



*The 2018  
Garnish  
Scholar  
Awards*

Saturday, September 8, 2018

# The 2018 Garnish Scholar-Athlete Awards

## From the Director's Chair

### George VanderZwaag

Executive Director of Athletics

Today we recognize ten of our senior students as Garnish Scholars. The Garnish Program was created in honor of Lysle "Spike" Garnish, coach and mentor to many Rochester students from 1930 to 1948. He became a trainer and assistant basketball coach in 1931. He was named an assistant baseball coach in 1932. Spike was an assistant football coach from 1945-48.

The Friends of Rochester Athletics, through an alumni committee, reviews nominations of students from our varsity teams who have achieved at a high level in both their athletic and academic pursuits through their junior year. From these nominees, a small number are selected as Garnish Scholars.

Periodically, the Garnish Memorial Citation is given to a graduate, faculty member, or a staff member for dedication and contributions to the intercollegiate athletic program.

These students represent the ideal of the scholar-athlete. They lead our teams on the field of play, while doing outstanding work in the classroom. I am continually inspired by what our students are able to achieve when given the opportunities at a great institution like Rochester. What we know about the students that we recruit is that they set high goals for themselves inside and outside the classroom. What we learn from our Garnish Scholars, and reaffirm today, is that Rochester students are able to demonstrate educational excellence through an outstanding combination of athletic and academic achievement.

The Garnish Committee is proud to present to you these exemplary University of Rochester undergraduates and the Friends of Rochester Athletics continues to remind us of the values of this institution through the Garnish Program.

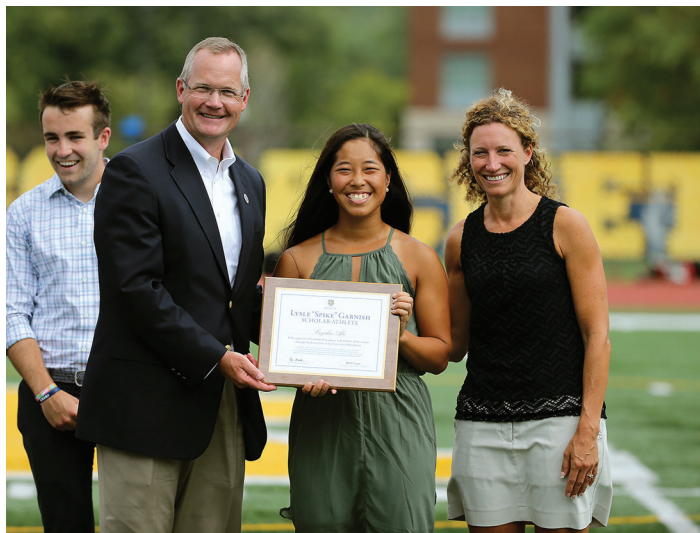


Alexandra Leslie (l.) with George VanderZwaag (r.). Leslie earned 10 All-America honors in four years and led women's basketball to three straight NCAA playoffs, including the Elite 8 in 2016 and 2018.



Boubacar Diallo (l.) was an All-American in the triple jump in 2015 at outdoor NCAAAs. He competed in both the indoor and NCAA championships in the 2015-16 season.

## The Garnish Scholars Excel in the Classroom and on the Field...



Sayaka Abe (c.) of the field hockey team graduated with Phi Beta Kappa honors, was a First Team All-American, and an Academic All-American. She was honored by George VanderZwaag (l.) and Martha Winter '90, '95W (r.).



Arlen Fan '18 (l.) and George VanderZwaag (r.). Fan set two school records in his junior season, then finished first or second in 12 races as a senior. He was a Scholar All-American as chosen by the CSCAA in 2016-17.

**You have won three national championships in multi-events – the pentathlon in 2016, the heptathlon in 2016 and 2017. What's the key to succeeding in those kinds of events?**

There is so much that goes in to succeeding in any track event. Not only do you have to train practically all year, but when it comes to the big day you have to go out and perform to the best of your ability. This can be a mental battle, especially for the multi events which take one to two full days. You have to keep your head up when things don't go well and keep your head level when things do go well. I have learned a lot about myself because of this and I would be nowhere without my strong support system of family and friends.

**How did you become interested in so many different events?**

When I first started track in 8th grade my coach one day at practice told me he was going to train me to be a pentathlete. I had no idea at the time what that was, but he said I would get to learn many different events and I thought that sounded like fun. I enjoy having so many events to challenge me and keep me excited to continue learning. It also prevents me from overthinking and getting burnt out on just one event. It's been a lot of work but I'm glad I trusted in my coach's instincts way back when.

**What's it like to stand in the champion's position on the medal stand at the end of the NCAA meet?**

It has honestly felt different every time that I have. The first time in indoors, I was in shock that I had actually done it. In outdoors, I was just pretty happy that I had had such a great meet and had come back strong from indoors. This past year though, after having stood in the fourth-place spot in indoors and having a tough year of track, it was a pretty emotional experience. Usually, I just get happy and excited but this time I was beyond thankful and proud of myself.

**A number of the people whom you competed against last year also competed this year. Have you gotten to know them at all?**

At multi meets, the group moves from event to event together, so we get to know each other pretty quickly after a couple meets. From my experience, multi athletes are the best and worst to compete with. They are some of the nicest, most sportsmanlike, and encouraging people to be in competition with. We cheer each other on because we all know how hard it is. However, they are also some of the most competitive and mentally tough athletes out there. Until the 800, we are basically just battling ourselves and chasing PRs but during that 800 it's every multi for themselves. We all know how much we hate the 800 so we do everything we can to finish in the best place possible. You can be sure however, as soon as we cross that finish line, people will be hugging and congratulating each other before they can even pick themselves up off the ground.

