

**THE NEWS TRIBUNE'S  
2012 SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

Tyler Hemstreet; Staff Writer/Published: 05/25/12



Coming up through the youth soccer ranks, Bellarmine Prep senior forward Kurtis Pederson played every position.

His natural skill and feel for the game allowed him to excel at all of them.

Fast forward to his high school years and not much has changed.

"I'm a roamer," he said with a laugh.

But the self-described nomad – who racked up 18 goals and 15 assists for Bellarmine Prep this season – is a force everywhere on the pitch.

He's also **The News Tribune's All-Area Player of the Year.**

"That kid makes the world go around," Puyallup coach Matt White said of Pederson after the senior scored a pair of goals against the Vikings in the Lions' Class 4A state quarterfinal win last week. "(He's) easily the best player we've seen all year."

Pederson's athleticism and strong motor allows him to cover a lot of ground, giving the Lions' quick-strike offense plenty of range – and sometimes even another body on defense.

"I like to help out all over the field," said Pederson, who will play soccer next season at Western Washington University.

Pederson's desire to cover the field from sideline to sideline can sometimes get him out of position, Bellarmine coach Joe Waters said it's something the team is more than willing to live with.

"Sometimes you have to stop him from working so hard because it's not focused," Waters said. "It's a great thing to tell somebody to stop working so hard. Usually you're lamenting the fact that players don't work or don't want to work. He'd run around all day if you asked him to."

More often than not, Pederson is in the right place at the right time. That's certainly been the case in the postseason. He scored the winning goal against Snohomish in the first round of the state tournament, and came back a week later with the two goals against Puyallup in the quarterfinals.

Today, Bellarmine Prep will meet Narrows League rival Central Kitsap in the semifinals at 8 p.m. at Sparks Stadium.

"(His activity) is a great thing because it's difficult for teams to mark him," Waters said.

After a stint playing club soccer with Washington Premier FC, Pederson was selected as a sophomore to play for the Seattle Sounders FC Youth Academy. For nearly two years he balanced his time and played both club and high school soccer, but made the decision this season to play solely for the Lions.

"It was a really tough decision," Pederson said. "I love both teams and I have a lot of passion for both. But I knew we had something special here and I wanted to be a part of it."

A 10-day team trip to Ireland over spring break to play a couple matches and take in the culture solidified Pederson's bond with his Bellarmine Prep teammates, giving the senior the confirmation that he made the right choice.

"I knew that if there was ever a year to win (a state) title, this was the year," Pederson said. "Now we have a really good shot."

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**Other Bellarmine 2012 All-Area Boys Soccer Team Members**

- Goalkeeper Eric Bottjer (12)
- Defender Adam Smith (12)
- Defender Michael Dick (12)
- Forward Michael Rector (12)