

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

Eastlake's Cutler Gray pulls off a balancing act with diabetes, soccer

By Tom Wyrwich
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REDMOND — On a picnic table, Cutler Gray lays out all of the tools that help keep him alive.

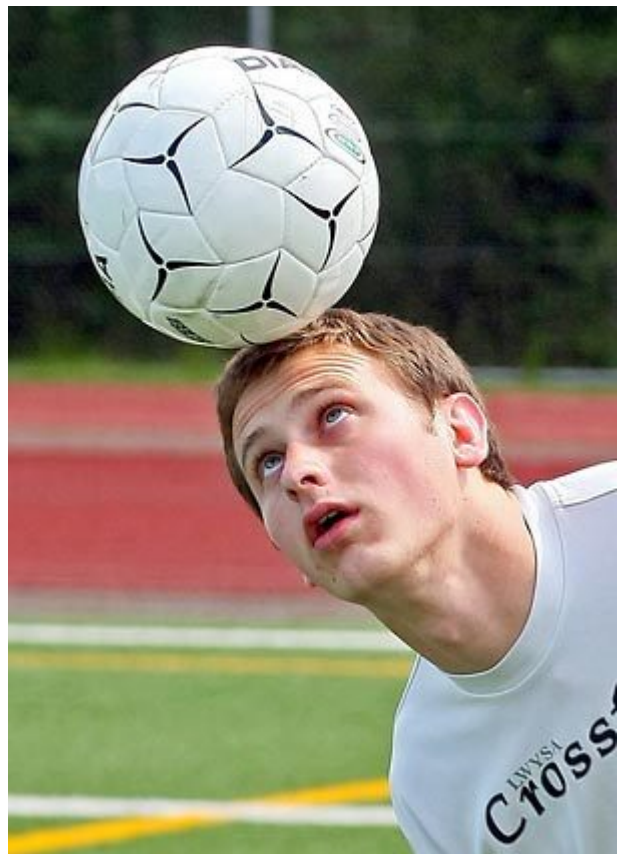
"I can show you if you want," he says.

He sticks what's called a lancing device — a fancy, safer version of a pin — in his pinky. A dab of blood pools from the prick. He slides the blood onto a small strip, which connects to an electric meter. Three seconds later, the meter reads 123.

"That's perfect, right in range," he says.

Gray, a senior forward on Eastlake's boys soccer team, tests his blood sugar like this at least 10 times a day. On days he plays soccer — which is about every day — he runs at least 25 tests, including during practices and games.

"It's kind of like breathing," Gray says of living with diabetes.



MARK HARRISON / THE SEATTLE TIMES
Eastlake senior Cutler Gray is "our Energizer bunny," says coach Adam Gervis. "He is the hardest-working member of this team."

For the past two weeks, often playing in hot weather, Gray has been an important part of Eastlake's run to the Class 4A semifinals.

"He is the hardest-working member of this team, without a shadow of a doubt," Eastlake coach Adam Gervis says. "He's our Energizer bunny. It's amazing how that works — the kid with the least amount of energy, really."

Diabetes carries a number of dangerous side effects, with kidney failure or blindness certainly not the least of them. The best way to control blood-sugar levels and keep those side effects away is to test often, and if the blood sugar is too high or low, "correct for it," Gray says.

If it's too low, he quickly reaches for a bottle of Gatorade to get carbohydrates and electrolytes. He keeps a bottle in his backpack at all times, along with his insulin pen. If his blood sugar is too high, he takes a shot of insulin.

"It's all a balancing act," Gray says.