The 2018 season is officially in the books and it certainly will go down as one to remember. The team earned the program’s third appearance in the NCAA Division III Soccer Championships and advanced to the national quarterfinal. The quarterfinal appearance and #7 final national ranking are both program-best finishes.

I entered the 2018 season cautiously optimistic about the team’s ability to achieve some lofty goals. We returned a good group and had a productive spring season. The team had been in a lot of close games during the 2016 and 2017 seasons and I knew we would be in many tight, competitive games again. What we had to answer is if we were going to be mature and gritty enough to win those matches.

We opened the year with a convincing 3-0 win against a Marietta College team who was regionally-ranked in 2017. Two days later we dropped 1-0 game to Mount Union in a game that was an early turning point in our season. Following the game, the team had to collectively decide if we would be hungrier and tougher in tight games to turn those matches into positive results. Over the next 9 games the team won 8 with three coming in overtime. Highlights from that run included wins over 2018 NCAA tournament teams John Carroll University (2-1 in OT), #22 Capital University (1-0 in OT), and #7 Kenyon College (3-0).

As good as our non-conference record was, we knew if we wanted to play in the NCAA tournament we would need to raise our current form to an even higher level. We opened conference play with a good road result at 2017 Final Four participant Brandeis University. In our second game of conference play we stumbled badly against NYU losing 3-0 at home. I didn’t do a good job preparing the team in that game and we had to lick our wounds with traditional conference powers Washington University (MO) and #11 University of Chicago coming to town for a Friday-Sunday “double” weekend. In that weekend we really hit our stride. A first half goal from senior Alex Besi was enough for a 1-0 Friday night win over WashU. Sunday’s 2-1 win over #1 University of Chicago was an incredible performance in a back and forth game that will go down as an “instant classic”.

The Chicago result propelled us on a run that saw the team win three of our final four regular season matches, including a 3-2 overtime win at #9 University of Rochester. Following the regular season, we were among the first “at-large” team selected for the NCAA tournament and earned one of top 4 seeds nationally, which guaranteed us hosting opportunities. Our first and second round weekend saw the team play some of its best soccer of the season winning both games while scoring 3 goals in each match.

In the following weekend, we hosted the NCAA Sectionals and a “Sweet 16” re-match against regional foe Kenyon College. Kenyon stuck first to go up 1-0, but a late flurry of goals from sophomores Nathan Ekberg and Seldon Magruder put us up 2-1 going into halftime. Kenyon scored early in the second half to equalize the game and the rest of the match was back and forth. Penalties ultimately decided the outcome with Zach Senft, Brian Woo, Connor Weber, and Seldon Magruder all making their kicks. Freshman goalkeeper Charlie Fink made a big save on Kenyon’s fifth shooter to ensure junior Garrett Winter’s successful kick would win the game. Garrett’s shot was a good one to move us on. A tough 2-1 loss in the NCAA “Elite Eight” the next night to eventual national runner-up Calvin College ended our historic season.

The 2018 team was truly a special group. They had tremendous chemistry and their competitive habits each day were as good as any team I’ve had the pleasure of coaching. The 2018 team have raised the standards and expectations for our program moving forward, while leaving a solid foundation for the future. A special thank you to seniors Alex Besi, Josh Wargo, Brady Daulton, Reed Kurtenbach and Christian Lytle for their commitment and leadership. We don’t accomplish what we do without their special contributions. Also, thank you to all the parents, alumni, and friends of the program for your support of the 2018 team. GO SPARTANS!
2018 All UAA Honors

First Team
Alex Besl  
(Sr., Cincinnati, OH)
Zach Senft  
(Jr., Bay Village, OH)
Nathan Ekberg  
(So., Liberty Twp., OH)

Honorable Mention
Garrett Winter  
(Jr., Bloomfield Hills, MI)
Christian Lytle  
(Sr., Liberty Twp., OH)
Charlie Fink  
(Fr., Akron, OH)

2018 Statistical Leaders

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<tr>
<td>Connor Weber</td>
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2019 Fall Schedule

August
August 21  Ohio Northern University (Ex.)  TBD
August 24  Penn-State Behrend (Ex.)#$  TBD
August 30  Heidelberg University  7:30pm

September
September 2  University of Mount Union  1:00pm
September 6  @ Capital University#  7:00pm
September 8  College of Wooster  6:00pm
September 11  @ Geneva College  7:00pm
September 14  @ Ohio Wesleyan University  7:00pm
September 18  John Carroll University#  7:30pm
September 21  @ Adrian College  7:30pm
September 25  @ Marietta College  7:00pm
September 28  Otterbein University  1:30pm

October
October 5  @ New York University#  1:30pm
October 13  Brandeis University  1:30pm
October 18  Emory University  7:30pm
October 20  University of Rochester#!  1:30pm
October 28  @ Westminster College#  7:30pm

November
November 1  @ University of Chicago#!  7:30pm
November 3  @ Washington University (MO)  1:30pm
November 9  Carnegie Mellon University#  3:30pm

Subject to change
BOLD University Athletic Association (UAA) game
# 2018 NCAA Tournament Participant
$ 2018 NCAA Sweet 16
! 2018 Final Four

