

KAI TAMASHIRO | UNC SOCCER

My name is Kai Tamara Uh play soccer at UN C and originally from the islands of Hawaii coming from the islands of Hawaii It's very isolated especially from recruitment standpoint Um Don't get the most um looks or it's just so far from everyone as far as recruitment So it's definitely hard to be seen at first Um And so making the move uh to Img Academy of Florida at the age of 12 it was a big move for me Um definitely hard to leave my family and friends at a young age But um it was definitely something that needed to be done for the the dreams and aspirations I had I think being at IMG was definitely helpful for me as a as a freshman Um They gave me a lot of good uh tools and just advice on um but also just a good platform to um be recruited and be seen Um But I think something I wish I knew as a as a freshman going into high school Um It's just the importance of realizing that your current sample size of your competition is not the whole picture Um It's way bigger than you think there's way more um athletes who are playing in your position aspiring to be at the schools where you want to go Um And so I'd say definitely not comparing yourself to first of all don't compare yourself to anyone else but um don't get caught in comparing yourself to just the people in your circle Um That circle is so much bigger than you think And so definitely um keep working um try to get a little bit better every day So I think the biggest thing especially now is just the importance of recovery um and consistency I think I mean when you reach a certain level everyone is gonna be pretty good Um everyone can make that play that shot but it's just um how can you do that day in and day out um and being able to properly recover um get your body ready for the next practice next session next game Um It's just gonna allow you to keep getting better but allow you just uh I do believe availability is the most important thing It's the biggest skill you can have and the more available you are the better you can get and um the more your number will be called So I think my dad growing up he was a big um big role model big mentor for me Um He he and my mom were both uh pretty big time athletes growing up Um And so they kind of gave me the foundation not just genetically but also um the right mental um aspects of you know how to kind of take on your sport Um and different things like telling me like win or lose always play like a champion be proud of Um the way you carried yourself on the field Um My mom was big on body language and uh being humble um being half Japanese that's a big part of our culture is just carrying yourself with humility Um Whether you win or lose

just always portraying that Um Respect I think it it's very tricky at first Um You don't really know the level of interest you're gonna get till that June 15th day when colleges can you know contact you of course Um So it can be very tricky as far as like knowing what level of interest you have you know Um I always kind of knew like my standing was probably in that division one area but it was still tricky knowing like you know how many schools are really looking at me right now or um what's the level of you know what power do ones or lower D ones So that was definitely you know a little tricky to think about But I think the biggest thing um my coaches and parents just preached on to me was just focusing on the things that I can control uh both on and off the field Um And you know once June 15th came um it was definitely very like I was happy you know get the interest I was getting Um but then you know that was just the start at the beginning being able to show that you know you're not just uh um an athlete on the field but you know off to fit the way you care yourself um in the classroom how your grades are Um so all of those things that just build up to um kind of build your package of being a good prospect Um And I think the biggest thing as far as recruitment is you want to show what makes you different um and unique I think every prospect is gonna be especially at the schools that you probably aspire to go to um are all gonna be pretty good Um And so what makes you different is the biggest thing I think the goal was always to make it uh to HD one school preferably was the AC C for men's soccer is the power conference to be in Um And for me North Carolina was always kind of um always you know hearing about Michael Jordan um you know the the drip they get at UN C the the clothes they have Um it's a well renowned university Um and they're you know very well known for their soccer program And so when they first contacted me it was definitely it wasn't like um like uh oh shit is just another D one It was it was I was definitely very excited And so um I was really happy about that and it wasn't just the things on the field that excited me It was also the culture they have off campus Um Everyone there just loves the community um in Chapel Hill And so that was a big um aspect about me choosing UN C Um But I think a big part of kind of choosing where you want to end up going is not just making it because of the sport Um Obviously that's a big part of who we are Um what we put a lot of our time into but when you're on a campus um you're not gonna be on the field the entire day Um There's gonna be parts of the day where you're in the classroom where you're gonna have a little more time to relax and so you wanna be somewhere where you're comfortable Um And you're really enjoying your time there I'm

definitely creating a good highlight reel Um This isn't the end all be of you know getting you getting recruited but I think this is a good stepping stone a good first step It's just kind of getting a few good clips just show showcase the kind of player you are Um But also maybe a little resume that um just kind of list the accolades and accomplishments that you've had over a few uh couple of years And so I say that but also um don't be afraid to reach out to coaches You may um or just don't get discouraged as well if they don't um contact you back They they technically cannot contact you until June 15th of your sophomore year the end of your sophomore year So definitely do not get discouraged Um if you don't get the call back the text back email back um just keep pushing I think the biggest one is focusing on the controllable Um uh yeah just focus on the things you can control and let the rest you know happen Definitely uh at IMG they definitely encouraged us to maybe um if we felt comfortable looking into social media more um building our our brand or audience uh at the younger ages kind of building that platform for us to once we get into college we kind of have a good following um to you know be appealing to brands and companies Um And so I'd say definitely start as early as you can Um but only do what you feel comfortable with or what you have time to do Um But also don't focus focus on it too much Um Definitely invest your time into it but it's it shouldn't be your main focus your your academics and your sport should be the most important things Um And uh a big thing my coach is a mentor is my parents always say is that you know if you do the work um you gotta do on the field and in the classroom get yourself right mentally and physically Um