**You came back from the national meet and by early June, you flew to Italy to take part in a summer service project off the coast of Naples. How did that go? Was it enjoyable? What did you do with the program?**

My trip to Italy was the experience of a lifetime. I had never traveled that extensively before, so I was a little intimidated, but in the end, it just made me want to travel more. It gave me the chance to go sailing and swim in the Mediterranean, meet and make hot air balloons with elementary school children, help clean up the streets and gardens of the island, sightsee in Florence and Rome, and I even made a pizza from scratch with an Italian chef. It was jammed packed with activities for us to help the friendly people of Procida with various tasks, genuinely experience the culture, and to learn everything we could about the island's history while getting our fill of gelato.

**Did you speak Italian before you arrived? If not, did you learn any?**

I only knew a few words of Italian before I arrived in Italy. This wasn't a problem in big tourist cities like Florence and Rome, but in Procida very few people speak English. In a way, it made it easier to pick up everyday words while being fully immersed in the language but also made shopping for food and asking questions while traveling very difficult. For this reason, I had to pick up some basic words quickly.

**In addition to your All-America awards, you've been elected as an Academic All-American for two years: Second Team as a**

# Kylee Bartlett



**HOMETOWN:** Williamstown, NY  
**MAJOR:** Brain & Cognitive Science

**sophomore, First Team as a junior. How are you able to balance your academics with your athletic achievements?**

I find that track has helped keep me focused on my school work and properly manage my time. I have a responsibility to myself to be the best student I can, and I also have a responsibility to be the best athlete I can for my team. This drives me to get my work done so when I am at practice I can relax and focus on just track, and to make sure that I manage my time outside of practice to ensure I have time for my schoolwork. When I'm stressed in one, working hard in the other gives me an outlet.

**What influenced you to select Brain & Cognitive Science as an academic major?**

I wasn't sure coming into U of R what route I wanted to take but knew that I enjoyed science. I explored by taking a couple different classes freshman year and ended up loving the Brain and Cognitive Science class I was in. It was difficult, but I enjoyed the challenge it presented and it greatly interested me. I enjoy trying to understand how the brain works and what the resulting behaviors are.

**You worked as a lab assistant in the Clinical and Social Psychology Department in a motivation lab where you used a virtual reality headset. What images were you seeing in the headset?**

We were showing videos that were meant to inspire awe which had a much more profound effect with the headset. My favorite videos showed the Aurora Borealis, and there was one with the vantage point on top of a weather balloon as it rose off the ground into space. How could you not be awe-struck while in 360 degrees of visible space above the Earth?

**What goals are you setting for yourself this year – both athletically and academically?**

This year my goal for my academics is to keep applying what I've learned about myself to be the most successful student I can. This goes for athletics too, I need to relax and enjoy what I do because that's when I perform my best. It's my last year so I want to make the most of it and see where my hard work will take me!

**Your swimming resume lists a number of Top 10 times at Rochester in three different strokes: the freestyle, the backstroke, and the butterfly. What are the keys to being successful in each of those?**

The key to being successful in those wide range of strokes is preparation. Swimming, racing in particular, is as much mental as it is physical. I find out what events I am racing the day before every meet. I have to be prepared to perform my best regardless of the event and the competition. Being able to mentally prepare for an event on short notice has been a big reason as to why I have been able to drop time in a wide range of events during my time here. Every year I train a little differently. Coach Emily and I make small tweaks to my training every year. I have shifted towards a more versatile training program that allows me to focus on all of my strokes, which has benefited me greatly.

**When did you become interested in competitive swimming?**

I started out taking level 3 swim lessons when I was 6 years old. I went on to competitive swimming when I was 7 years old. However, I didn't fully devote myself to the sport until I was a freshman in high school. I went from practicing 4 hours a week when I was in 8th grade to practicing 16 hours a week in 9th grade.

**Coach Wylam pointed out that you have continued to improve every year. What do you work on in the off-season?**

The past two summers, I trained with local club teams. Going into my junior year, I had an internship here in Rochester, so I worked with a club based in Fairport. I had the opportunity to train with The University of Vermont swim team this past summer while I was in Burlington, VT for an internship. I find it important to get in the water during the offseason to maintain a feel for the water and stay in aerobic shape. In addition, I spend a great deal of time in the weight room, while making sure I eat healthy to prepare for the coming season. Most importantly, I make sure I come into the season ready to compete with a determined mindset and positive attitude.

**What drove your decision to attend Rochester and to compete?**

I applied early decision here because I knew this school was a perfect fit for me as soon as I came on my recruiting trip. I was drawn to the University of Rochester by the team culture and tight-knit atmosphere that I experienced while on my recruiting trip. In addition, the supportive, inviting, and competitive atmosphere is addicting to be around. That is exactly the environment I like to be in and is why I saw myself thriving at UR. Coach Emily does an amazing job at promoting positive attitude and work ethic. Her impact is evident when looking at all of my successful and hardworking teammates.

**Do you have a way to evaluate how you swam in a meet besides the sheer race against the clock?**

Yes. While achieving the times that I want is important to me, understanding where I can improve after every race is just as crucial. I make sure to talk to Coach Emily and Coach Cameron after every race to get feedback. They point out aspects of my race that I can improve on, such as my walls, technique, and pacing. I love hearing the feedback because it outlines what I must focus on for the rest of the season.

**As a senior now, what is your role with the younger members of the team, particularly the first-years?**

My role is to continue to create a fun and productive environment on our team. This is achieved by setting a positive example for the team, in and out of the pool. I love coming into practice every day and pushing my teammates. My most memorable practices in college have been the ones where everyone was engaged and cheering each other on. Creating an environment in which people can feed off each others' positivity and success is extremely important to me. Danny Aronson and Paul Steve, the two other captains on the team, have been amazing at promoting these values as well. Danny, Paul, and I are looking forward to endorsing a strong work ethic and an enjoyable environment that will allow the first years to excel in college.

