

Younger, Brady Sign National Letters

Written by Mike Kelly

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Watauga High seniors Hannah Younger and Lillie Brady love playing soccer. They love it so much, that no matter what the situation may be, they'll find a

way to get on the pitch.

They were just born to play the game. Their passion for the sport is unparalleled. And no one knows that better than head coach Brittany Bolick, now in her third season with the program. "Those girls have been great leaders for us," Bolick said. "They just love to play soccer. I don't care how bad the weather is, what the situation might be, they're willing to play. They have such a drive and a desire for the game. This is a big day for them, and big day for our program. Playing at the next level is a just reward for those two."

Both Younger and Brady made it official Tuesday afternoon as they signed their National Letters of Intent. Younger will attend Queens University in Charlotte, a Division II school and a member of Conference Carolinas. She will also join another Pioneer, Lydia Mauney, who signed with Queens back on December 20.

Brady signed her National Letter with Pfeiffer University, a Division II school in Misenheimer, N.C., and ironically, a member of Conference Carolinas.

"I just felt Queens was the perfect fit for me, both athletically and academically," said Younger, who wants to major in psychology and minor in sports management. "They've got a big freshman class coming in (17 total), but I'm confident, that I can make a contribution next season. The coach (Katie Talbert) saw me at a camp at (Appalachian State University), we spoke and it all worked out. I am so glad this is out of the way. It's like a weight taken off my shoulders. Now I can relax and enjoy my senior year."

Younger and Brady, playing club soccer in Lake Norman, have been teammates for quite a while---eight years to be exact. And they even got to play in Germany and Denmark just before their freshman year at WHS. And during their stay in Denmark, they participated in the third largest tournament in the world.

"It was an eye opening experience for Hannah and myself," said Brady, who will major in criminal justice and possible pursue law school afterwards. "We got a good taste of soccer at a high level. We have a great friendship, but we aren't rivals. Instead, we feed off each other. But (Younger) is good. And I'd rather have her as my teammate, instead of playing against her (something that she will do beginning next fall)."

"Playing in Europe really opened my eyes about playing in college," said Younger, who started playing soccer when she was four-years-old. "It was more physical, and the skill level was very good. But we won the tournament, which made it special for both of us. Lillie and I, more or less, decided after that experience that we wanted to play in college. And I really got serious about it last year."

Younger, a mid-fielder and a two-time all-conference player, has 21 goals and 12 assists in her last two seasons with the Pioneers. She was also named the WHS' Offensive Most Valuable Player last spring.

"Hannah has been an offensive threat and a player that truly adds so much to our offense and our team as a whole," Bolick said. "She has been a four year varsity member and a starter for me these past two seasons."

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Brady, a defender, has nine goals and had five assists the last two seasons.

"Lillie is a player you can out anywhere on the field and can be a threat and successful," Bolick said. "She will be leader on the back line this year. She has a lot to offer the college soccer program as she is a very versatile player. She was an all conference player last season, although I am not sure she was her sophomore year. She has been a starter for the past two seasons as well."

And the Pioneers, who will feature a youthful team in 2013, will be looking to Brady and Younger for leadership this season. And the pair embraces the responsibility.

"I really want to be a captain this season," Younger said. "I had seniors I looked up to when I was a freshman. And it helped me a lot. Now, it's my turn to help the younger girls coming up in the program. My goal is to be a soccer coach one day. That's why I'm taking a minor in sports management."

"Coach Bolick has a lot of confidence in us," Brady said. "And playing for her the last two years has been a great experience. She's like a big sister to us. She's tough on us when she has to be, and she's also compassionate and loves us. I want to be a role model for the younger girls on this team. Being a female athlete is great. Hannah and I can hold our own."

The WHS girl's soccer team opens the season at A.C. Reynolds on Wednesday, February 27.