



sports

Eagles freshman success story *Justin Libertowski gives AU a spark*

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Justin Libertowski steps onto the soft green grass at Ferguson Field for his first collegiate soccer game. GOAL.

Three days later the team travels to Ohio Dominican to take on the Panthers. Libertowski finds the back of the net again. GOAL.

Back home on the green grass of Ferguson Field a week later (Sept. 9) against Gannon, Libertowski finds the back of the net once again. GOAL. GOAL. Libertowski scored both goals for the Eagles to defeat the Golden Knights 2-1.

In his first three games as a collegiate soccer player at Ashland University, freshman forward Justin Libertowski from Medina, Ohio scored four goals in just three games to help his team to a 3-0 record to start the 2017 campaign.

“He can stretch the game, he’s quick. All the way through his career he knows where the back of the net is,” head coach Oliver Slawson said. “We will just keep riding him as long as we can.”

Libertowski starting playing soccer at the age of 4, influenced by his father he grew to love the game at an early age.

He started playing in rec leagues, then moved up to travel and club soccer as well.

Libertowski attended Medina High School in Medina, Ohio and played soccer all four years. In the first game of his sophomore year, Libertowski suffered a collarbone injury that would put him out for the rest of the year.

“That was a big setback, but when I got back I was more focused, more determined, and worked that

much harder.”

Although suffering that injury, Libertowski came back his junior and senior years of high school ready to lead his team.



Libertowski rushing toward the ball during a game at the start of the season.

His senior year, Libertowski was named first-team All-Ohio and helped his team to 18 wins and its first state semifinal appearance. At Medina High School, Libertowski holds the record for goals in a season (37), points in a season (79), and assists in a game (four).

In high school, Libertowski searched for schools to attend to play soccer and decided between

Ashland University or John Carroll University.

“The second I heard that the men’s soccer program was starting back up and Oliver Slawson was

high level in club soccer.

However, Libertowski knew that he had something to prove while entering college soccer.

So far in this young season, Libertowski has met that expectation for himself by scoring five goals on the season while having two assists, totaling up to 12 points which leads the team. While he is on the field, Libertowski gives a spark to the Eagles offense and gives a jump start when needed.

“He’s doing everything we knew he could do when we recruited him,” Slawson said.

Libertowski likes the challenge of playing a better opponent in collegiate soccer, one who is much stronger and taller than he is. On his five goals that he has scored in this young season, Libertowski gives a lot of the credit to his teammates for feeding him the ball so that he can easily one-touch it and find the back of the goal.

Libertowski hopes to continue to spark his team so that they may succeed and reach the goal of winning the GLIAC conference this season.

“We’re still building our program, we’re still a young team, so I think that if we can win a conference finals that would be great.” he said.

While attending Ashland University, Libertowski is a finance major and is extremely excited to be a huge part of this men’s soccer program.

“I really think that we’re a good, young program that’s only going to get better, hopefully start a legacy to be a successful soccer program.” he said.

AU football midseason review

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After losing the season opener, 26-23, to Indiana University of Pennsylvania, the Ashland University football team has rattled off four straight wins and finds themselves with a 4-1 record at the half-way point of the 2017 season.

Ashland started the season as an unranked team in the AFCA poll, but their four game winning streak has helped them jump into the top 25 as they hold the No. 18 spot after five weeks of football.

Ashland took now No. 4 IUP down to the wire as Ashland had the go ahead field goal blocked with 1:45 left to play and IUP was able to march down the field and knock the winning field goal through as time expired.

The week one loss put the Eagles in the hole, but they picked up some valuable strength of schedule points that would help them come playoff time.

“This was a little different than last year’s losses because it was to such a good football team,” head coach Lee Owens said. “They are awfully talented, athletic, I wouldn’t be surprised to see them run the table in their league and make a deep run in the playoffs.”

After the loss, Owens said that the team discovered many of the weaknesses that they would need to work on and they certainly corrected those things prior to their week two matchup against Ohio Dominican which was called the “division II battle of Ohio.”

Ashland defended their home turf in a big way against ODU as they dominated the Panthers, 47-21.