**And what do you remember about your first year on campus?**

I remember being very overwhelmed coming into college. I needed to work hard to transition smoothly into college swimming as I found it much more challenging compared to high school. Coach Emily assisted me with developing the necessary habits that have allowed me to be successful in college swimming.



**When did you develop the interest in mechanical engineering?**

I went from computer science to biomedical engineering to mechanical engineering. I developed an interest in mechanical engineering during my introduction to biomedical engineering course. I was intrigued by the biomechanics portion of the course and decided halfway through my first semester that I would pursue mechanical engineering.

**Do you have a 'dream job' in the industry?**

I do not have a specific "Dream Job". A lot of different industries and jobs interest me. I had a wide range of course work here at Rochester and all of the courses have grabbed my interest. A job that requires me to be very well rounded is what appeals to me. Although I don't have a specific job in mind, I do know that I will be very happy to have a career where I am constantly problem solving and learning new skills in multiple different expertises.

**Please talk a little bit about what you did as a Quality Engineering intern at Keurig Dr Pepper?**

Before a product can be marketed or sold at Keurig Dr Pepper, it needs to go through a series of tests based on various risk assessments. I worked in a cross functional team to develop standardized testing protocols for new products in the Keurig network for different types of risks. I also programmed a tool to go along with these protocols that would guide business leads through a decision tree and generate a customized test plan based on the risks they identify in the new product. I also automated data reporting methods for the Supplier Quality team by writing queries and programs that populates a form and gives suppliers a score based on defect data directly from Keurig's database. This allowed the Supplier Quality team to gain access to live and frequent updates when scoring Keurig's suppliers.

**You were also an intern with an Eco-lab company (Nalco Water). What did you do there?**

The University of Rochester's Central Utilities Plant is a client of Nalco Water. I worked with the Central Utilities Plant and provided onsite support for the plant's members throughout the summer and school year. I collected samples for the plant and constructed analytic reports to ensure chemicals in the boilers and cooling towers were being regulated at an optimal level.

**What do you hope to be doing at this time next year?**

I will be sending out job applications this year as I hope to work right after I graduate. I have wide areas of interests, but I would love to start out my career going into Management Consulting or Data Science/Analytics. Most importantly, I hope to be finalizing my travel plans for Meliora Weekend.

**When did you start playing soccer growing up?**

I started playing soccer when I was about 4 years old; my mom was my first coach!

**In pursuit of such a challenging major, did you plan on playing soccer when you applied to the University?**

Growing up, I knew I wanted to play collegiate soccer. My sophomore year of high school, I was fortunate enough to be put into contact with coach Sike through an ECNL showcase. From there, I attended a UR soccer camp, went on an overnight visit and fell in love with the school for its high academic standards, research opportunities and competitive women's soccer program. I knew I wanted to continue my soccer career at the U of R and decided to verbally commit the spring of my Junior year. Soccer is my passion; I couldn't imagine my life without it.

**What made Rochester attractive as a college choice?**

Rochester's reputation in the medical field and affiliation with Strong Memorial Hospital attracted me to the university. Its high academic standards drew me to look into its soccer program as I knew I wanted to continue my soccer career in college. As a D3 school, the U of R provided me with the opportunities to fully pursue both of my passions: soccer and neuroscience in a challenging and competitive environment.

**Your athletic career here started with you as a forward, then moving to more of a central role to help teammates develop. How challenging was that for you?**

Throughout my youth soccer career, I was put in a multitude of positions; from outside midfielder to center back. These experiences allowed me to transition pretty fluidly from a left winger to the central midfield position here at the U of R. I love the switch to the center as I believe my skill set as a player lends itself more to the center position than a winger. As a center mid, I am able to see more of the field, anticipate plays, anticipate passing patterns, and aid teammates in their positioning more so than I could as a winger. I believe the challenging part for me was not playing in the center but taking on more of a vocal role with my teammates.

**You are majoring in neuroscience and psychology. Where did your interest in neuroscience and psychology come from?**

My spark of interest in neurology first began when I was in middle school. I saw how passionate my mom was for working with adults who have acquired brain injuries. I loved when she came home and told stories about her patients. I remember always asking her for more information regarding her patients, their diagnosis, the cause of injury, and their treatment plans. I was intrigued by how each injury is different and how the brain plays a vital role in our sense of being.

As for psychology, I think that started with my older sister, Stephanie, as well as how it compliments the field of neuroscience. My sister took a lot of psychology classes in college so when she would come home for holidays, she would start probing at the world in new ways that I found fascinating. I love learning about different theories of psychology and how those theories interplay with neuroscience.

**Dr. Jeffrey Bazarian selected you as a research assistant to work with him in the UR Medical Center. Can you talk about that?**

My first interaction with Dr. Bazarian was actually in his concussion clinic after I sustained a concussion in soccer. From then on, I have had the honor to work with him on a variety of research studies. My main research study with Dr. Bazarian was utilizing an eye-tracker to test vestibular system alterations pre- and post-concussion in collegiate athletes. I was honored to present my research at the National NeuroTrauma Conference in Toronto this past August. Dr. Bazarian has been a great mentor these past three years, and I appreciate all the valued guidance and support he has provided me.

**You also work as a clinical research assistant in the Strong Emergency Department. Is that stressful?**

At times it can be due to the multiple projects and studies going on at once, but you learn to balance and ask for assistance. All of my coworkers in the emergency medicine research department are very supportive and are always willing to help.



**HOMETOWN: Elm Grove, WI**  
**MAJOR: Psychology, Neuroscience**

I believe one of the most stressful times of the year is pre-season in the fall when we have concussion baselining for all of the incoming athletes! There are a lot of students and the organization of it all once school starts is a little difficult. While it may be stressful, I love my job as it gives me the opportunity to work in a lot of different environments with all types of people, including athletes.

