

A EUGENE SOCCER STAR SLOWLY RISES

I've occasionally questioned the adage that patience is a virtue, but Brian Rowe has proven its wisdom — at least in the context of pursuing a professional soccer career as a goalkeeper. The route Rowe took from playing youth soccer here in Eugene to playing at the highest level of professional soccer in North America was somewhat slow and sinuous, but his patience and perseverance have paid off.

Growing up in Eugene, Rowe played several sports — including football, track and golf (as well as soccer) at South Eugene High School. With the encouragement and insight of coaches Colin McMillen and Anthony Latronica, Rowe began considering playing collegiate soccer as a goalkeeper.

Having played with the Olympic Development Program (ODP) and having attended several goalkeeper camps, Rowe put himself in good position to play at a top college program. His longtime teammate from American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) soccer and friend from Roosevelt Middle School, Ryan White, helped persuade Rowe to play for UCLA's college program, where they got to compete together once again.

UCLA's soccer program is one of the best in the country, and Rowe didn't secure a full-time starting position until his fourth year. He said it was difficult, at times, to watch the matches from the bench; he had moments of doubt and questioning whether he chose the right school, and even briefly considered trying out for UCLA's football program as a kicker.

Eventually Rowe earned his starting position between the goalposts and helped lead UCLA to the Final Four after

winning their conference without losing a match.

The Los Angeles Chivas drafted Rowe to play in the MLS in 2012, but that club ultimately chose not to sign him. Rowe ended up with several different MLS teams as a backup goalkeeper until the Los Angeles Galaxy finally signed him later that year.

Once again, however, Rowe was watching most of his team's matches from the bench, only getting an occasional opportunity to play when the Galaxy's starting keeper

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wasn't available. In his first three seasons with the Galaxy, Rowe estimates that he played about 10 full matches — and never more than two consecutively.

In this year's season opener, Rowe found an immediate opportunity to play when the Galaxy's starting goalkeeper, Dan Kennedy, was injured early in the first half. Rowe has remained in the Galaxy's goal box ever since and has proven himself to be one of the best goalkeepers in the league.

In the 2016 regular MLS season, Rowe had the highest save percentage of any keeper to play a majority of the season (or 2,000 minutes) and the lowest Goals Against Average (GAA) of any keeper playing at least 30 matches, at 1.10.

Rowe also ranked third in the league for most shutouts (9) and third for most saves (113 saves of 148 shots faced —

many less than the only two keepers with more saves this season). It's no wonder the website *Total MLS* recently selected Rowe as "Goalkeeper of the Year."

While the Galaxy's season and playoff hopes ended Nov. 6 after a dramatic penalty shootout in which Galaxy's veteran offensive players failed to put the ball in the back net three out of their four attempts, it was undoubtedly a successful and rewarding season for Eugene's rising soccer star.

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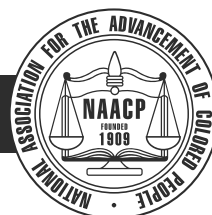
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EUGENE



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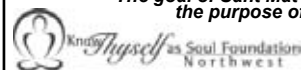
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