The 2021 Lysle "Spike" Garnish Scholar-Athlete Awards

Saturday, September 11, 2021

The 2021 Garnish Scholar-Athlete Awards

From the Director's Chair

George VanderZwaag
Executive Director of Athletics

Today we recognize 12 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.

The 2019 Garnish Scholars were honored at a reception in Fauver Stadium after the on-field presentation (l-r): Colleen Maillie, Jamison Seabury, Jorie Freitag, Stephen Savchik, Noah Chartier, Rocky, Michaela Burrell, University President Sarah Mangelsdorf, Garrett Renslow, Beth Ghyzel, Zach Lawlor. On the Far right: Devin Woodyard.

All-Time Lysle 'Spike' Garnish Scholar-Athletes - 1986 - 2020

1986: Craig Fitzgerald (baseball), Eric Lipton (men's tennis), Karen Price (volleyball), Patty Rupp (women's swimming & diving), John Schnell (football), Janet Siemer (women's basketball).

1987: Josefa Benzoni (women's cross country/ basketball/track & field), John Deinhart (football), Dave Vaccaro (men's soccer).

1988: Gary Ciarleglio (football), Jill Decker (women's soccer), Elka Ertur (volleyball), Carolyn Misch (women's cross country/track & field), Peter Sciandra (men's soccer), Greg Sutton (football).

1989: Abby Heister (women's soccer), Jeff Jordon (football), Rob Kruty (football), Scott Milener (men's tennis), Jim Schwiegerling (men's track & field), Michele Wilson (women's basketball).

1990: Pam Delp (volleyball), Kelly Gorman (women's soccer), Matt Jackson (men's lacrosse), Paul Muntner (squash), Dana Quattrochi (women's swimming & diving), Tom Schmidt (men's soccer).

1991: Chris Apple (men's soccer), Matthew Bergin (football), Jim Dunlop (men's cross country/track & field), Megan Hanushek (women's soccer), Daniel Malone (football), Jennifer Sherry (volleyball).

1992: Tim Cody (football), Nikki Izzo (women's soccer), Jim Jordan (men's basketball), Jim Ritzel (baseball), David Unger (men's soccer), Diane Verso (field hockey). .

1993: Tracey Buettgens (women's basketball), Ben Lanning (baseball), Kyle Meeker (men's basketball), Perrin Morse (volleyball), Eric Sundberg (men's soccer), Libbie Tobin (women's soccer/basketball).

1994: NA

1995: Lisa Allen (women's soccer), Amy Chodikoff (women's tennis), Darrin Hubert (men's basketball), Daniel Pratt (football), Emily Sanders (field hockey), Lauren Viscardi (volleyball), Elizabeth Woods (women's cross country/track & field).

1996: Kelly Bowman (women's soccer/basketball), Heather Clark (women's soccer), Kristen Costello (volleyball), Jennifer Franzen (field hockey), Kelly Peters (women's swimming & diving), Jason Porter (men's tennis), Pisey Ung (women's tennis).

1997: Ben-Ari Elias (squash), Andrew Evans (men's cross country/track & field), Rachel Feinberg (women's track & field), Emeka Iheme (men's soccer), Tanya Klebe (volleyball), Anni McDonough (field hockey/lacrosse), Dave Sickler (men's basketball).

1998: Taya Branton (women's basketball), Larry Brown (football), Lori Chan (lacrosse), Laurie Kurtelawicz (women's cross country/track & field), Karan Raichand (men's tennis), Bobby Versacci (baseball).

1999: Tarun Arora (squash), John Ginnetti (baseball), Jodi House (women's cross country/track & field), Ben Keegan (men's basketball), Kareen Kreutziger (lacrosse), Tarah Street (women's track & field).

2000: N/A
2001 Amanda Danforth (women's cross country/ track & field), Gavin Hickey (men's soccer), Brian Kowalski (football), Jessica Lerman (lacrosse), Deepa Popuri (women's tennis), Claire Willscher (women's swimming & diving).

2002: Megan Barritt (women's soccer), John Breedy (football), Elizabeth Conway (women's track & field), Jeff Joss (men's basketball), Amy Kelmenson (women's soccer), Jacquelyn Staple (women's swimming & diving), Tim Sweeney (men's basketball), Daniel Quinn (men's track & field).