**As you head into your final season on the soccer pitch, what do you believe is your role, especially in regard to helping the first-years to adapt to the college game?**

In my final season, I will strive to make my coaches, teammates, and university proud as captain. I will lead our team through a competitive season, and be more vocal than I have in previous seasons. It will be difficult for me as I tend to be a quieter person, but having great teammates makes it easier. As for the first-years, each year they come in nervous, and this year will be no different. I will help the first-years adapt to college life and show them how wonderful of a family they are coming into on our team.

**You are working with Grassroots Soccer and 'Soccer Girls Rule' in the Rochester City School District. What kinds of things are you doing to help mentor and empower girls in the community schools?**

My sophomore year I had the opportunity to work in the "Health Curriculum" portion of the Grassroots soccer club. Three other club members and I helped raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in the Rochester area by visiting a local high school each week of the fall semester. It was very impactful as we saw the high school students open-up and gain confidence throughout the fall. In other years, I have helped at Saturday soccer clinics with the Soccer Girls Rule program. There, girls aged 4-12 years old gain basic reading and math education while developing their soccer skills through practices and tournaments. The girls inspire me to enjoy the little things in life and not take life too seriously.

**And, lastly, what do you hope to be doing at this time next year?**

This time next year I hope to be attending medical school! I am not sure which school I will be attending quite yet, but I hope to be furthering my career in the medical field.

**When was the first time you were contacted about possibly attending Rochester?**

The summer before my senior year, I attended a Headfirst Honor Roll camp in Sacramento. Coach Reina was there scouting and saw me play. He reached out to me shortly afterwards.

**Did the coaches come out to meet you in person?**

After talking on the phone a few times, Coach Reina invited me to visit Rochester, which I did later that fall. That's when we first met in person.

**The spring climate can be a tad chilly in Western New York. Your hometown, Los Gatos, CA, is in Northern California. What's the weather like there – south of San Francisco/Oakland and west of San Jose?**

The weather in Los Gatos is pretty great. It's warm and sunny most of the year. In winter there may be an occasional dusting of snow on the highest hills, but to see real snow you need to drive three hours to the Sierras. I was looking for new experiences in college and having seasons has been one of them.

**Besides high school, when did you start playing baseball competitively?**

I started playing little league at five and was playing baseball year-round by the time I was ten. When I started high school, I quit other sports and focused exclusively on baseball.

**Here, you have caught and played first base. What are the toughest challenges at each position?**

As a catcher, your job is to control the game. You must understand everything going on and make sure your teammates know exactly what to do on the field. At first base, you know you'll be involved in almost every play. It requires consistent, flawless execution. Done right, the first baseman will make the whole infield look better.

**Was it tough to adapt to college ball?**

College ball is definitely a higher level of play, both physically and mentally, but I had supportive teammates who made the transition easier. Now that I'm an upperclassman, I hope I can make the transition easier for the incoming first-years.

**What adjustments did you make during the off-season between freshman and sophomore year, and then sophomore and junior year?**

I work to maintain a high level of conditioning year-round. It's easier to stay fit than to get fit, especially with the competing demands of classes and activities. I also have a more rigorous routine. Our season is concentrated and intense and there is less time between games to recover.



**Aiden Finch**

**HOMETOWN: Los Gatos, CA**  
**MAJOR: Mechanical Engineering**

**You are studying mechanical engineering. Where did your interest develop?**

I come from a family of engineers, so I've known for a long time that I wanted to do some kind of engineering. Initially, I looked at environmental engineering because I see renewable energy, resource conservation, and addressing climate change as enormous future challenges that will require lots of engineers. Then I realized as a mechanical engineer, I can play an even bigger role in tackling those issues.

**Have you done any internships – either near home or elsewhere. Please tell us where you interned and what you did.**

This summer I had an internship with Silicon Valley Mechanical in San Jose. They are a mid-sized HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) company. I split my time between office work and job sites, and given their relatively small size, worked closely with the senior engineers. It was a great experience.

**Which classes are you really looking forward to in this academic year? And why those classes?**

I'm looking forward to the lab classes, like senior design. I'm excited to start applying everything I've learned the last three years in the real world.

**What do you hope to be doing at this time next year?**

Hopefully, I will be starting a new job I'm passionate about and beginning to build my professional career.

**How young were you when you started to play soccer?**

I was around 4 when I first started to play recreational and 10 when I started to get serious about it and playing select soccer.

**At Stadium HS in Tacoma, you played football and soccer. Those are usually both fall sports. How busy was your schedule between practices and games ? (And that's not counting the academic workload).**

Soccer in Washington is actually a spring sport so I was able to play football in the fall and soccer in the spring. However, my schedule was still full all year long and that helped prepare me for the rigors of being a student athlete at the University of Rochester.

**You played with Crossfire Premier in the U.S. Development Academy and played for the Seattle Sounders USSDA. The northwest flourishes as a soccer area. What's the atmosphere for the scholastic and club teams games?**

The atmosphere is incredibly competitive no matter what team I played for. I was able to play with the best players from all areas of Washington and also play against the best players from all around the country. I got to experience what it is like to play at the highest level I can and it cultivated an even greater competitive attitude within myself which I have tried to bring to the men's soccer team at U of R.

**When were you first contacted by the University?**

Being on the west coast, getting recruited by top Division III soccer programs was tough because most of the best ones are on the east coast. I reached out to Coach Apple and Coach Burgasser first knowing that this is the type of school and soccer program I wanted to be a part of.

**Did you have a chance to visit? What did you think?**

I visited a couple times and I loved it every time I came. I remember Pete Martin, who graduated this past year, met up with me and showed me around and introduced me to a bunch of the team. All the guys were awesome, and I immediately felt at home. From that, I knew I wanted to come to this University.

**What interests you about engineering as a major?**

Growing up I have always been interested in how things work. Whether it was building computers, fixing electronics around the house or doing projects using micro controllers such as the Arduino. I found joy in building and creating. I figured, what better way to continue doing what I love than studying to become an Engineer.

