

Christiansons clubbing the ball for Kennedy

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This is the first time Gareth and Gabe Christianson have donned the green and yellow for the Kennedy High School soccer team, but the Christianson brothers are not strangers to the Cedar Rapids soccer community.

The Christiansons have been two of the top club players in Cedar Rapids for years. Gareth is a senior forward and has committed to play for Drake next season. Gabe, a junior midfielder, is a four star recruit and is the 50th ranked prospect in the nation, according to topdrawersoccer.com.

“Gabe is just a midfield presence that other teams have to deal with defensively,” said Kennedy co-head coach Steven Robertson. “Having a guy like that in the middle of the field with his dynamic ability to deliver passes, beat defenders, see runs that other guys maybe don’t see and then still be able to get the ball there is what makes him so devastating to defenses.”

Robertson also is excited about the skills Gareth brings to the Cougars this season.

“Gareth can do all the things you need out of a forward,” he said. “He can beat defenders, he has speed, he has the ability to do some things when the ball is played to his feet. He is really just a goal scorer, he puts the ball in the net. He can either do it finesse-wise when it is necessary, and when power is necessary he can just rip the ball and score from anywhere.”

So why did they finally decide to join the high school soccer team?

“This year it just seemed to make more sense for me,” Gabe said. “The previous two years I

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have had a lot of conflicts, with both club soccer and the Olympic Development Program. This year it has kind of slowed down a little bit for me so I thought I would come out and play for Kennedy.”

Garet, who played club for Eastern Iowa United last season, is now playing for the West Des Moines Soccer Club and cannot practice with them as much because of the distance, so he's glad to get some extra touches this spring.

“When we do practice I normally make it up once a week,” he said. “Once a week isn't quite what I want so high school soccer definitely helps.”

The Cougars are glad they decided to join them for this season.

“They really understand how to play well in the system that we are playing,” teammate Matt Peak said. “They have just created a lot of opportunities and a lot of goals.”

It didn't take long for their presence to be noticed on the team. In Kennedy's first game this season against Dubuque Hempstead, Garet scored a team-record five goals.

“I've basically been going out there and my main objective is to score goals for our team,” Garet said. “That's why I play forward, to score goals for my team.”

Several of those goals came off assists from Gabe, who finished the game with a school-record five assists.

“I have just basically tried to fit in and keep the ball, and then go forward when I feel it's on,” Gabe said.

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They haven't slowed down much since. Gareth has 11 goals and two assists through the first three games, with Gabe racking up two goals and eight assists in the same span.

"I have been able to combine with my brother a lot and it seems like every time we combine something good comes, so we have been looking to combine a lot," Gabe said.

The brothers combine so well because they have been playing together since they were kids. Gareth even calls Gabe his wing man.

"There have probably been two or three years that we haven't played together, so the majority of my soccer career I have been playing with him," Gareth said.

Kennedy is glad they've got them now.