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Keomanivane enjoys European vacation

By [Theo Tate](#)

Mara Keomanivane had reason to celebrate when she participated in a soccer camp at CBC High School in St. Louis last summer.

The Granite City freshman was selected to play soccer in Europe.

"There were 104 kids there and they take 20 to go on the trip and I was one of them," said Keomanivane, who also was picked as the camp's Most Valuable Player. "I was excited that I was one of the kids who got picked."

Keomanivane went to Holland on March 18 - which was two days before the Warriors' season opener against Althoff - and stayed there for 10 days.

"Soccer over there is like baseball and football here," Keomanivane said. "I didn't see one baseball or football field over there. There are only three baseball fields in the whole country there."

Keomanivane was the second Granite City player in five years to play soccer in Europe. The other was Tasha Dittamore, who traveled to Germany, Austria and Holland with her United States Region II soccer team in 2004. Dittamore, a goalkeeper, graduated from Granite City in 2006 and is a senior at the University of Missouri.

When she returned home, Keomanivane won a spot on the Granite City varsity lineup. She was one of four freshmen on the varsity roster.

Keomanivane said the European trip helped prepare her for her freshman season.

"They played different styles of ball over there," said Keomanivane, a midfielder. "It was more like passing and working together. It's fast paced instead of kick and run. It definitely helped me. The players over there are amazing."

Keomanivane helped the Warriors finish 13-7-1 and capture their fourth regional championship in five years.

"I thought we were going to do really well," said Keomanivane, whose older sister, Sulyn, played varsity at Granite City for four years (2005-08). "We did good. We worked hard and we ended up doing really good. I thought we were going to make it."

Keomanivane already has high hopes for her sophomore season.

"I'm excited," Keomanivane said. "Hopefully, we can go to state."