

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight



Kicking is Life for Von Bertrab Madero of NMMI

By Jeff Jackson

Whether he's on the football field or the soccer pitch, Hans Von Bertrab Madero is getting a kick out of his senior year at the New Mexico Military Institute.

The cadet from Coahuila, Mexico, with a German heritage, is a defender for the Colts soccer club while moonlighting as a kicker and punter for NMMI's football team.

Von Bertrab Madero has been playing soccer since he was three years old, but the other sport is a whole new ball game.

"Soccer has been my passion my whole life so I'm usually up for soccer, but I also like football," Von Bertrab Madero said.

"After I started playing football, I began to like it too because it's not the same thing. People think it's easy if you play soccer to kick a football, but I've learned it's not. I like football sometimes in some ways and soccer in other ways."

There is not much of a scheduling conflict between the two sports. On Thursdays, he is with the football team practicing for a game Friday. The rest of the time he works with the soccer team. If there are soccer and football games the same day, Von Bertrab Madero sticks with his natural game of soccer, but that has happened just once this season.

"It's not hard for him to juggle both sports," said Colts soccer coach John Barbour.

Von Bertrab Madero finds an interesting comparison and contrast of the two games. Football and soccer are comparable in that he kicks in both, while they contrast in terms of physical nature.

"Football, is more of a contact sport; the team unites more, defending each other. There are more restrictions in soccer," Von Bertrab Madero said. Also, every player in soccer kicks the ball as opposed to just one in football.

The actual motor skill kicking a football and a soccer ball are different as well, he pointed out. Usually, kicking a soccer ball is more about finesse, while kicking a football is



more about power and technique.

“A soccer ball is a sphere. You can hit it from many angles and you can still get it to where you want. In football, it’s a cylinder. It’s harder and you have to hit it in the right place for it to go as far as you want,” Von Bertrab Madero said. “In soccer, you can put more English on the ball, different spins. You can put torque on it.”

“In football, it’s possible but it’s harder. My (football) coaches here don’t like when I accidentally put torque on it. There’s been a time when I mishit the ball and put torque on it. He doesn’t like it,” Von Bertrab Madero said. Then there’s getting hit hard and tackled in football, which is not the same thing as getting tackled in soccer.

“There’s contact in soccer, too. I’m not really scared because I prepare myself and I know I’m big,” Von Bertrab Madero said. “The coaches tell me ‘don’t worry about hitting’ during practice hitting in the warm-ups, but when you hit someone that means we are making a mistake because I shouldn’t be hitting the person.”

Von Bertrab Madero has not attempted a field goal this season but has converted 12 of 13 extra-point attempts in the Colts’ three games. He’s also punted once, and that ball sailed for 43 yards.

In five soccer games, he’s had five shots on goal with four finding the net. That’s pretty good for a burly defenseman who measures 6 feet 1 inch and weighs close to 200 pounds.

“He’s got size, he knows how to win balls in the air, which is important for a defender. This year, he’s actually scored a few from getting space in the open field from winning the ball and moving the ball forward,” said Barbour, NMMI’s soccer coach.

With football definitely being an American-influenced game, soccer is more of a global-friendly game for a young man with a German father, Hispanic mother and a host of teammates from Mexico.

“I’ve learned it’s not a Mexican sport, it’s not a European sport. It’s a sport for everyone.”