

**ATHLETES ASSESS**

**Senior soccer player shares D1 recruiting experience**



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Per the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the college recruitment process for soccer begins June 15 of your sophomore year of high school, which really means colleges can start talking to you directly on that day. For me, that day was pretty eventful, meaning I got a few calls, but nothing really came out of it.

Throughout my sophomore and junior years, I would try to email coaches every two weeks or so to keep updating them with my games, highlight reels, and academics. I think the biggest mistake that I made during this process was not staying on top of my emails because it is important to every coach that they know you are interested in them.

Another huge part of the process was the out-of-state tournaments. They are designed for college coaches to come watch and recruit players, so it was crucial to play my best soccer at those events. I had a few schools express interest in me, but it wasn't anywhere that I could see myself playing soccer and definitely not living for the next four years of my life.

That was really important to me. I knew that I wanted to play soccer in college, but I also had to take into consideration the campus and the programs that the school had. It was very important for me to find somewhere that offered a place I could see myself living and going to school.

Eventually, the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) began showing interest in me. I'm not sure what tournament UTSA first saw me play in, but their interest in me started near the end of my junior year. Luckily, I had private training every morning before school and the coaches at that training were good friends with the coaching staff at UTSA.

This was really significant for me because I tore my ACL the summer before going into my senior year and I was already considered to be "late" in the recruiting process. Having both the private training coaches and UTSA coaches watch me play and train prior to my injury allowed the UTSA coaches to be confident in recruiting me.

A few days before my ACL surgery, head coach, Derek Pittman, called me for the first time. He told me he had faith in my skills as a player and knew I would work extremely hard to not only get back to where I was, but better.

My first time ever communicating with coach Pittman, he offered me the chance to play for his team. It's valuable for me that Coach Pittman was willing to offer me a spot on the team despite my injury, because it shows that he has confidence in my ability.

Once I could walk after my surgery, I went on an official visit and loved the atmosphere of the team. All of my worries about being able to continue to play the sport that has shaped me to be the person I am today left when I got to meet my future teammates.

Another big part of my decision to commit to UTSA was the fact that they are putting a lot of effort into growing the women's soccer program. They just built a new locker room for women's soccer as well as a brand new athletic building for all of the athletes.

The athletic building has a weight room, training room, hot and cold tubs, athletic massage as well as study rooms for only athletes. The day after my visit, I decided that UTSA was the place where I wanted to spend the next chapter of my life. ■

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# Father-daughter dancing in ring

*Freshman Quinn Loyd practices mixed martial arts form Muay Thai with coach*

Caroline Baxter  
Dispatch Reporter

Freshman Quinn Loyd narrows her eyes at her father who dances on the other side of the ring. Closing the space, Loyd lashes out a powerful kick, which she follows with a series of ferocious hits.

Loyd has been training for her first Muay Thai, a form of mixed martial arts, competition which will take place in June 2024. Despite only fighting for a short period of time, Loyd's father has helped her prepare since she first showed interest in the sport.

"My dad noticed that there was a Muay Thai gym across the street, so we joined it," Loyd said. "I was like, 'Dad I want to do that as soon as I'm done with cheer.'"

Originating from Thailand, Muay Thai is a form of boxing that incorporates kicks, elbows, and sweeps. Loyd was first introduced to the sport when her dad began attending Warrior Family Muay Thai which was located near her cheer gym.

"I love training with him because he's a really great person and a very important person in my life," Loyd said. "I wouldn't have been able to socialize as easily because they are mostly adults. So, he kind of eased me into it."

Conversely, Jaylin Loyd, Quinn's father, enjoys the

opportunity to bond with his daughter. He always enjoys quality time with Loyd and his family.

"I really enjoy spending time with her at the gym and traveling back and forth," Jaylin Loyd said. "It gives us time to just talk about whatever comes up, silly or serious."

Jaylin started training in the art of Muay Thai 18 months ago, thereby enlisting Quinn to join him 14 months ago. Quinn has the advantage of youth on her father, but Jaylin uses his athleticism from other activities during his high school years to help her train.

"I participated in fencing and wrestling in high school," Jaylin said. "I only started learning Muay Thai at Warrior Family in February 2022."

Since both Loyd and her dad started around the same time at Warrior Family Muay Thai, they have been training together their entire time there.

"In some aspects, I think it's a benefit that he's not afraid to correct me if I'm wrong. He's very focused on me," Quinn said. "He's like 'Don't get knocked out.' We definitely have different skill levels and he is still older."

Quinn doesn't let the possibility of getting hurt affect her training work ethic. She loves how aggressive Muay Thai is and how similar it is to dance, which she's done in the past.

“Muay Thai is basically a form of super aggressive dancing. It’s a good way to get out anxiousness and nervousness.”  
**Quinn Loyd**  
Muay Thai fighter



**IN COMBAT:** Freshman Quinn Loyd spars with her father. Quinn was first introduced to Muay Thai, a form of mixed martial arts originating in Thailand, by her father. **PHOTO BY** Will Olemick

"I've been a very athletic person my entire life. Muay Thai is basically a form of super aggressive dancing," Quinn said. "It's a good way to get out anxiousness and nervousness and feel more settled and sound with yourself."

In what started as a simple chance to bond with her father, Quinn has since considered pursuing Muay Thai competitively. Now, Quinn has until June 2024 to prepare for one of the biggest competitions in the country, Thai Boxing Association Classic.