**You interned after your sophomore season with Bechtel Marine Propulsion in Pittsburgh. What did you do with them?**

At this internship I learned about different cryptographic algorithms used in today's industry and I used what I learned to program an integrated circuit board to do different things.

**Did you do an internship this summer?**

This summer I worked for Harris Corporation in Rochester. They are a company that makes radios for the army. Here, I coded and automated a firmware test that they used to do manually. I also helped create a parametric battery test that they will continue



working on now that I am gone.

**Which courses are you really looking forward to this year?**

This year I am really looking forward to working on my senior design project. I love the feeling of putting all that I've learned into something tangible. I have been coming up with a bunch of ideas with my group members so I'm excited to get started.

**Let's talk about last season. UR was 2-1-2 after five matches, then won nine and tied one in the next 11. When did it begin feeling like everything was clicking? Was there one game in that stretch that stood out in your mind? (before NCAAAs).**

Everything started to click after our game against the University of Chicago. Losing against one of the best teams in the country was a great reality check on how much more work we needed to put in. From then on, as a team, we collectively pushed each other harder than before each day and it showed as the season went on.

**How can you tell when you are playing well? What's going on with the team, with you, and with your teammates?**

Playing against different teams with different styles of play means that our team needs to be ready for everything. That's why I know we are playing our best when I can feel that we are all on the same page. Whether we are playing a game where we need to defend and counter attack, possess the ball, or keep putting it on the other team, when we are all doing it together, the game feels like it is in our hands and we are playing our best.

**When did you start catching in softball?**

I started catching pretty much right when I started playing little league, around the age of 6 or 7. I have honestly been catching for as long as I can remember. I have played just about every position on the field throughout my years of playing softball, whether it was for my various travel teams or for high school.

**What do you like about that position?**

I enjoy catching so much because I love being in on all the action. I also love the feeling and adrenaline rush I get when I throw a girl out at second or pick someone off.

**At Trumbull HS, you also played as an outfielder and a shortstop. Do you prefer to be behind the plate?**

Out of catching, shortstop and the outfield, catching is definitely my favorite. Although, I have truly enjoyed the opportunity to play these different positions. I have even spent time at the U of R during my freshman year at shortstop and outfield, in addition to catching. There's no better feeling than making that amazing catch in the outfield or cleanly fielding a ground ball and throwing a girl out. But nothing tops the feeling of helping the pitchers strike a girl out by framing the ball just right or throwing out baserunners trying to steal or making close plays at the plate. I would definitely have to say I prefer catching the most.

**Was it a big adjustment, moving from high school to college?**

Besides being a bit homesick and feeling out of place, academically and athletically it was not a big adjustment for me. I was always worried going into college that academically it was going to be so much harder than high school and that I would never be able to get the grades I got in high school. Come to my surprise I have managed pretty well to keep my grades up, play softball, and even work part time at the GAC. College softball is definitely a huge step up from my high school team, but because I played on a premier travel showcase softball team, I was more than prepared to face our competition.

**Is there a game from your first year at UR that really sticks out in your mind?**

I think the most memorable game from my first year would be our very last game against St. John Fisher in the NCAA Regionals. This game sticks out the most to me because I went 2-3 (including a double to right center) against one of the best pitchers in Division III and drove in the two runs we scored against them. Although we didn't win, it was a great feeling to be able to go out and play my best for my team, even though I was just a freshman. And to top it all off, I made the All-Tournament Team.

**In three years, you've thrown out 18 basestealers. Is there a key to being successful?**

Hard work, dedication, and the ability to stay calm in tight situations have helped me to be successful.

**When did you become interested in attending the University?**

I honestly had no idea that the U of R existed until Coach Yerdon emailed me to recruit me after an individual showcase camp. After visiting the campus and staying with the team, I realized I could see myself spending my college years here.

**What appealed to you about UR?**

I really liked the curriculum that the U of R has. I really like the freedom I have to explore different classes while still being able to focus on my major. Because of the cluster system, I have been able to take extra classes such as an architecture class and a CNC class that I might not have been able to take elsewhere because of the



**HOMETOWN: Trumbull, CT**  
**MAJOR: Mechanical Engineering**

mandatory classes other schools make students take. I also really liked the fact that I would be able to study mechanical engineering while still playing softball at a competitive level because that is not possible to do everywhere.

**Why did you select mechanical engineering as a major?**

While away with my travel showcase softball team one summer, we visited a nearby university and got to take a tour through the university's mechanical engineering facilities. I had no idea what I wanted to major in up until this point, and after the tour I thought it was pretty cool and just decided to go with it. Also, after looking into it more, since I was and still am undecided about what career path I want to take, I realized how broad mechanical engineering is. The flexibility I will have was also a determining factor.

**You interned at an engineering department in Fairfield, CT before you came to UR. What did you do during that internship?**

This engineering internship was related to the civil engineering field. During my time in the engineering department, I shadowed the civil engineers and helped them with their daily tasks. Some of the tasks included marking up blueprints and visiting a site in which a solar panel powered car charging station was going to be built.

**You are very involved in community service at home – with TOPSoccer for special needs students and at a child care center for Jewish Senior Services. How did you get started with community service?**

I got started with community service because it was required for my confirmation, for graduation from middle school and for the National Honor Society in high school. Having community service got me initially involved, but I went above and beyond the amount of hours needed because I enjoyed helping out so much.

**In each game, you get the tough job, defending the top offensive players of the opponent. Do you look forward to doing that game-in and game-out?**

Yes, I look forward to that 1-on-1 because it brings out the best in me. The rush is intense, and I feel like I have more impact on the game when I succeed.

**Is there a secret to being a good defender?**

There is no secret. Like any other position, you need to be poised and adaptable for every situation because you don't know what they're going to throw at you next.

**What do you need to play good defense?**

Communication and anticipation are extremely important. If the field is quiet, that is never a good sign. Defense needs constant chatter to relay where opponents are and how we are moving to cover them.

