

MISSION BEFORE SOCCER



Christian loves soccer, but he loves the Lord and missionary work more. During his senior year of high school, he scored 17 goals and had 7 assists. His coach noticed Christian's leadership skills and commitment to others: "He does all the things a good leader should do. He helps motivate his teammates. He works as hard as anyone I've ever seen, and he's been blessed with a lot of talent. If there's anybody whom younger guys can look to, he's the example." Christian also regularly took time to go with the missionaries in his area and noticed how much they cared about the people they were teaching.

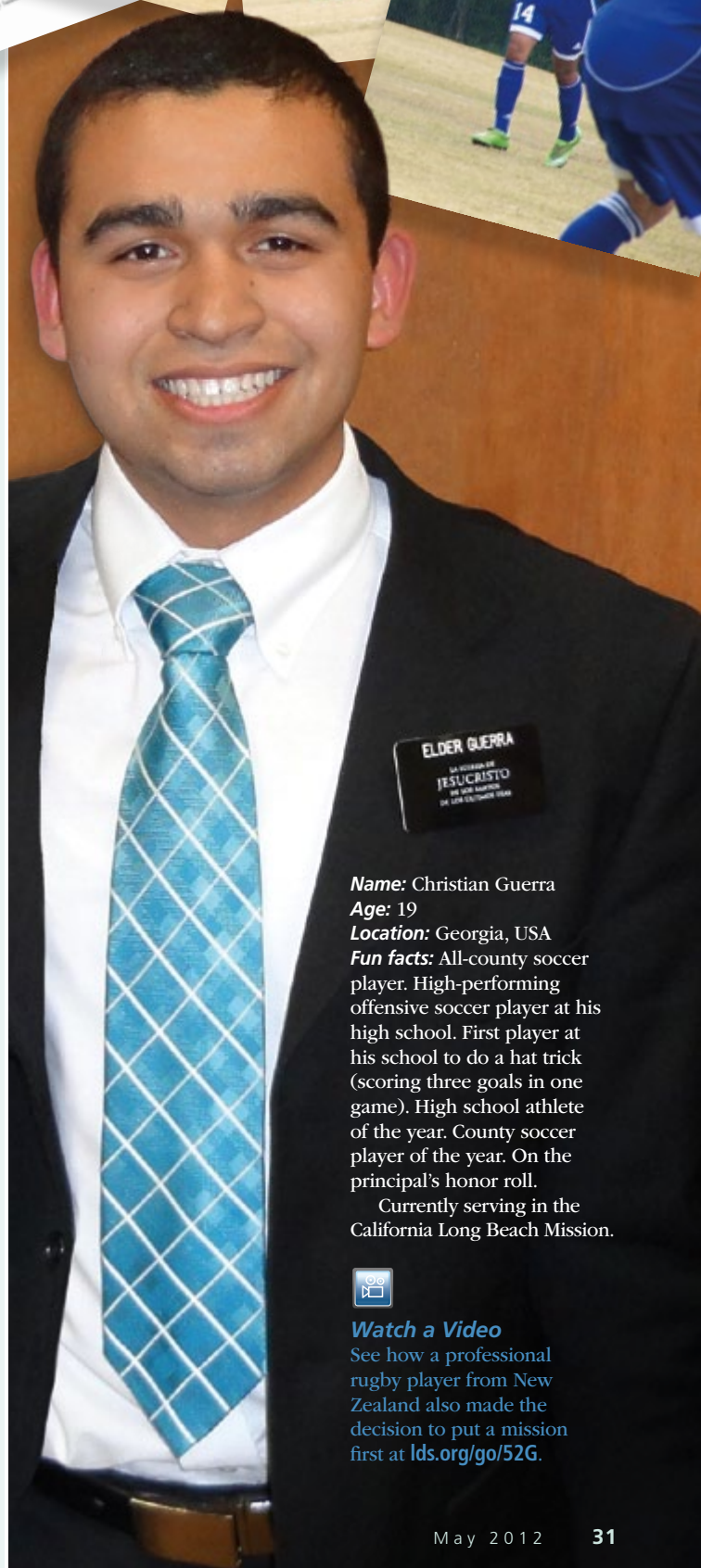
When did you decide to serve a mission? I've wanted to serve a mission for as long as I can remember. Although it was tempting to accept the opportunity to play soccer in college, I knew the right thing for me was to decline the offer of a scholarship and serve a mission. I know greater things will come in the future because I chose missionary service.

What did you learn when you went out with the missionaries? I learned that everyone has a good, kind side. I learned that the Holy Ghost can touch even the hardest, proudest heart, and He can soften people to let the gospel penetrate into their souls. I also learned that putting God first in everything we do is the best thing we can do. I feel that if I had chosen to play soccer instead of going on a mission, it would have been a selfish decision.

What have you learned on your mission? I discovered an amazing promise in Doctrine and Covenants 84:88 that says, "And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up." Now that I'm on my mission, I feel His love when I'm teaching people, and I know He is there.

I have no doubt that the Lord answers sincere prayers, and I know He loves each and every one of us. I know I am blessed to have the opportunity to serve a mission and that everything else will fall into place. **NE**

—As told to Sally Johnson Odekirk, *Church Magazines*



Name: Christian Guerra
Age: 19
Location: Georgia, USA
Fun facts: All-county soccer player. High-performing offensive soccer player at his high school. First player at his school to do a hat trick (scoring three goals in one game). High school athlete of the year. County soccer player of the year. On the principal's honor roll.
Currently serving in the California Long Beach Mission.



Watch a Video
See how a professional rugby player from New Zealand also made the decision to put a mission first at lds.org/go/52G.