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Stephen Woodward Jenks Alumni

Woodward brings family legacy to UNT Kicker's father played pro soccer in England

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In some families, it's an innate ability to hit a baseball. In others, a strong arm for throwing a football is passed along from generation to generation. In Steven Woodward's family, a stout kicking leg is the family legacy.

Steven Woodward first capitalized on that trait during a professional soccer career in England and passed the gift along to his son, Steven, the latest addition to North Texas' 2006 recruiting class.

Steven, a kicker rated No. 9 in the nation by Scout.com, committed to play for UNT last week and will join the Mean Green football team this fall.

Kansas, LSU and Kansas all asked Steven to walk on, while Chadron State, a Division II school in Nebraska, offered a scholarship. Steven passed on those opportunities and accepted a scholarship from UNT because the school offered what he felt was the best fit.

ght situation.

ven overcame a learning disability to become an honors student at Jenks, Okla., High School and will work with UNT's Office of Disability Accommodation while continuing his education in college.

will be able to get help at North Texas because I have a learning disability," Steven said. "That is the biggest reason I picked UNT and I really liked the coaches."

ving a kicker was a priority for UNT following the graduation of Nick Bazaldua, who finished his career as the all-time leader in Mean Green history with 247 points.

was a big vote of confidence for North Texas to offer me a scholarship," Steven said. "I think that I can come in and compete and win away."

ven was named to the 6A-4 All-District team as a senior and was also invited to Chris Sailer's Top 12 Kicking Camp in Shafter, Calif. The honor is reserved for the top performers in a series of combines, including a national kicking combine that took place in Las Vegas, Nev.

ven credited his success in part to his father, who helped coach him early in his career and also arranged for him to work with other college and NFL kickers, including former Dallas Cowboy Chris Boniol.

at extra tutoring helped Steven secure a chance to follow in his father's impressive athletic legacy. Alan played for Sheffield Wednesday in England's top soccer league for 17 years as a right side midfielder. He is the club's leading post-war scorer and is in the club's Hall of Fame. After his career in England ended in 1978, he moved to Tulsa to continue his professional soccer career with the Tulsa Roughnecks.

oving to the United States gave Alan a chance to try kicking for a football team after he retired from professional soccer.

ght after I finished playing for the Roughnecks, they had a semi-pro football team in Tulsa that needed a kicker," Alan said. "I wanted a name player and called me two or three days before the season. I went out and kicked for them that season."

at experience helped Alan coach his son, who was born after his pro soccer career came to an end.

ven played both soccer and football until he suffered a knee injury when he was 14 while playing soccer. After recovering from the injury, he decided to concentrate on kicking.

th me being an ex-player, I didn't push him toward soccer," Alan said. "He really liked football."

e decision to concentrate on football paid off for Steven last week when he agreed to kick for the Mean Green.

am very excited that he is getting a chance to kick in college," Alan said. "He's a good kicker. He has a leg on him."

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