**What makes Rochester such a strong defensive team?**

We've had little change since we were freshman in terms of defense. This allowed us to figure out what each others' strengths and weaknesses are so that we can perform to the best of our ability. Our coach constantly challenges us in practice with numbers-down situations that push us to work extremely hard.

**It's been a great three-year run: three straight NCAA tournaments, Liberty League runner-up twice, LL regular season and playoff champion last fall. How early in the season do you start to see the pieces come together?**

I really struggled with this question because there is no exact moment when the pieces start to come together. We take things one game at a time. This lets us focus in on exactly what we need to do right now rather than getting ahead of ourselves and being distracted from what is currently most important.

**Was last year's regular-season win over Skidmore one of the most exciting matches you have been a part of?**

I'd rather not relive that game because I tore my ACL during it, but it was incredible to have had a role in such a crazy game. I've never been so stressed while watching an overtime and a shootout before.

**How can you tell when you are playing well?**

Warm-up lets me gauge where I am at for the day. If



I am a little slow or have messy touches on the ball, I know I need to pick it up and increase my intensity.

**Your major is psychology. What is interesting about that?**

I like knowing why people function the way they do and how they interact with others.

**Have you had a couple of classes in your major that you really enjoyed?**

Yes. I have taken a few that revolve around adolescent studies, and I find those more interesting than other psychology classes.

**Which classes are you looking forward to this year?**

I will be taking Psychology of Parenting in the spring. I have heard this class is interactive and has good group discussions, so I am looking forward to it.

**What do you hope to be doing at this time next year?**

Hopefully I will be in graduate school studying education so that I can teach children in grades K-6.

**What appeals to you in distance running as opposed to sprints and middle distance races?**

There are a ton of reasons why I love distance running. First, there is an awesome community in distance running. As distance runners we spend countless hours grinding through workouts and runs. This forms a really strong, unique bond, that I don't share with anyone else. It's much easier mentally to get in the work that I need to when I'm surrounded by people who are doing just the same. Second, through running for so many years, I've learned about myself and my limits, which is really valuable. Third, there is a big mental component to running, which I really like. Each race is a mental battle with yourself, and your competitors. At the end of the day, I can be satisfied that I gave it everything I had, and be proud of that.

**You were the Liberty League runner-up in the steeplechase last spring. That's an event where everyone focuses on the water jump. Is there a key to clearing that hurdle (literally)?**

The water jump is a super important part of the Steeplechase, because if you don't do it right, you can waste a lot of energy on it unnecessarily. For me, the key is to attack it. If you've got enough speed going into it, your momentum takes you over the water. If you hesitate going into it, you'll be going in too slow and get dragged down by the water.

**You come out of the water jump and you have a regular jump approaching. Do you change focus mentally for that jump, especially after the water jump?**

The steeplechase is tough because there are always more barriers coming up. As soon as you get over one, you're preparing for the next one, trying to line your steps up correctly, and getting in a good position so that you can get over it the most efficiently.

**You've run the Distance Medley Relay (DMR). Can you talk about that a little bit? It's four different distances in one race?**

Yeah, the DMR is a relay that goes 1200, 400, 800, 1600. It's a cool event in track because it combines long distance and mid distance into one race. Track is a pretty individualized sport, but when it comes to relays, each person is super important to the success of the team.

**Relay runners in general will sometimes move around (first leg, second leg, etc.), but all distances are equal. In the DMR, have you ever moved from one distance to another in different races (ran a 400 in one, the 1,600 in another)?**

Who runs which leg is all about strategy. You want to have the fastest time possible, but you also want to compete to win, so you might put your more aggressive 800 runner in the 1200 since it's the first leg, so that he can hand off the baton in the lead. I have run both the 1200 and 1600 legs at separate times for UR, but I'll leave the 400 and 800 to the guys with quick foot speed.

**When you run cross country, do you pay attention to which runners are around you?**

Sometimes. I mainly look for people I know, especially in a race with a lot of people, because it's sometimes hard to tell where you're at in the race. Having my teammates at my side also helps me push myself harder to keep up with them or vice versa.

**What is your general plan for a distance race?**

Everyone is different with their race strategy. I like to go with the flow early in the race, biding my time, sort of waiting for the right moment. Depending on how long the race is, I might make a few moves, or just one, which is where I surge past the people I was running with enough that they can't follow me. Sometimes it works, but sometimes they keep up, which means you're in for a tough fight. I try to save these moves for near the end of the race.

**Coach Novara praised you as an outspoken leader. What do you talk about with your teammates?**

I see my teammates put in so much hard work to get better as a runner, an athlete, a student, and as a person in general. As I get older and more experience, I want to do everything I can to help the younger guys achieve the goals they want to. I spend a lot of time trying to think about how to help us become the best team that we can be. At the same time I want everyone to love what they are doing and have fun while working hard. My biggest goal as a leader is to spread positivity so that everyone is having a good experience.



**Benjamin Martelli**

**HOMETOWN: Lexington, MA**  
**MAJOR: Mechanical Engineering**

**You worked in a fluid dynamics lab in the engineering department. What kind of work was involved?**

I joined this lab sort of on a whim because I wanted to see what research was like, and I've really enjoyed it. The lab that I work in is called the Mixing Lab, because we study how fluids mix. I've been specifically working on two-dimensional experiments, where I take videos of turbulent fluids in the lab for a few days, and then I use the computer to analyze that data and make a whole bunch of graphs and visualizations to help us understand what the data means. Eventually, we come to a conclusive story about what the data means, and we can publish what we've found in a paper! I was a co-author on a paper that got published this summer, and I'm super proud to have added knowledge to the scientific community so that other researchers in the future can learn from what I've done.

