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Tyra Okuda
Seattle University

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Time Out Session: Akili Kasim Closes Out Record-Breaking Career

Tyra Okuda, Copy Chief/Online Editor

Seattle University men's soccer star goalkeeper Akili Kasim will conclude his final season with record-breaking numbers. Kasim, a graduate student, recently set the record for most goalkeeper wins in Seattle U's modern Division I history. Following the Oct. 21 game against Utah Valley, he sits as the program's all-time leader in shutouts.

TO: What was your journey to get to Seattle U?

AK: I was supposed to come to Seattle U for my freshman year, but things happened, so I went to a junior college for one year. At the time, there was a new goalkeeper coach for Seattle U and he [Jake Feener] started coming to my games and having a lot of interest in me. I was training with the Seattle Sounders Academy to stay in shape and he was coming to watch that too. That's when he really started wanting me to come to Seattle U.

TO: What was it like during your first season?

AK: The year that I did redshirt [2018], I was behind Josh Adachi. That senior class set really good standards and expectations of how things should go. So I went into the 2019 season kind of already having an understanding of how I should play, what to do and what not to do for the most part. It ended in the second round of the NCAA tournament, but overall, that year was really good. We were undefeated in the conference and the chemistry was great amongst the team. It was a really fun year. And if you're not having fun while playing, then it's not going to be the best.

TO: What was the 2020 season like? Especially because it was postponed until the spring of 2021.

AK: That year was mentally tough. Everything was online, which was just totally different. Even when we got to the playing part of the season, in the spring, it was different because it was a lot warmer, compared to in the fall. We didn't play very many games because other teams had to cancel, or we had to cancel due to COVID-19. It was a tough season. But it still had its learning points on dealing with adversity and with outside elements that you cannot control.

TO: You then played the 2021 season a few months later, in the fall. What was that like?



Jordie Simpson

Goalie Akili Kasim on the field during home game against Grand Canyon University

AK: Normally, you don't really get a break in between, so I was used to it. During the summer, I just trained. It felt good to be back at a normal time, but I didn't really feel anything different. I was just more excited.

TO: Looking at this season so far, how do you think it has gone?

AK: There have been a lot of injuries, so it's been tough. Definitely a lot of learning points, for sure. You still have to do your best with what you have and I think that a lot of our guys have that same mentality. It's a year of testing your mental strength and how well you can deal with that stuff.



Goalie Akili Kasim making a save at the home game against Grand Canyon University (Jordie Simpson)

TO: What has been the highlight of your soccer career?

AK: In my first conference tournament, I had three penalty saves in a row to win the conference. That was really fun.

TO: Is there something that you will miss the most about being at Seattle U?

AK: Probably clowning around in the locker room with my teammates and going to practice. Even though I hate waking up early, it's still fun to be around everyone. Getting through tough times with the team and then finding success after that is a really good accomplishment as a whole. There are a lot of things that I will miss.

TO: What has been your favorite part about being at Seattle U? Either on the field or outside of soccer.

AK: I have learned a lot of adult lessons, personal responsibility and leadership. I feel like I've developed more as a person, which I've enjoyed a lot. I think that the coaches and my teammates have all instilled that amongst ourselves, to just be better people outside of soccer. Eventually, you're going to stop playing, so what are you going to do? How are you going to take what you learned while playing and then apply that to the rest of your life?

Upon leaving Seattle U, Kasim hopes to move on to play professional soccer. After five years of hard work and success, he is pleased to leave such a legacy at Seattle U.