The win solidified Ashland’s title of the premier division II football team in the state of Ohio and put the Eagles back on track.

After the big win over ODU, Ashland took their second road

trip of the season as they traveled to Northwood.

The Eagles had no problem dismantling the Timberwolves defense as they scored 42 points in the first half as they went on to win 42-14.

The win marked No. 100 in Owen’s career and senior quarterback Travis Tarnowski also became the program’s all-time leading passer (9,482) after throwing for 339 yards and passing Billy Cundiff.

Following the dominant road victory, the Eagles returned home to the friendly confines of Jack Miller Stadium to take on, then No. 2, Ferris State.

The Bulldogs came into the week four matchup with the best offense in the country averaging over 640 yards per game and they left Ashland with just three points on the scoreboard.

Ashland dominated Ferris State in every facet of the game and it showed on the scoreboard as Ashland pushed their regular season home winning streak to 19 games with the 20-3 victory.

Despite Ashland’s home dominance the Eagles would play four of the five games in the middle of the season on the road but they got a bit of a break after the hard fought win over the Bulldogs as they headed to take on winless Davenport.

AU did not take their foot off the gas as their lead quickly swelled to 38-0 and stayed that way until the end.

The win marked the first road shutout for the Eagles in 23 years.

“The grind of the road doesn’t seem to be having the impact on us up to this point,” Owens said. “What I am seeing with this team that I’m most pleased with whether you look at IUP, or you look at Northwood or you look at Davenport is the way we travel, the way its business like demeanor, the focus the day of the game, it’s almost

like our guys like getting together traveling together, staying in a hotel together and getting ready to go the next day with very little distraction.”

It was a very successful first half of the season, but Owens said that now is not the time to look back.

“It’s so hard to look back, we are focusing on Northern, I know right now this is back-to-back road trips and it can wear a team out, and it’ll be great to be back home next week,” Owens said. “We are trying to play this thing where it’s a one game season, we are in the championship race, we are in first place with two other teams so every week we play we are playing for the GLIAC championship.”

The second half of the year will not be a cakewalk for the Eagles.

“We are trying to play this thing where it’s a one game season, we

are in the championship race, we are in first place with two other teams so every week we play we are playing for the GLIAC championship,” Owens said. “When you present it that way it takes the sting away from an early loss at IUP where we didn’t finish or it takes away a little of the hype from beating Ferris, which we really don’t need right now, you just have to try to stay in the moment.”

Ashland opens up the second half with a trip to Marquette, Michigan to take on the Northern Michigan Wildcats in the Superior Dome.

“The dome’s a really hard place to play,” Owens said. “There’s a humidity factor, there’s a heat factor that you’re not aware of you just don’t even realize how hot it is, how much water or fluid you’re losing how much energy you’re losing during the game and teams



The football team is currently 4-1 on the season after a shutout against Davenport and ranked No. 18 nationally.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Women’s Soccer

Oct. 6 @ Grand Valley St.

Oct. 8 vs. Ferris St.

Oct. 13 @ Michigan Tech

Oct. 15 @ Northern Michigan

Men’s Soccer

Oct. 6 @ Purdue NW

Oct. 8 vs. Davenport

Oct. 13 @ Northwood

Volleyball

Oct. 13-14 @ Midwest Region Crossover

Football

Oct. 7 @ Northern

Michigan

Oct. 14 vs. Michigan Tech

Cross Country

Oct. 7 @ Carnegie Mellon

Hampton Invitational

Women’s Golf

Oct. 8-9 @ Bing Beall Inv.

Tennis

Oct. 7 @ Northern

Michigan

Oct. 14 vs. Grand Valley State

Oct. 15 vs. Ferris State

get “domed,” in terms of not being able to handle that inside atmosphere that teams aren’t used to playing in.”

From there the season does not let up for the Eagles as they return home on Oct. 14 for the homecoming matchup against Michigan Tech.

Then the Eagles hit the road for back-to-back weeks as they will take on Tiffin and Wayne State.

After the road trip, the Eagles will be back home at Jack Miller Stadium for their second marquee matchup of the year as they will take on Grand Valley State on Nov. 4 before finishing up the season with Saginaw Valley State on Nov. 11.