



For eight years I dedicated my time to the same soccer club and those eight years are some of the most memorable years of my life. I made incredible friends that I am still friends with and always will be and had amazing coaches. I had a lot of traveling experiences that most kids never get, experiences that were unlike any other. I also made friends through networking opportunities that I got from playing club soccer. The best thing I ever did was get involved with Idaho Rush.

Making life-long friends that aren't a part of their everyday lives is a very rare thing for young kids, most kids find their best friends at school where they are with them all the time. By playing club soccer I was able to make friends that didn't go to my school and those girls are the best friends I ever made. I looked forward to the days we had practice because not only was I excited to play, but it also meant that we all got to see each other. All of us have graduated and gone off to college now, but we still keep in contact and I still consider them a very important part of my life. The other great thing about Idaho Rush was the coaching staff. All of them were great coaches and more importantly great mentors, I was always able to look up to all the men that coached me and they all taught me valuable lessons that had to do with more than just soccer.

Although practices and games here at home were enough to create a strong bond between my team, nothing made us grow closer that traveling. Club soccer provided so many opportunities to travel around and showcase our talents and knowing that we were in another state representing not only Rush but our home state of Idaho gave us a whole new level of pride. Sometimes it was easy to blame each other for losses but it seemed like when we were away from home, we lost as a team because being somewhere else and wearing a Rush jersey we knew it was something bigger than ourselves. At home, everyone knows the players on the opposing team or at least has an idea of who they are, but when we went away no one knew who we were as individuals they only knew us as Idaho Rush. Traveling made me open my eyes and realize that when I stepped on the field it was no longer about me; I was part of something larger than myself.

Since I played club soccer, I was also able to meet people from other places and was given opportunities to guest play with out-of-state teams. I played in a local tournament with a team from Hawaii on summer and became very close with the girls as well as the coach. The next two summers the coach called me and asked me to play with them in a tournament in Seattle. Guest playing was a great opportunity and it really expanded my network.

I loved all of my time playing for Idaho Rush and I wouldn't have changed any of it. It developed me as a player and also a person and gave me so many cool opportunities. I created friendships that will last a lifetime, learned lessons from coaches that will stay with me forever, had chances to travel and see the bigger picture, and got to meet and play with people from other states. Club

soccer was the most important and beneficial part of my childhood.