



# Sprenkel, Meyer recognized for All-America honors

The DePauw Men's Soccer program wrapped up its 2011 season accolades in Kansas City where a pair of Tigers received All-America honors capping the college careers of two of DePauw's finest. Seniors Nathan Sprenkel and Sam Meyer were recognized by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) at its national convention.

Sprenkel finishes his tenure at DePauw as one of the finest goalkeepers in program history and the All-America honor the culmination of his highly decorated career. In 2010 he earned First Team All-Region honors after posting a .43 GAA in 1657 minutes of work. In that same year Sprenkel was also a First Team All-SCAC performer and earned the distinction of SCAC Defensive Player of the Year.

Sprenkel only raised his standard in 2011, being named a First Team All-NCAC performer and once again earning the coveted title of Defensive Player of the Year. For the second year in a row he was voted a First Team All-Region goalkeeper. However, this time he went one step further, earning Second Team All-America honors.

"Walking into such a massive place that was set up so extravagantly really caused things to fall into perspective," says Sprenkel. "I began reflecting back on the journey leading up to that afternoon and tried to take everything in because I knew it would be over before long."



Seniors Nathan Sprenkel and Sam Meyer at the NSCAA All-America banquet in Kansas City.

But what made the day even more special was that he had company. Joining the DePauw goalkeeper was senior classmate, Sam Meyer. Different from Sprenkel, however, Meyer left his mark on the offensive side of the field. One of the most explosive players in program history, Meyer led the 2011 team with 13

goals and 5 assists, good enough for 31 points overall, ranking him second in the North Coast Athletic Conference.

But Meyer's legacy may well be his innate ability to find the back of the net in the defining moment, scoring five game-winners and assisting on three others in the regular season. It was a trend that continued in post-season play; first in an overtime winner against Hiram College, then again in one of the great performances in program history, bagging two goals in the North Coast Tournament Championship, to propel the Tigers into their first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2001.

For his work Meyer was voted First Team All-NCAC, First Team All-Region and Second Team All-America.

"It feels really good to see all the hard work pay off," says Meyer. "I hope this sparks some much deserved recognition for DePauw soccer program. We definitely have a few guys that deserve this honor and I hope they can be as fortunate as I am to receive it."

## All-American Reflections

*"I guess I had no idea how big this event really is. Hearing what all of the other All-American recipients have achieved thus far in their career was quite humbling. That being said, it was an amazing experience and I am glad I got to share with the Sprenkels, Coach Nick and my own family."*

*-Sam Meyer*

*"This award means a great deal to me personally but more importantly to DePauw Soccer. Having two All-Americans recognized in one year can only lead to bigger things for this program. I am excited to see what doors this opens for the Tigers and I am just honored and humbled to have been a part of it."*

*-Nathan Sprenkel*

# Tigers take part in pro soccer combine

Following their successful 2011 season a pair of Tigers are looking to continue the trend in the new year. DePauw senior All-Americans, Sam Meyer and Nathan Sprenkel, recently traveled to Florida where they took part in the 12th annual InfoSport Pro Soccer Combine. The combine took place from January 3-5 at the Premier Sports Campus near Bradenton where coaches and scouts from professional clubs in the MLS, USL, NASL and MISL were present.

Over the three days period 265 players gathered on the Bermuda grass fields hoping to catch the observant eye of the professional staff which included coaches from organizations such as the Chicago Fire, Houston Dynamo, Sporting KC, Real Salt Lake and Philadelphia Union.

"The atmosphere was amazing," recalls Meyer. "I had the chance to play with some very talented players

from all across the world. It was a very high level of competition and gave me the opportunity to see what type of players make it at a professional level."

The format required that the players be divided up into fourteen teams. The players trained and competed in match play, which included small-sided and full-sided games, with their teams over the course of the combine. Though the typical day for a goalkeeper was slightly different.

"As a goalkeeper, we naturally worked longer and harder than the field players," says Sprenkel with a smile. "The first full day consisted of small-sided 7v7 games, each one lasting between 20-25 minutes. There were about six of these and after the last one it was time for lunch. After a short lunch break the goalkeepers were back at it for an hour of keeper training."

But whether a goalkeeper or a field player, every player had to deal with the emotions that accompany such an event. "The most challenging part of the combine was the first day," says Meyer. "There was a lot of anxiety and uncertainty, and you could see it in everyone's eyes."

Sprenkel observed a similar pattern. "There were a lot of nerves coming from everywhere the first morning. Some guys were able to hide it better than others, but you could tell everyone was pretty anxious."

However, after their nerves settled the All-America performers returned to their winning ways. Sprenkel, who trained with Tim Hanley the goalkeeper coach for the Houston Dynamo, found that big saves meant big compliments. "Getting to learn from someone with such high-level experience is humbling and rewarding," says Sprenkel. "When you hear someone of that stature compliment part of your game or say they are impressed by something you're doing really makes you feel good."

And while Sprenkel denied goals, Meyer was busy scoring them—enough to be named to the All-Star game. "The most rewarding part of the combine was being selected to play in the All-Star Game. I was lucky enough to score a few goals and get a chance to play with some of the best players at the camp."



Sam Meyer in action at the InfoSport Pro Combine



Nathan Sprenkel deflects a shot wide of the frame while training in Bradenton, Florida

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