and after two years moved up to Division II St. Martin's University in Lacey, Wash. After playing one year for the Saints, he made his way back to Salem and played his final year at Corban.

"The experience and maturation throughout my playing career has helped me out quite a bit," Noonkestar said. "The transition has been harder because every coach and every manager wants something different."

Lane United had an up and down season and finished 3-5-6 in the PDL Northwest Division, missing out on a playoff spot. Despite the record, the team was loaded with talented players from

around the country.

"Our team's so talented that the trainings are just as intense as games," Noonkestar said. "A lot of times we're pushing ourselves. Any of the 24 guys on the roster can play; it's just a matter of the style of play and who's fresh."

Now that the season is over, Noonkestar will head back to Corban to continue his coaching duties and finish up his degree, which he will receive this year. He hopes to land on another amateur team next summer and continue his ascent up the soccer pyramid.

"I've really enjoyed Lane United (as) it's been a great learning experience," Noonkestar said. "It's always an adjust-

ment moving up ranks as you're constantly adjusting to the speed of play."

Meanwhile, Lane United hopes to continue bringing local players on to their team, as coach Galas has developed a good rapport with Corban and other players from the Salem area.

"We have a very good relationship with Aaron Lewis so we'll continue to look at players from Corban," Galas said. "We're an attractive club now for our local players to try out for and hopefully make it because we need that local flavor."

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Stayton ceremony to include ballgames and a potluck

North Santiam School District invites the community to a rededication ceremony of Joe Brock Park and Dale Emery Field at Stayton High School, 11 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 13.

Members of the Emery and Brock families, including Joe Brock, will be at the ceremony held on the varsity baseball field.

Following the dedication, there will be one or more softball games between Eagle alumni and current staff and students. The number of games depends on the number of players who are game; how many eager Eagles are ready to give

it a go?

But there's more than just ceremony and games: there will also be a potluck barbeque with hamburgers, hot dogs and condiments, compliments of the school district and Stayton Boosters Club. Guests who attend are asked to bring a store-bought side item (chips, pasta salad, dessert, etc.) and their own drinks.

Anyone interested in attending the barbeque or playing ball should contact Tonia Whisman at tonia.whisman@santiam.k12.or.us or call 503-769-6924.

—Annette Utz



JUSTIN MUCH | STAYTON MAIL

The rededication of Stayton High School's field will include a potluck. Guests who attend are asked to bring a store-bought side item