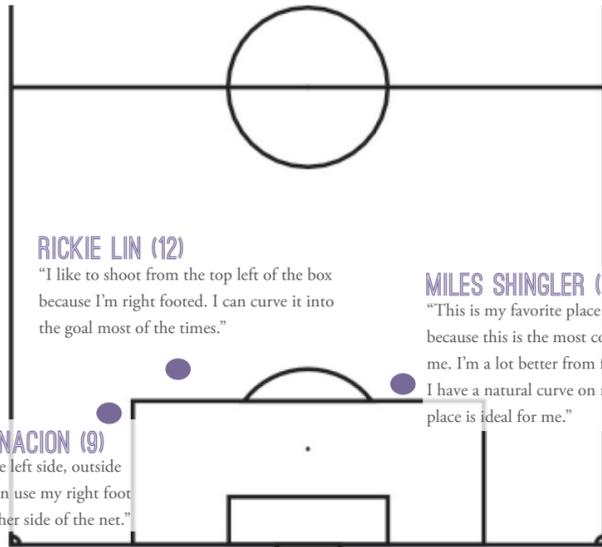


INSIDE AND OUT

PLAYERS DESCRIBE FAVORITE SHOT AROUND GOALIE BOX



RICKIE LIN (12)

"I like to shoot from the top left of the box because I'm right footed. I can curve it into the goal most of the times."

MILES SHINGLER (11)

"This is my favorite place to shoot from because this is the most common shot for me. I'm a lot better from far out shots and I have a natural curve on my shot, so this place is ideal for me."

ALEXANDRO ENCARNACION (9)

"I like to shoot from the left side, outside the 18-yard box, so I can use my right foot and curve it into the other side of the net."



PUSH FORWARD // Tucker Titus (9) runs down the field to possess the ball during the Feb. 8 game against Windsor Forest. "I am running after the ball when I played it near the sideline," Titus said. "Possessing the ball can change the momentum of a soccer game. There are no time outs so you have to methodically possess the ball whenever you can, so you can control the game." Photo by Bailey Strickland.

RIC FLAIR

Design by Alan Gibbs.

PLAYERS SHOUT UNIQUE CHANT TO MOTIVATE EACH OTHER

Still wearing their yellow, green, or blue pennies from their drills, the boys huddled together after their practice. Sweaty shin guards were barely supported by soccer socks bunched around players' ankles. After coach Chad Griffin ended the prayer, players looked around the huddle until they found Alan Gibbs (12). They cleared their throats to prepare for their favorite chant.

"A senior, Alan Gibbs, says 'Can I get two claps and a ric flair?' and then everyone else claps twice and yells, 'Woah!'" J.C. Upton (10) said. "It is a thing that we had all heard before in other sports and that was inspired by the WWE wrestler, Ric Flair."

Gibbs learned the Ric Flair chant from a coach on the football team. Ric Flair was a professional wrestler who let out large whoops and hollers during his speeches. Gibbs introduced the chant to the soccer team, hoping it would provide excitement and motivation for the team.

"My uncle I think was the first one to show it to me," Nathan Sheldon (9) said. "I found it very cool and fun, but it was even cooler when I was able to do it with the team after games and practices."

"IT JUST LIGHTENS THE MOOD A LITTLE AND GETS US RELAXED. IT ALSO HELPS US REALIZE THAT WE HAVE TO FOCUS AND KEEP PUSHING EACH OTHER THROUGH TOUGH PRACTICES OR GAMES." NATHAN SHELDON (9)

After hearing the chant for the first time, some players were caught off guard. The spontaneity of the chant was surprising at first, but players caught on and looked forward to the chant after a couple of days.

"Alan started saying the phrase after our first practice," Luca Patten (10) said. "[At first], I didn't really want to do it because I don't usually speak out that much. Now, we feel sort of a connection with each other when we do it."

The Ric Flair chant was intended to remind the boys of their common goal. They ended each practice and game, win or loss, with the Ric Flair chant to provide a sense of unity and a determination to win.

"It just lightens the mood a little and gets us relaxed," Sheldon said. "It also helps us realize that we have to focus and keep pushing each other through tough practices or games. The team is also made up of really awesome guys and I am so proud to play with them."

Gibbs looked back at all the players staring at him in the huddle. They ended their practice yelling at the top of their lungs just like they did every other time.

"Can I get two claps and a ric flair?" Players clapped twice. "Woah!" Story by Nicole Crowley.



PASS BACK // Jacob Shepherd (12) passes the ball back to another teammate during a pregame drill. "I am kicking the soccer ball to a team mate after first trapping it. We do a drill where we pass the ball directly back to the person who passed us the ball. I am a striker, or a forward, on the team. The midfielders are supposed to pass the ball up to us and we shoot the ball to score. That's how you win," Shepherd said. Getting the ball to the strikers was a key factor in each game. Photo by Abby Hunsinger.

CLEAR IT AWAY // Cole Carswell (10) takes his steps to clear the ball out of the back of the field. "I am dribbling down the field, heading towards the opponents goal pushing against their defense with my team mates along with me," Carswell said. Clearing this ball away helped the midfield move the ball up the field and away from their own goal. Photo by Brandon Brooks.

THE JUGGLER // Andrew Wilkins (11) volleys a ball by himself in order to practice his "touch." "I'm juggling the ball by myself to get familiar with my touch before the game starts. I primarily play the position of defensive midfielder, meaning that I stay just in front of the defenders as an extra midfielder. I help distribute and possess the ball in the middle of the field," Wilkins said. Since players, except goalkeepers, can't use their hands during a game, they have to learn how to control the ball through the air with only their feet. Photo by Bailey Strickland.

DRIBBLE ON THROUGH // Reece Dominguez (9) turns and makes a cut to the outside of the soccer field. "I just got the ball and I was looking for a cross or to take it straight down line," Dominguez said. Being able to make quick turns and dives made the difference between a good and a bad soccer player. Photo by Abby Hunsinger.



"MY FAVORITE MOVIE IS 'PULP FICTION' BECAUSE IT HAS A GOOD PLOT AND HAS BOTH OF MY FAVORITE ACTORS IN IT." PETER CLIFTON (10)



"MY FAVORITE BOOK IS 'THE GREAT GATSBY' BECAUSE IT IS FILLED WITH ROMANCE AND EVERYTHING IS LAYED OUT WITH MYSTERY." CARRIE STACK (11)



"MY FAVORITE HOLIDAY IS CHRISTMAS BECAUSE WE CELEBRATE JESUS' BIRTH AND THE PRESENTS ARE NICE, TOO." HAYDEN DICKEY (6)