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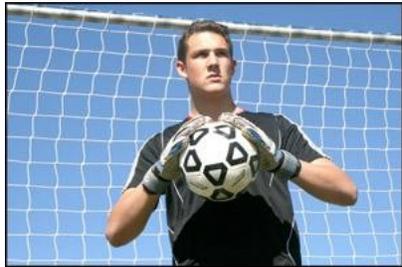
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Bringing his magic to the Rangers



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Julian Lindeken, who is from Essen, Germany, is spending his foreign exchange year playing soccer for Vista Ridge High School before he returns home to school and the prospect of a four-year contract with a professional soccer club.

Posted Thursday, January 15, 2009 5:00 pm

by Jenn Rains, Hill Country News

Professional soccer awaits Lindeken in Germany

Julian Lindeken might first appear as a typical 17-year-old Vista Ridge student. He likes warm weather, chatting with friends online, playing sports and he loves Whataburger. So what makes Lindeken stand out from his other classmates, aside from his 6-foot 6-inch stature?

When Lindeken returns to his native Essen, Germany, in June for his final year of school, he already has his next four years planned out, but they won't be in college. Though he hasn't signed it yet, he has been offered a contract to be the goalkeeper for MSV Duisburg, a professional soccer club in Germany.

"It's a dream. I'm living my dream right now," said Lindeken, who is an exchange student here for the 2008-09 school year. He got the call two weeks ago about going pro, he said.

When he first thought about coming to America for a year, Lindeken said he had to weigh his options about soccer, but after talking with his host family, he was sold and he couldn't pass up the opportunity to come to America. "I have a super host family. I met them and thought 'I have to go.' That's the best thing that could happen," he said.

"It's a second life almost. Who has the chance to do that?" he said. "Now I've got everything. I feel incredible right now." Lindeken, who has a 12-year-old sister, also finds it very cool to have two host brothers.

When Lindeken suits up for the Rangers' soccer team, it won't be his first time in a Vista Ridge jersey. He had the privilege of being the kicker for the football team last semester - his first taste of American football.

Lindeken said when coming to America, he had heard about football and how big of a sport it was, but playing was a totally different experience.



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"[Former head football coach Bill Wilder] thought about me being a tight end because of my size, but I'd never played, I didn't know the rules, I didn't know anything about it," he said.

Getting pumped up with his team and busting through the sign was one of his favorite parts of football season, along with kicking a field goal to put the Rangers up 3-0 in the Leander game. However, it was a nerve-wracking experience too.

"I've never been that nervous before. For this one second, everyone is watching me, the kicker," Lindeken said. "When I kicked that first one, I got the first (field) goal for Vista Ridge in 5A."

Though he was sad when the season was over, Lindeken said it was a great experience, one that amazed him.

"It's high school and there were so many people. It was like a movie," he said. He said one thing that was different from any sport in Germany is the way it was a team effort with lots of spirit and not every man for himself. "The school really stands behind the team; it's all about the Rangers."

Soccer is his real life though, and he's very excited to be playing with a Rangers team that made it to state last year, said Lindeken, who has been playing the sport since he was three years old.

"He brings a lot of things to the team, especially his experience, and he is a very good communicator," said Vista Ridge soccer coach David Hilsenteger. It also puts the coach in a unique situation because he already has a goalkeeper in Trey Ponce and now he must decide who will start - a decision he hasn't made yet.

Hilsenteger said this is very rare for him because often foreign exchange students have listed that they play soccer, but "it's very rare they pan out to be what they say they are on paper, so I never knew what to expect. It's very nice to have someone like Julian here."

Despite keeping for a position, Lindeken's goal for the season is simple: "To be successful with the Rangers and have fun and go as far as possible," he said.

Lindeken said it can get pretty stressful playing soccer sometimes, but he's found his own unique way of handling that pressure.

"It's pretty good to come down from soccer so when I need to relax, I practice magic. It's a complete other side of my life," Lindeken said. He's quick to add that it's not the typical cliched magic tricks either.

One of his favorites, Lindeken said, is a card trick that drove his host mom crazy. A person signs a card and puts it back in the deck. When he throws the deck against a window, the card with the signature sticks to the other side of the window.

When asked how it works, the grinning teenager said that was his secret. "I'm very strict with my magic. I don't tell."

While his magic might be a secret, his desire to visit America again isn't. "I'll definitely come back to visit," Lindeken said. "I love it here. It's like my second home."

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