

Ellison 'experiment' shows promise

By Geoff Cooper
Staff writer

If human cloning were legal and suddenly available,

Northwest
soccer
coach
Ron
Wilhelm

BOYS SOCCER

would be cooking up copies of senior Joe Ellison.

That way he could use Ellison No. 1 as his goalkeeper, a spot where he was so effective last season, and Ellison No. 2 at forward, a position where he has started every game for the Lions this season.

But Wilhelm knows he's only got one Joe Ellison, and for now he'll play forward, despite the coach's better judgment.

"It's kind of an experiment," Wilhelm said. "We thought we'd move him out of the goal this year. I think he could be one of our top scoring threats."

So far, the experiment has had its ups and downs. Ellison, who was an all-Suburban South selection last season at goalkeeper, has been a threat up top, but has yet to score. Meanwhile, sophomore goalkeeper Joe Munzlinger has faced a lot of shots and has allowed seven goals in three games.

Wilhelm says the jury is still out on the experiment.

"If it doesn't work, we'll put (Ellison) back in the goal," Wilhelm said, adding that he intends to give Ellison the forward and Munzlinger the goalie time to get settled in their jobs.

Wilhelm said Ellison played as a striker with his club team during the summer.

"He came to me and said 'I'd like to try playing up front' so we're giving it a shot,"

Wilhelm said.

As a goalkeeper last season, Ellison was one of the area's finest. He recorded 10 shutouts, allowed just 1.52 goals per game and was a major reason the Lions won a school-record 19 games.

"He's so aggressive and he's got great instincts. That's what made him a good keeper," said Wilhelm. "He's going to sneak up and burn you. He's the best-conditioned kid on the team."

Last year was Ellison's first season as a goalkeeper, after spending his first two high school seasons as a midfielder. That transition worked, and Wilhelm is confident the switch from keeper to forward will eventually pan out.

"He turned out to be one of the best keepers in the area last year after playing midfielder for a few years," Wilhelm said. "He was a real diamond in the rough. I think he can do that again at the forward position."

Northwest takes on Pacific Monday evening.

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