**You belong to Solar Splash, which builds and races a solar-powered boat. How did you get into that?**

I got into Solar Splash because one of my teammates on Cross Country, Chris Dalke who is now the president of the organization, had joined and said he really enjoyed it. I've always liked the idea of building things, and have really enjoyed this hands-on project, it's a nice contrast to the classroom. It has helped me learn about the challenges of "real-life" engineering, where not everything works out the way you want it to.

**This summer, you interned at an Optomechanical Engineering company. What's involved with that?**

This summer my goal was to learn about what it meant to be a real mechanical engineer and learn about what it was like to work in the industry. It is very different from research, which is very exploratory, whereas working at a company is all about delivery to the customer. It was cool to see this contrast so that I can make a more informed decision about what I want to go into. Optomechanical Engineering is similar to mechanical engineering, but it has to be much more precise and accurate because optics are very sensitive. We build things like telescopes and communication systems with satellites.

**Your graduate school plans will involve either Ocean Engineering or Aerospace Engineering. What sorts of things would you be studying in either of those majors?**

I've really enjoyed doing research in fluid dynamics and want to continue that in a practical field. Aerospace engineers build things for planes or rockets, or things like that. Ocean engineers study the ocean and how it flows, and is especially relevant to the weather and climate change.

**How would you explain your position of 'libero' to the casual volleyball fan?**

Liberoes are the leaders of the back row- the ultimate defenders and serve receivers. They earn a different colored jersey which allows them to stay in the back row for almost every rotation. The job of a libero is do everything possible to not let the ball fall on our side of the court by reading the hitters, anticipating ball placement, and directing the rest of the team on defense through communication.

**As the ball is played back and forth by the other team before they attack, what keys are you looking for to get in the correct position to 'dig' it?**

I make adjustments from my base defensive position based on the ball location, the attacker's body, shoulders, and hand positioning, and if I know their tendencies from scouting ahead of time I might adjust my base accordingly, too. That being said, when there is a quick attack from the middle it's all about discipline and reflexes.

**Considering how acrobatic liberoes have to be, how are your knees holding up?**

Besides the swelling and stiffness after playing... great!

**What did you work on athletically between sophomore and junior year to prepare for last season?**

I worked out daily, really focusing on sprinting and fueling my body properly. I also played volleyball weekly whether it was grass or court volleyball with friends from high school.

**How did this summer go in terms of prepping for this year?**

Really well! I was in Rochester this summer, so I had access to the gym and courts which I exploited with several other teammates who were also in town this summer.

**You have an academic cluster in Bioethics. What courses are involved with that?**

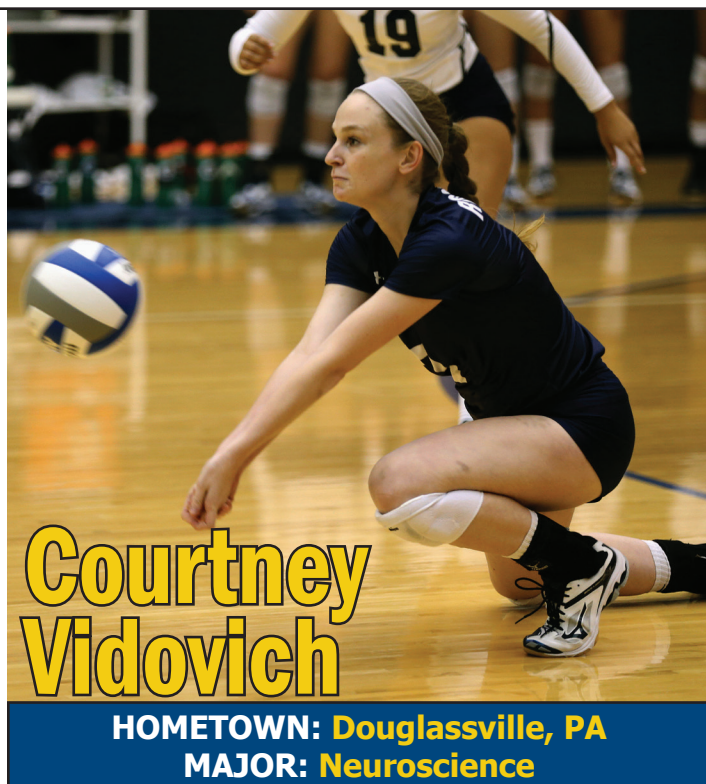
Bioethics is the philosophical study of ethical controversies in biology, medicine, and public health, which interests me as these are key players in the field of healthcare. I have taken classes on public health, the US health system, and ethical decisions in medicine. There are also classes held by the School of Medicine and Dentistry like Bioethics at the Bedside.

**Your major is Neuroscience with a minor in Clinical Psychology. Which specialty do you want to pursue?**

Currently, I am most interested in surgery, neurocritical care, and pediatrics, likely as a result of my experiences. I am sure these interests might change as I am exposed to more specialties during medical school. Although, right now, I know that I would like to tie in research and mental health regardless of the specialty that I pursue.

**You've had internships since your initial year on campus (2015-16). How do you find the time to mix in all the academic work, the internships, and still have time to play volleyball in one of the toughest conferences in Division III?**

I am definitely a workaholic and I am the happiest when I am very busy. Motivated by making the most of my time at U of R and with an interest in unique learning opportunities, I started my internships the spring of my first year. I have been able to do



this by managing my time very well, planning ahead, seeking out opportunities in advance, and maybe sacrificing sleep here and there. I also find that volleyball is a great stress reliever and contributes to my focus and success.

**You are a medical scribe at Rochester General Hospital. What sorts of work does that entail?**

As a scribe I perform documentation for physicians in the Emergency Department. Essentially, I see patients with the providers and record their dictations. It's a great way to get exposure and experience the fast-paced environment of emergency medicine.

**How much work do you put in as a T-A for Chemistry?**

As a Chemistry TA I led two workshops a week, held weekly office hours, and ran review sessions before exams. I also had a weekly class where we discussed a broad number of topics including methods of teaching, leadership, and diversity.

