

# FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME

## Ordonez leaves lasting impact on HC soccer program

**BY ABBY HOOVEN**  
Jorge Ordonez zips down the field with ease, dances his way around several defenders before sending a smart shot past the opposing goalkeeper to the corner of the net. His face lights up with a smile as nearby teammates flood him with cheers and celebratory hugs before trotting back to midfield. Time and time again, this scene played out during Ordonez’s tenure with the Henry County soccer program.

The steps were almost routine: make a dazzling move down field, shake the defense, drop in a great shot and briefly celebrate the play before getting back to business. The importance and complexity of each play varied, but the end result was the same. Ordonez’s relentless effort, careful finesse, seemingly perfect touch around the goal and pure joy for the game were spotlighted each time he stepped onto the field.

He made his teammates, and the program, better with each performance and set multiple school records along the way. “On the field, he was a beacon of skill and intelligence, reading the game with a sharp mind and executing plays with precision. His versatility allowed him to adapt to any position, always putting the team’s needs above his own. He was the player others looked to emulate, a player that other teams change their tactics for,” said Henry County head coach Dave Uehlein. “You could tell Jorge didn’t just play for the glory or the accolades; he played for the love of the game and the camaraderie it brings.”

As a sophomore, Ordonez scored 28 goals, including five in a postseason run that featured a 31st District Championship. He also earned five assists in 21 games to help the Wildcats to a 15-5-2 record.

In 2023, he scored 17 goals and tallied two assists in 11 games as Henry County ended with a 4-11 record.

As a senior this fall, Ordonez broke his own school record with 33

goals, two of which came in the postseason. Throughout the year, he had multiple games with four or more goals, including a record-setting six-goal outing in a victory over Harrison County on Aug. 27 and a five-goal showcase in a close loss to Nelson County on Sept. 19.

“It’s part of my life. I feel very happy to have set a school record,” said Ordonez.

In total, Ordonez now holds four school records for the most regular season goals (77), postseason goals (7), single season goals (33) and single-game goals (6).

“Coaching a player like Jorge was truly a rewarding experience. Jorge is a player with an unyielding passion for the game, always the first to arrive at practice and the last to leave. His dedication is unmatched, constantly pushing himself and his teammates to be better,” said Uehlein.

Henry County greatly benefited from Ordonez’s talent the last three years, but soccer has been a constant for Ordonez for much longer.

He began his soccer journey as a kid in Honduras, playing “for the fun of it.”

“In Honduras, soccer was life,” said Ordonez.

His speed also developed as a kid and played to his advantage during his three high school seasons.

“I like to run fast because it is fun,” said Ordonez.

His overall dedication to the game stems from his genuine passion for soccer, which motivated those around him at Henry County.

“His humility and sportsmanship made him a role model for all, and his joy in playing was contagious. Everyone, including opponents, feared him, and at the same time respected his drive and fair play,” said Uehlein. “There were games that Jorge would take an awful beating, but he would always leave the field with a smile and ask, ‘When is the next game?’ His physical play and abilities set the standard for his teammates, a standard that forced them to get better.”



Jorge Ordonez celebrates after scoring one of his six goals against Harrison County in August. Ordonez set a school record with 33 goals in the 2024 season.



Jorge Ordonez maneuvers around a Gallatin County defender in this year's 31st District Tournament.

While English is not his native language, Ordonez found a way to communicate with his teammates and push them to succeed.

“Off the field, leadership was evident. Although there was a language barrier, Jorge spoke soccer, helping younger players, and fostering a spirit of unity within the team,” said Uehlein.

Uehlein took over as head coach late in 2023 for the Wildcats, and in his time at the helm, he saw incredible progress in the team and each individual player, including Ordonez.

Ordonez said he has only trained with his coaches at Henry County, and while Uehlein helped Ordonez excel on the field, he also played a crucial role in the development of Ordonez as a person.

“Coaching someone like Jorge was not just about improving his skills, but about witnessing his journey and growth, both as a player and as a person. It was about the shared moments of triumph and learning, knowing that his success and the team’s, was a result of hard work, perseverance, and a

deep love for soccer, a love for the game many players have, but he took it to another level,” said Uehlein.

In total, Ordonez has played soccer for 12 years, including the last three with the Wildcats.

He said his favorite part of playing for Henry County was playing with his teammates and added that he intends to continue his athletic career after high school.

“My desire to play soccer has always been inside of me and is in my blood. Thank you to all my coaches that I have had over the years. I have learned a lot from them,” said Ordonez.

While his time as a Wildcat has come to an end, Ordonez’s impact will be felt within the program for years to come.

“Jorge is a unique player with unique skills with an unmatched passion for the game. Myself and the team wish him the best as he closes this chapter in his life and moves forward. He may not know it, but he made many a player better for not only his play, but his smile and kindness,” said Uehlein.



Jorge Ordonez dribbles the ball up the field against Carroll County on Sept. 9.

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— Dave Uehlein  
Henry County head soccer coach

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Mariano Rivera gives Jorge Ordonez a celebratory high five after Ordonez's goal in the 31st District Tournament against Gallatin County.