



Strong play from Adewumni has sparked CBC's soccer playoff run

By Joe Lyons | jlyons@post-dispatch.com | Posted: Thursday, November 8, 2012 3:00 pm

L.J. Adewumni has been a key figure in the CBC soccer team's attack for two seasons. But the speedy senior has taken his game to a new level in recent weeks.

During the Cadets' six-game winning streak, Adewumni has had five goals, including three game-winners, and two assists. Last week in district play, he scored the insurance goal in a 2-0 win over defending Class 3 state champion De Smet in the semifinals and then netted the second and third goals in CBC's title-clinching 4-2 victory over top-seeded Marquette, which was ranked third among STLhighschoolsports.com large schools.

Ranked second in the area, CBC battled by Lafayette 2-1 in sectional action Tuesday night. In that game, Adewumni knocked in a cross from Dave Geerling for the deciding goal with 11½ minutes to play. Earlier in the match, he ripped a shot off the cross bar.

"I think a big key to my play lately is my mental approach," said Adewumni, whose 22-5-1 Cadets host seventh-ranked Vianney (17-10-1) in the quarterfinals Saturday at 6 p.m. "I've been spending a lot of time trying to visualize the game and what I need to do to be successful. At this point, I realize that every game could be the last of my high school career, and I'm trying to do everything I can do keep it going as long as possible."

CBC coach Terry Michler says a lot of Adewumni's recent surge is due to confidence and team continuity.

"Earlier in the season, when we were dealing with injuries, I feel like a lot of guys, including L.J., were trying to do a little too much, trying to make up for the guys out of the lineup," Michler said. "But now that we've pretty well settled into a lineup, everybody knows his role, and L.J. has thrived because of it. L.J. has tremendous speed and skill, but he's also a very smart player, a guy who can read the game and who anticipates better than most. Not only has he scored some big goals for us, but he's also checking back to help in the midfield, he's holding the ball when we need him to and he's finding the open man with his passes.

"He's become a difference-maker for us."

Adewumni, 17, comes by his soccer sense naturally. His father, Julius (L.J. stands for Little Julius), is a native of Nigeria who played some third-division soccer in England before making the move here in 1984 to attend St. Louis University.

"Soccer's something that both me and my dad have a passion for," said L.J., who leads CBC with 14 goals and four assists. Six of his goals this season have been game-winners.

"L.J.'s kind of a deceptive player," Michler said. "Just when you think you have him figured out, he uses that burst of speed and he's gone. That's what happened for the second goal against Marquette -- Devin (Boyce) played the ball long, L.J. had a lane and there was no way anybody was going to catch him."

Adewumni, who stands 5-foot-9 and weighs 157 pounds, said the key to CBC's strong play of late is teamwork.

"It's not one guy -- it's everybody playing as a team and working toward a common goal," he said. "We know that every team that plays CBC is coming at us at 100 percent, and we have to match that and give everything we have if we want to be keep our season going."

A gifted student who plans to study international business in college, Adewumni has been in contact with some Division I and top-level Division II schools but is keeping his options open.

"L.J. has a great deal of upside, and I really feel his best soccer is ahead of him," Michler said. "But the recruiting situation is tricky. I look at guys like L.J. and (defender Xhovani Dokaj) and I have no doubt they're guys who can step in and contribute at the next level. It's just a matter of finding the right situation."