**Coach Iya highlighted your motivation. What gets you motivated?**

I am very intrinsically motivated and find complacency uncomfortable. I am happiest when I am challenged which drives me to constantly find new ways to push my limits. I am also motivated by knowing that the effort that I put in now will allow me to better help others and make change in the future.

**Where in medical school do you hope to be next year?**

I would be very pleased to go to any of the medical schools that I am applying to. I am really looking to go somewhere that not only develops my clinical competencies but also provides me with learning opportunities in research, ethics, public health, and service to others. Additionally, among other things, I would like to be a part of a culture that is dedicated to forward thinking and innovation.

**When did you begin thinking about UR as a college choice?**

I identified U of R as a potential choice for me during the summer before my junior year of high school.

**You played football, basketball, baseball, and ran track & field in high school. Did you think about playing more than one sport in college?**

Yes, I was considering playing football as well, but as the recruiting process progressed I decided it would be best for me to focus on basketball.

**Your father, Jeff, played baseball and football. Did he give you any 'tips' about the University before you enrolled?**

My dad told me that I would be challenged both academically and athletically, and that I needed to stay focused and on top of everything. He also said there will be a lot of great opportunities and I should try to get involved in different things.

**When you bring the ball upcourt, what are you watching – how the defense is reacting, how we're setting up offensively?**

I am definitely looking at both. In addition to reading the defense and making sure we are set up, I am thinking about other factors that will help us get our best shot. I am looking for a match up that we like and a play that we think we work well.

**Two years ago, in the Elite 8, you had nine assists and two turnovers against Whitman College which had, according to Coach Flockerzi, 'the best pressure defense in Division III'. What made everything click?**

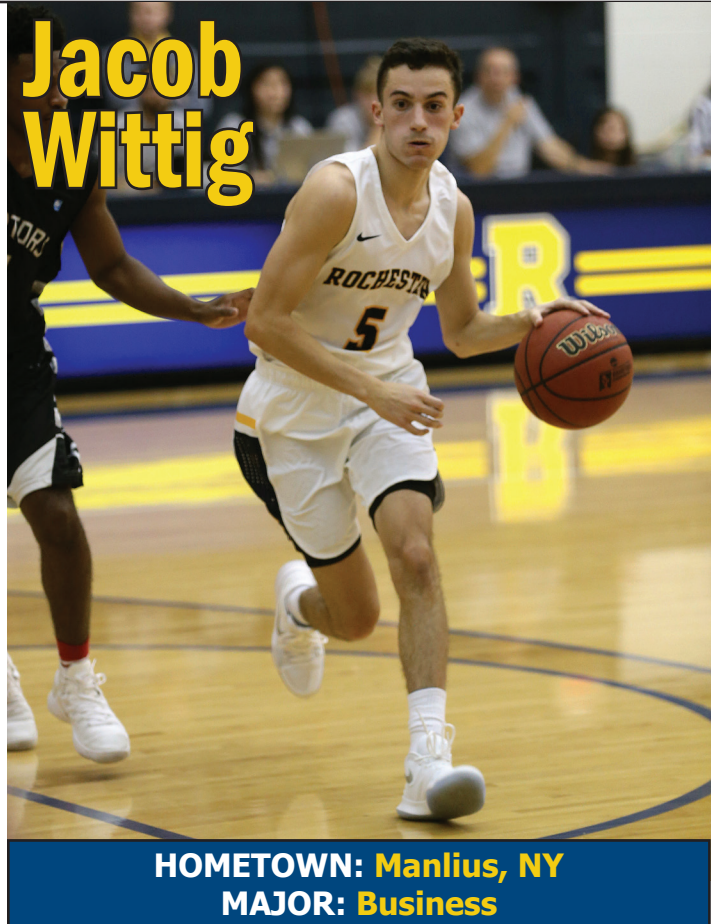
We had a great game plan provided by our coaches and my teammates made plays after we broke the pressure. I just tried to remain calm, under control, and put my teammates in a position to succeed.

**Players can feed off the energy provided by their own crowd. Can you feed off the energy provided by the opposing team's crowd when you play on the road?**

Definitely. The energy provided by the away crowd can increase your adrenaline and energy. The other team will be playing with a lot of intensity so we want to try to top that. It is also a great feeling when our team makes great plays and quiets the away crowd.

**Can you talk a little bit about the work done by the Varsity Student-Athlete Advisory Committee at UR?**

VSAAC works to enhance the life of the student athlete by building relationships between teams, athletes and administration, and athletes to the community. We have participated in many fundraisers, including our main fundraiser during Meliora Weekend where all proceeds go to breast cancer research. We are also in constant communication with the athletic department to address any concerns or discuss what we think works well. We also work to improve school spirit and support other athletic teams. Every year we hold RAM, which is a month to celebrate athletes and bring them together for some fun events.



**You've been a teaching assistant for Social Psychology. What do those courses focus on?**

I was a teaching assistant for Social Psychology and Individual Differences. This course provides an introduction to social psychology and an overview of individual differences in personality. Some of the topics of focus are social cognition, relationships, and social influence.

**You are a mentor for Advocates, Inc. What does the group do, and what do you do as a mentor?**

During high school, I was a mentor for Advocates, Inc. Advocates is a non-profit organization which empowers people with developmental disabilities to direct their own lives. As a mentor, I supported a teenager in achieving his goals and provided guidance in social interactions.

**Your major is business. Which courses have you taken that you've really enjoyed?**

I have enjoyed a lot of the accounting courses I have taken, including Financial Accounting and Managerial Accounting. Outside of business, I have really enjoyed some psychology classes as well, including Psychology of Consumerism. Another course I really liked was the Politics of Sport.

**What do you hope to be doing at this time next year?**

I hope to be starting my Masters in Accountancy program. In addition, I may try to be a Graduate Assistant for the basketball program at the college I am attending.