

CALEDONIA – It’s not surprising that Annalyse Chance and Karianne Reed probably could finish each other’s sentences.

When you have been friends for as long as Chance and Reed, you tend to develop an impeccable sense of timing that enables you to know where the other will be on the soccer field and what they will do.

In this case, the friendship the Caledonia High School seniors have shared since about fourth grade also allows them to make the same choice about their college destination.

On Friday, Chance and Reed celebrated a decision they came to at nearly the same time when they announced their plans to play soccer at Northwest Mississippi Community College in Senatobia.

“We just got lucky, I guess,” said Chance, who plans to study biomedical engineering. “We went to every ID camp together and we play club together, so coach (James) Beattie was interested in the both of us. It was a decision we kind of made together, and it was a lot easier decision to make because going into it with a best friend by your side is a lot easier than being a stranger.”

Chance played goalkeeper until her freshman season at CHS, when she was pushed into the center back position. Reed has played all over the field, including defensive

midfielder this past season. Chance said the years of playing club and high school soccer together have strengthened a bond that also extends off the field and gives her the confidence she and Reed have made the right decision.

“It’s just a blessing that came along to play soccer at the same school,” Chance said. “When we got to senior year, we thought, ‘Yeah, I think we want to play soccer in college.’ When we found out coach Beattie was interested in us, we thought, ‘All right, this is what we’re going to do.’”

Caledonia High soccer coach Louis Alexander recalled Chance and Reed having a strong relationship dynamic when they were seventh-graders. When Alexander returned to CHS and resumed leadership of the girls and boys soccer programs, the bond between Chance and Reed had only gotten stronger. As a result, they helped set the example the past two seasons and were captains this past season.

“It is hard to put into words what they have meant to the program,” Alexander said. “They are two very, very good technical players, but they are very different players. They are almost the yin and the yang. They balance each other out. I think Northwest is getting two solid players, and I wouldn’t be surprised if they couldn’t go in and contribute as freshmen.”

Alexander said the friendship Chase and Reed share enabled them to be even more effective on the field. He said

they have such an understanding of what the other player is going to do that they can sense where they are going to be. Alexander said that connection will be something they can lean on in college, where the pace of play will pick up.

That doesn't faze Chance or Reed, who may move to outside back and be on her friend's right or left instead of in front of her like she was this past season, when Caledonia finished 13-3-1, won a district title and lost to eventual state runner-up West Lauderdale in the second round of the Class 4A playoffs.

"I feel like going to college together is the right move, and I am very excited," said Reed, who is undecided about what she will study. "I feel like we're going to have a lot of fun with the new team and the overall new experience of everything."

Reed said she and Chance have played club soccer together in Columbus and with TFC Starkville. That partnership will continue at Northwest Mississippi C.C., where they will share a dorm. Reed said they already have Facetimed on multiple occasions to discuss decorations for their room. They shouldn't have any problems, though, considering their history together on and off the field.

"I would not know what to do if I was playing college soccer without her," said Reed, who was trained to be an outside back earlier in her travel soccer career. "That bond just comes very naturally. I always know what she is about to do,

and I know her next move. I know everything she is about to do, and she knows everything I am about to do. Sometimes we communicate without even saying a word.”