

# Jonah Bowen-Burt

By Max **Berry-Stoelzle**

For Jonah Bowen-Burt '25, soccer didn't start as a competitive sport. It started as a way to spend time with his grandfather over a shared love for the sport.

"Every time I played [soccer], I ended up having a good time," Bowen-Burt said. "I wanted to really commit myself to practicing every day and working [hard]. I just enjoyed it."

Bowen-Burt started playing soccer when he was 4 years old. Since then he has gained years of experience, playing on teams such as CRSA (Cedar Rapids Soccer Academy), and ISC (Iowa Soccer Club).

"I've known Jonah since he played at CRSA," Colin Crichton, Jonah's current coach at ISC, said. "It looked as if he had the ability to go pretty far in the game, and we're fortunate that he decided to come to ISC."

One thing coach Crichton values about

Jonah is his ability on the ball.

"He's got this ability where he can dribble at players and they don't know which way he's going to go," coach Crichton said. "That really helps the players around him because they know he feels comfortable on the ball and rarely gives it away."

One thing that Jonah does that helps him improve as a player is to watch the professionals play.

"Jonah watches the game a lot, and sees how the [professional] players play the game," coach Crichton said. "He watches to see the movement of players and how they can get into space and receive a ball without being under pressure, which has definitely helped him improve."

Playing on soccer teams his whole life, Bowen Burt values the team aspect of the sport.

"Teamwork is by far the most important



part [of soccer]," Bowen-Burt

said. "If a teammate makes a mistake it's ok, you make mistakes too. We're kind of like a big family."

This fall, Bowen Burt is running cross country, as well as playing on a club team for soccer.

"[Cross country] is mainly just for conditioning and staying in shape for soccer," Bowen-Burt said.

With soccer season starting in the spring, Bowen Burt is looking forward to joining the team.

"I've heard a lot of good things about it [from friends]," Bowen-Burt said. "I've also watched a lot of games. It seems like such a good time."

Bowen-Burt finds time to practice every day, whether it is with his

soccer club, or alone at a neighborhood field.

"I just [want to] make a good first impression on people I don't know," Bowen-Burt said. "I know a lot of [people] on the team but I want to perform well and come back [with a] guaranteed varsity spot."

All throughout Bowen-Burt's soccer career, he has had the goal of playing professionally in college and beyond.

"In America professional soccer is very location dependent," Crichton said. "But I think he'll continue to play the game until there's nothing left for him to do."

# Ani Wedemeyer

By Greta **Stanier**

When Ani Wedemeyer, '25, started cross country, she didn't think she would like it, 2 years later, running is a huge part of her life.

"When you're feeling good, and you're running, it feels so great," Wedemeyer said. "[Running] is a way to push yourself, that nothing else does."

Wedemeyer started running in 7th grade when she joined the junior high cross country team. During this time, she was a competitive gymnast, practicing up to 19 hours a week.

"I love running and running in such a positive environment," Wedemeyer said. "Gymnastics kind of wasn't [this environment], the coaching is so different it's a lot [of training]."

Wedemeyer ended up quitting gymnastics at the end of eighth grade.

"I wouldn't have been able to do running in gymnastics," Wedemeyer said "I wanted to do running."

This year, Wedemeyer is running on the varsity team. In comparison to her gymnastics team, Wedemeyer has enjoyed the team environment.

"Being on a team like this is something I never experienced in gymnastics," Wedemeyer said. "I was obviously on a team, but it was not the same. It feels like a family here, instead of just people you practice with."

Wedemeyer has also enjoyed the new challenges that have come with the change from junior high to high school cross country.

"[In] junior high our long run would be

five miles, now, we did that for recovery after our race so it's really different," Wedemeyer said. "The people also take it more seriously, it's not just an activity or an after school thing."

So far this season, Wedemeyer has been running in the number one spot on varsity, with a PR of 20:23. She runs alongside her sister, Iris, who is also one of the top runners on the team.

"If I was [Ani's] teammate, I would say watching her and how she does things in practice is going to show you how to do it the right way," Ahlers, a head coach of the team said. "The way that not only the coaches want it done but really, the best way to do it, how to be effective in the sport."

At their recent Pleasant Valley meet, Ani

placed first on the team and 22nd overall.

"Ani doesn't shy away from racing, we've seen it in the time trial in one meet so far this year and there's a lot of great things for her coming up," Ahlers said. "That's one thing that I truly admire about coaching her, she embraces every aspect of training but also the racing, and she enjoys it."

With upcoming district and possible state meets, Ani has many opportunities ahead of her.

"I see her growing in the sport and becoming one of the best in the state," Ahlers said. "And then beyond that, I think the sky's the limit. She can go collegiately and beyond. She's a talent."

