Defender Dale Robins-Bailey moves forward after father’s death to motivate teammates on and off the soccer field

By CARLEIGH DAVIS
The Breeze

Four years ago, Dale Robins-Bailey’s father died of a heart attack while playing soccer with some friends.

Moving forward, junior defender Robins-Bailey uses his father’s mentorship to be a leader on the JMU soccer field. His father was part of the reason why he started to play soccer.

But Robins-Bailey has remained positive with the help of his family and friends.

I think a lot of it is to do with my family,” Robins-Bailey said. “We have been through hard times, but no one really gets depressed or down. If they do, we have a really close family so everyone helps out.

Not only has Robins-Bailey made a contribution to the team on the field, he has also changed the team off the field. Head coach Tom Martin and teammate junior forward Paul Wyatt agreed that it’s Robins-Bailey’s personality that stands out the most on the team.

“He had... quite personal things that went on, and the fact that he can have such a bright outlook on life and be a leader and those kinds of things... Robins-Bailey is not the most talented player, but he’s the most consistently hardworking player on the field, and that’s why people respect him,” Wyatt said.

Martin also praised Robins-Bailey’s outlook on life and his personality in his team, saying, “His biggest attribute is his personality.”

Martin said, “I’m not sure if it’s because he’s just a good person, or if it’s because he’s really stepped into a role for us.”

Robins-Bailey credits his father with inspiring him to continue with soccer.

“I love my dad, and he taught me how to play soccer,” Robins-Bailey said.

Robins-Bailey said his dad taught him all he knows about soccer. It was his dad who encouraged Robins-Bailey to move to the U.S. before his death. He knew someone who had traveled there to make a new life.

“Most days I sit in the locker room and think about my dad, and it just makes me happier to be here,” Robins-Bailey said.

Robins-Bailey is known for his sarcastic English humor and for his practical jokes that he likes to play on everyone.

“I like to do a lot of practical jokes,” Robins-Bailey said.

“Most days I sit in the locker room and think about my dad, and it just makes me happier to be here,” Robins-Bailey said.

Robins-Bailey said, “I love that guy.”

Although often subjected to Robins-Bailey’s humor, Manrau considers Robins-Bailey to be a close friend and one of the most important people on the team.

“It’s really positive for the team to have someone like that,” Manrau said, “If I go to him on the pitch, he’ll always make me laugh and I’ll be better for that.”

Martin has also noticed Robins-Bailey’s ability to be an influence on his teammates.

“If he’s a leader for us, just by example,” Martin said, “I think his biggest attribute for us is his personality. He’s got a great sense of humor and has a real solid rapport with everyone in our program, just being Dale.”

Martin has no doubt Robins-Bailey will go on to play professionally.

“All credit to Dale,” Martin said. “He’s figured out what he needs to do. He’s worked very hard to get where he is, and all credit to him.”

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