

# RISING STAR

# C.J. Klaas

**WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP.** Craig Jared Klaas, who models his game after Roberto Carlos, is set to start at right back for the U.S. U-20s at the World Youth Championship, where they'll face Paraguay, Germany and South Korea. "They're all good, but we can beat any team on any given day," says the University of Washington sophomore from Rockford, Ill. The squad is comprised of collegians and pros. "We all get along well." Klaas says.

**MAGIC YOUTH.** "I started playing at 5 or 6," he says. "My first big memory is winning a major tournament in Tennessee with Rockford United." After spending most of his youth career with Rockford — "My coaches there were great influences" — he joined the Chicago Magic, for which he started at sweeper during their runner-up finish at the 2000 U-17 (Greer Cup) national championship.

**HOME-SCHOOLING.** Craig and Jan Klass home-schooled C.J. his older siblings, Kevin and Katie, until their sophomore years. "Some people might look at it negatively. I view it as a positive. It made a big difference, being able to stay home and get things accomplished more quickly, then play soccer with my brother, sister and their friends. It allowed me to practice on my own more than other players." He spent his last two school years at Christian Life High.

**OFF THE FIELD.** Klaas' favorite subject is economics. He hopes to get into UW's business school. He enjoys rap and hip-hop, especially Nelly. In his spare time, he likes to read the Bible, go hunting and fishing, and hang out with his girlfriend, Kristin. The three celebrities he'd invite to a dinner party: Mel Gibson, Denise Richards and Pamela Anderson.

— Bryan Alvarez

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