2019 Spring Non-Traditional Game!!!

This spring we will have the opportunity to challenge ourselves against 2018 Division I National Finalist University of Akron. Akron won the 2010 NCAA Division I National Championship and have advanced to 6 NCAA Final Fours including three in the past four seasons. Match details are below:

*This will be a non-traditional game*
Saturday, April 13 8pm
First Energy Stadium- Cub Cadet Field (campus of Univ. of Akron)
2018 Team Award Winners!
On Sunday, January 16th, 2019 we held our annual team banquet to formally wrap up the 2018 season. At the banquet we handed out team awards that are voted on entirely by the players. Below are our 2018 team award winners:

Vinny Bell Most Valuable Player
2018 Winner: Alex Besl

RJ French Attacking MVP
2018 Winner: Zach Senft

Niro Wimalasena Defensive MVP
2018 Winner: Nathan Ekberg

Unsung Hero Award
2018 Winner: Brian Woo

Mark Ruesegger “For The Love Of The Game” Award
2018 Winner: Christian Lytle

Kevin Bigart Rookie Of The Year
2018 Winner: Peter Dernelle

Commitment To The Program
2018 Winner: Chas Novitsky

Chris Cvecko Most Improved Player
2018 Winner: Nevo Ziv

Spartan Spotlight

Zach Senft
Name: Zach Senft
Number: 23
Grade: Junior
Position: Midfielder
Major: Engineering
Hometown: Bay Village, Ohio

What do you want to be doing in 10 years?
In 10 years, ideally I’ll be working for an automotive company working on developing cars that run on renewable resources or as a research and development engineer at a company related to the automotive industry.

What is your favorite class and why?
My favorite class at CWRU so far has been Mechanical Manufacturing I (EMAE 160). It’s the first hands-on type of class related to mechanical engineering and the first time I’ve been able to design something and work with metal in the metal lab.

What is your best memory from the 2018 season and why?
My best memory from the 2018 season was beating Keystone in the first round of the NCAA tournament. It was a critical game and we were all a little on edge going into it. Going down 1-0 in the first half made us really band together as a team. Then coming out in the second half and scoring right away and personally being involved in all of the goals made it a really special moment for me and the team. The singular moment from that game that was most special was scoring the second goal to put us up 2-1 and put us through to the next round.

What is the best part of playing soccer at CWRU?
The best part of playing at CWRU is easily the brotherhood we have as a program. I know that no matter what happens on the field or in the classroom, the guys have each other’s backs and care about each other. The brotherhood is different from any team that I’ve been a part of.

What are you looking forward to most for the 2019 season?
What I’m looking forward to most in 2019 is getting back to the NCAA tournament. This year was an unreal experience going as far as we did. I want to go even further next year and with it being my last year, I think we definitely have the skill and drive to do so. Winning the UAA would also be an awesome thing for our program to strive for.

Bianco on Senft:
“Zach is someone we recruited out of high school and we were thrilled that he chose to transfer to CWRU. Transferring into a new school and team can be really challenging, but Zach has integrated himself so well. He’s now a leader in the group and someone the team can count on in our biggest moments. He relishes big games and in those games he’s at his best. More than anything else, Zach is a great teammate, student, and person.”
2019 Team Award Recognition - Chris Cvecko ‘16

Following the 2018 season, the program named our Most Improved Player Award after 2016 graduate Chris Cvecko. Chris is one of the most decorated players in CWRU men’s soccer history and only one of two to be name UAA Most Valuable Player. In addition, Chris was a three-time All-UAA First Team member and a 2015 NSCAA All-America.

2018 Enhancement Initiative - Thank You To Donors!!!

This past fall we did an organized fundraising campaign to raise funds for specific items needed by the program for us to provide our student-athletes the kind of championship environment to be successful. Some of these items included pre-game team meals, post-game chocolate milk, training mannequins, home game opponent guarantees, team yoga sessions, and our banquet sponsorship. A HUGE thank you goes out to the following donors who made a gift to help enhance the quality of our player’s experience: Zach Broujos ’17, Rusheel Shah ’17, Thomas Nolan ’17, Bairdy Hansen ’15, Alex Masiopinto ’16, Kaveh Varghaj ’16, Kent Molino ’83, Michael Carey ’81, Matt Zembas ’16, Chris Cvecko ’16, Alan Berko ’73, Dernelle Family, Rehklau Family, Weber Family, Klemm Family. Thank You!

Spring Break 2019 Brazil Trip

In March of 2016, the program embarked on a week-long cultural experience that was second to none. The team played games against professional clubs, toured culture sights, and took part in service learning activities. During spring break this March, the team will again travel to Rio de Janeiro to take part in a foreign tour that the NCAA allows once every three years.

During the trip we will be active on social media. If you would like to stay connected to what’s happening with the team, please follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (Twitter account launching soon!).

@CWRUmenssoccer

2017-2018 Academic All-UAA team members- these players were recognized for carrying a 3.3 GPA or better.

2019 Alumni Game

During the weekend of April 6-7, 2019 we will host our annual Alumni Game. We are still firming up the exact date and time for this match and those details will be shared in the coming weeks. We hope that all alumni will be able to keep this weekend “free” and we would love to see as many of you as possible. We will have an alumni vs. current team game followed by an alumni vs. alumni alumni game. More details coming soon!