

SOCCKER CHAMPION WILL PERFORM AT UNCOMMON THREAD

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LONG HILL TWP. – The Uncommon Thread (TUT) on Elm Street in Stirling is in for a treat later this month, scoring a soccer spectacle from a local sports champion.

Stirling resident Nick Seyda, a freestyle soccer titleholder, will be showcasing his skills at TUT in honor of National Autism Awareness month.

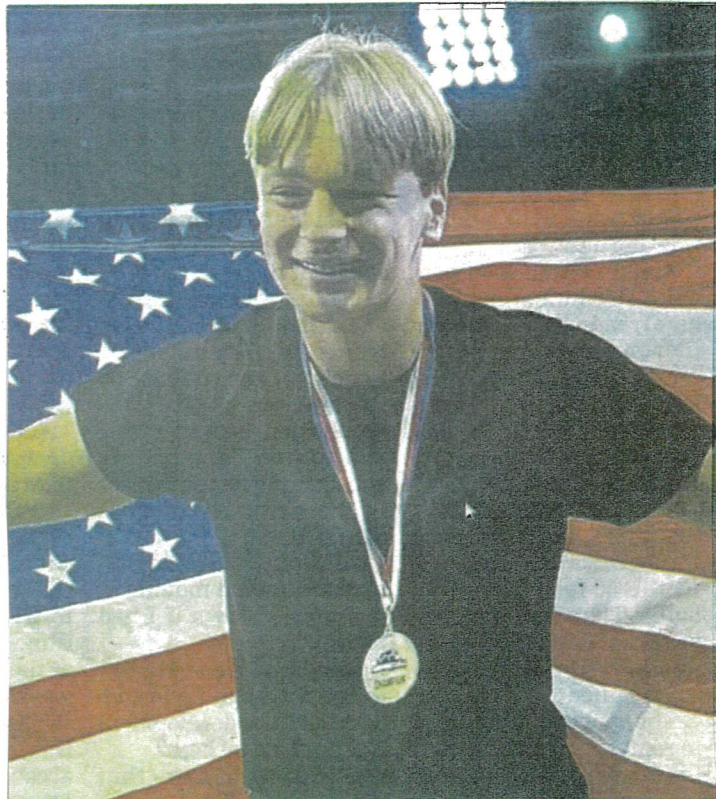
TUT – a non-profit autism treatment center – will host a field day on Friday, April 29, which will include Seyda's freestyle football performance. The event will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. and is open to staff, students and their families.

Seyda's mother, Shannon Seyda, is the TUT Center Coordinator.

Last year, Seyda became the first American and youngest competitor to ever win a World Championship Title at Super Ball Freestyle Football in Prague, Czech Republic.

His accomplishments didn't stop there. In January 2022, he went on to win the Sit-down Freestyle National Championships. He will defend his world title in Prague this August.

Freestyle football, otherwise known as freestyle soccer in the U.S., is the art of self-expression through creatively juggling a soccer ball using many parts of the body. It combines soccer tricks, acrobatics, music and dance.



Stirling resident Nick Seyda won the World Championship Title at Super Ball Freestyle Football in 2021, the first American to do so.

Defeating expectations against all odds isn't new to Seyda, however.

Born severely premature, Seyda was given a low chance of survival. He wasn't expected to walk, talk or breathe on his own.

Through his resiliency, he not only survived but later started playing baseball in Long Hill and then took on soccer.

When he was about 10 years old, though, Seyda was diagnosed with osteochondritis dissecans, a condition where the bone in the knee begins to die.

Unable to play competitive soccer at a high level, he found a way to channel his love of the sport into a different, creative

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kind of competition.

A former junior at Watchung Hills Regional High School, Seyda transferred to NorthStar Academy, a Newark charter school, in November.

"Nick is the epitome of perseverance and finding a way to reach one's highest potential," said Uncommon Thread outreach manager Christine Hegan. "This resonates deeply with the staff and students of The Uncommon

Thread who work every day to overcome challenges and improve the lives of those impacted by autism."

The April 29 TUT event is by invite-only due to its limited parking lot and Elm Street's traffic issues.