"MDL stands for Muay Thai Development League. It's similar to a scrimmage or practice scenario," Quinn said. "It's for people of all ages and different skill levels. Right now it's not a fight, no one is winning or losing. But coming up in June I will have an actual fight, with a good chance of getting a belt."

One of her coaches, Oskar Estrada, believes that with more training, and Quinn's natural ability to fight, she'll be ready to go for her next competitions.

"I do believe she's a fierce competitor," Estrada said. "With the right training and

coaching she can go far in this sport. There's plenty of talent in her division and she can be up there, but it will take dedication and passion."

The first belt you can get in Muay Thai is a white belt. According to Estrada, Quinn has many good fighting attributes and has strong suits when it comes to earning Muay Thai belts.

"Quinn is still developing a fighting style, but she's an aggressive pressure fighter," Estrada said. "Quinn is best at her kicks and she can execute them well. Her best attributes are that she listens well and takes direction from us coaches when competing or sparring."

As Quinn is getting ready for her major competition in June, she has a rugged training schedule, practicing up to five times a week. These practices include skills training, punching bags, weight lifting, and conditioning.

"It's pretty rigorous," Quinn said. "Monday there's two classes, and Tuesdays I do one class. Wednesdays is homework. Thursdays I do two classes. On Fridays, I do two classes too. And then Saturdays,

there's a very long training day, but if you are fighting you come early to run."

Quinn credits the support she gets from Jaylin and her sister, Avery Loyd, for her continual growth in Muay Thai.

"My sister is very much into it. If she is ever there she's going to scream. But my dad has been there at every single class and always checking me to see if I am okay," Quinn said. "I think my dad is my biggest supporter. He's almost like my coach in the aspect where he tells me what I need to do to fix these things. All my dad wants for me is to get better." ■

**SCANTO SEE MORE!**



**VIDEO BY** Will Olemick



**THROWING A PUNCH:** Loyd readies herself for training by using a punching bag. Loyd practices everyday to prepare for a competition in June. **PHOTO BY** Adriana Choueiry

# Special teams completes 'Dawgs in playoff push

Cooper Fike  
Dispatch Reporter

Taking a deep breath, senior kicker Seediya Jabbi readies himself for the ensuing play by mentally visualizing the ball soaring through the uprights. Nodding to the holder, Jabbi watches as the ball is snapped and spun, laces facing away from him.

Striding forward, Jabbi strikes through the center of the ball, propelling it into the air. Seconds later, thanks to Jabbi, the 'Dawgs have added three points to the scoreboard. With a background in soccer, Jabbi originally began kicking for the 'Dawgs during his sophomore year.

"I felt like I was naturally good at kicking," Jabbi said. "I knew I had the potential to be good, so I stuck with it."

Jabbi was first given the chance to kick for the varsity 'Dawgs in the 2022 season, but was officially named the starting kicker this year as a senior. So far, Jabbi has accounted for two touchdowns and averages just over 46 yards each kick-off attempt.

"It felt good to have put in the work and it paid off," Jabbi said. "The season has been going great and I've been playing well. It has been important for me to stay consistent. The team relies on me to make the easy points, so I need to do my job."

Jabbi has statistically been one of the best kickers in the district, making 90% of his points after attempts. Furthermore, Jabbi has successfully converted



**ICING ON THE CAKE:** Senior kicker Seediya Jabbi kicks an extra point attempt after a 'Dawgs touchdown. Jabbi has made 26 of his 29 point after attempts this season. **PHOTO BY** Nick Wood

on four of his six field goal attempts this season.

"The mental side of kicking is one of the biggest aspects," Jabbi said. "You have to be confident when kicking. For me, it's easy to have confidence because

of the support group around me. My whole family goes to the games and my coaches support me fully."

Coach Sam Miller is the special teams coordinator. His job is to determine the players that kick for the

'Dawgs, and in doing so has determined Jabbi to be the best option for the team.

"When we're looking for kickers and punters, we look for consistency," Miller said. "Nowadays, kickers and punters specialize and we've had kids these last couple years that specialize in those traits and have done a great job for us."

According to Jabbi, coach Miller has been instrumental in his on-field success.

"Coach Miller pays attention to how I play and helps me by figuring out what works for me to be successful," Jabbi said. "Overall, he's given me the chance to play and perform."

While Jabbi specializes in kicking extra point attempts in field goals, senior Jacob Pulido is responsible for punting the ball. Pulido began punting his junior year and has quickly solidified himself as starting punter for the 'Dawgs.

"I felt like it was an easy position to play so I tried out," Pulido said. "Now I don't believe that at all. There's always going to be a lot of pressure. This being said, if one of my punts is bad I try not to let it get to me. I know I will have another chance, and I know I can do better."

Through nine games and 44 punts, Pulido has amassed a total 1310 punt yards, his longest being 46 yards. Overall, Pulido averages 30 yards per punt.

"I think everyone thinks that playing on special teams is super easy," Pulido said. "Fans don't understand how hard it is to get the ball to go where you want it to go." ■

**COMING UP IN SPORTS:**

**NOVEMBER 17** Varsity swimming Tri-Meet @ Camp Moody YMCA

**NOVEMBER 20** Varsity boys basketball vs. McNeil @ Bowie High School

**DECEMBER 1** Varsity girls basketball vs. Anderson @Bowie High School

**DECEMBER 8** Varsity boys soccer vs. Taylor @ Burger Stadium