

# Rock Valley's Twin Towers

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Jordan Dykstra

Marcus Heemstra

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Affectionately nicknamed by the media as the “twin towers”, Rock Valley High School (RVHS) seniors Jordan Dykstra and Marcus Heemstra have many things in common including both being 6’9” tall and incredibly gifted athletes. They have each recently accepted a full scholarship to play basketball at, South Dakota State University.

But it is not just about basketball for these two young men. They have played football as well. Dykstra played wide receiver and defensive end. Heemstra played wide receiver. Both were named All District, and Dykstra was also All-State. During 2009 they helped their team advance all the way to the State Finals.

“I have had the pleasure of coaching these two young men for four years and to say they are special is an understatement,” Football Head Coach Cory Brandt stated. “They are gifted athletically, socially, intelligently, musically and spiritually. They are not afraid to be used by God and to lead. It will be fun to see how God works through them throughout the rest of their lives and see the impact they have on others for the Lord.”



They have both participated in track. Heemstra plays baseball and was named All State last year.

The Rock Valley Rockets basketball team was the 1 A State Champs in 2009 and both young men made the All Tournament team; Dykstra was named Captain.

RVHS Head Basketball Coach Heath Swanson said, “Marcus has always given consistent effort and has always set lofty goals to push himself, but his biggest attribute is his wisdom. The Lord has blessed Marcus with an acute knowledge of the game of basketball. His strength is when he uses his gift to help others through his leadership. His heart is unmatched when it comes to teammates and family.”

“God has certainly blessed Jordan with a work ethic,” Coach Swanson continued. “When he is in the heat of battle, he is as determined as anyone I have ever seen, yet, he is a true Christian of character. When there is an opponent on the ground, he is always the first one there to help them up. Jordan also has the ability to make everyone around him share his expectations, which is, if you go hard you can accept any consequence.”



Although they are recognized statewide for their impressive accomplishments in sports, their involvement in school and church activities is equally notable. They rank second and third in their class of 47 students.

Both seniors are gifted musically and play in the band and jazz band: Heemstra part of the percussion section and Dykstra on the trumpet. RVHS’s jazz band finished in third place at State Competition last spring. Dykstra was named Outstanding Performer.

At school they are members of the choir –Heemstra sings bass and Dykstra sings tenor, show choir, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (Heemstra is the president), large group speech, plays and in the most recent musical, “The Music Man.” Heemstra played a school board member and part of the barbershop quartet and Dykstra played trumpet in the pit band.

In addition, Heemstra is president of the Student Council, president of the Technology Student Association (TSA), and a member of the National Honor Society.

Dykstra and Heemstra both attend Faith Reformed Church where Heemstra made a profession of faith in 8th grade and Dykstra as a freshman. Heemstra is part of the youth praise team SOKS. They are members of their youth group’s Leaders On the Horizon (LOH) program and they plan on going on a mission trip to Haiti the end of March if circumstances in that country allow.

What has motivated them to be in such a wide variety of things? They name positive peer pressure for one. “Our friends are in everything,” Heemstra commented. “We’ve got a good group of guys.”

Dykstra’s story includes a different perspective. He moved to Rock Valley from a larger school at the start of 4th grade. At his previous school, he had witnessed that the size of the school meant students had to focus on just one or two areas. The size of RVHS gave him a new outlook. “When I got the chances, I seized them,” he reflects.



Their faith influences how they approach opportunities. “When God gives you talents, you should use them,” Dykstra stated. But sometimes those talents aren’t immediately obvious. Heemstra’s personal philosophy and advice to underclassmen is, “Do your best and don’t be afraid to try something. If you have an interest in something, go and do it and see if you like it.” He added, “God tells you to do your best whatever you do.”

Their prayer life includes those times when they are on the court or the field. Heemstra said it isn’t unusual for him to send up a quick prayer when he is playing. They are very appreciative of the Christian coaches they have had over the years and the opportunity to pray as a team before each game. “I pray before I get announced in the starting line-up,” Dykstra said. “Forgive me for my sins and help me play my best.”

These two seniors are very aware that they are role models. It’s not something they have asked for or have taken lightly but they recognize it goes along with the successes they’ve experienced. They also understand a role model can either be a poor example or a positive one. “We have to be a good role model,” Heemstra said.

“It’s fun being a role model,” Dykstra observed, “but it’s also a pressure, too. It’s a good pressure to have because you can never forget what the little kids are going to think about you if you get caught doing something stupid.”

A necessary trait of a successful athlete is a competitive nature and these two guys are definitely in it to win it. Dykstra admits, “There are some good things about being competitive and some bad things.” Heemstra explained that sometimes they can get over-competitive. Dykstra agreed, “It’s not all about winning but we don’t like to lose.”

But losing and failure is a part of life so how do they deal with it? What Heemstra said he tries to do is, “Learn from it and move on and don’t do it again.” Instead of defeating them, failure becomes a fuel that enables them to try harder. “You learn more from the failures but you need success too,” Heemstra stated. “Having success kind of builds success. But you need to fail sometimes to keep you focused in the right direction.”

“Once you have success and you know what it feels like, you are going to strive for it and that’s going to make you become better at what you want to be,” Dykstra said. “Failure keeps you from becoming complacent.”

When asked how they keep a humble perspective in light of their accomplishments, Heemstra said, “We try to give credit where credit is due. It is not just Jordan and I, it’s the rest of our teammates. It’s God-given abilities; it’s the coaches and everyone else who has coached us and played with us.”



Dykstra's philosophy is, "Don't think too highly of yourself, you are just one individual. But don't think so little of yourself that you have no self-confidence, either. There's a fine line between arrogance and self-confidence. In order to be a good athlete, you have to have a lot of confidence but you can't cross that line."

Why add in the midst of a very busy senior year a mission trip to Haiti? Dykstra said, "It's always been my mission to spread God's word through basketball somehow." They have plans to run a basketball camp at an orphanage there. Heemstra said his interest in the trip came about after hearing someone share their experiences on a similar mission. He remembers thinking, "I want to do something like that someday." So when the opportunity came along he jumped on board. "I want to go out and be challenged and show God's love to other people."

As they consider the future and college, they said they are looking forward to this next stage of life and the additional independence that it will bring. Dykstra is considering pre-med and Heemstra is interested in pursuing a career in the math field.

"We've been through a lot together," Heemstra commented. "We've been playing together for so long, we know each other's tendencies and that is only going to help us," Dykstra said. And he is most likely not just referring to on the court.