2003: Jacob Budny (men's track & field), Tara Carrozza (women's basketball), Alison Collins (women's soccer), Andy Larkin (men's basketball), Kaitlin Poeth (field hockey), Colin Ryan (men's tennis), Erika Smith (women's basketball), Sam Snowden (football).

2004: Justin Galloway (football), Seth Hauben (men's basketball), Elizabeth Loveless (volleyball), Nathan Micklos (men's soccer), Katherine O'Brien (women's track & field), Avinash Reddy (men's tennis), Kelly Wescott (women's basketball).

2005: Lisa Aronoff (lacrosse), Michael Dermody (football), Jeremy Goico (men's soccer), Patricia McHale (women's swimming & diving), Jennifer Moshier (softball), Daniel Pfohl (baseball), Matthew Tierney (men's track & field).

2006: Joseph Lust (men's cross country/track & field), Emily Bango (women's basketball), Susan Johnson (volleyball), Zack Freed (men's swimming & diving), Jena Robertson (softball), Mary DiMatteo (field hockey), Nick Zappia (football).

2007: Rachel Cahan (field hockey), Kelly Fischer (women's swimming & diving), Stephen Goodridge (golf), Jon Onyiriuka (men's basketball), Andrew Rape (football), Mark Stevens (men's cross country/ track & field), Ashley VanVechten (women's soccer).

2008: Travis Buttaccio (men's track & field), Mike Chmielowiec (men's basketball), Erica Gelb (field hockey/lacrosse), Megan Jenkins (lacrosse), Julie Marriott (women's basketball), Matt Stack (football), Kelsey Turley (women's soccer).

2009: Adam Barrett (football), Christi Bottcher (field hockey), Brian Bowman (men's tennis), Jim Bristow (squash), Amanda Case (field hockey/lacrosse), Steve Guzski (baseball), Juliana Nicholson (softball). .

2010: Melissa Alwardt (women's basketball), Misha Carrel-Thomas (men's soccer), Zachary Feldmann (football), Yaneve Fonge (women's track & field), Mike Labanowski (men's basketball), A.J. Lee (men's track & field), Lindsay Macaluso (softball), Kirsten Ross (women's soccer), Lia Weiner (women's tennis), Steve Welles (men's soccer).

2011: Allison Beardsley (field hockey), Alex Caghan (baseball), Ellen Coleman (women's soccer), Rachel deLahunta (women's swimming & diving), Sara Hutchinson (softball), Jodie Luther (women's basketball), Nate Novosel (men's basketball), Hillary Snyder (women's cross country/track & field), James Vavra (men's cross country/track & field), John Whiting (football).

2012: Adam Bossert (men's swimming & diving), Claire Crowther (women's track & field), Andres Duany (squash), Benjamin Fischer (squash), Shelby Hall (field hockey), Bridget Lang (women's soccer), Jonathan Menke (baseball), Lauren Norton (women's cross country/track & field), Jakob Seidlitz (men's soccer), Jackie Walker (women's basketball).

2013: Kenny Apostolakos (football), Chris Doser (men's swimming & diving), Katie Flaschner (field hockey), Becky Galasso (women's track & field), Meghan Hennessy (softball), Dean Kennedy (football), Karen Meess (women's swimming & diving), Adam Pacheck (men's cross country/track & field), Sarah Skinner (lacrosse), Nate Vernon (men's basketball).

2014: Lauren Bailey (women's swimming & diving), Griffin Drake (men's soccer), James Frauen (men's swimming & diving), Cara Genbauffe (women's tennis), Blair Landolfi (women's basketball), Kevin Sheehy (men's basketball), Max Sims (men's track & field), Alex Swanger (men's soccer), Emily Widra (rowing), Kailee Zornow (women's soccer).

2015: Neil Cordell (squash), Boubacar Diallo (men's track & field), Jennifer Ford (volleyball), Megan Fujiyoshi (field hockey/lacrosse), Evan Janifer (baseball), Catherine Knox (women's cross country/ track & field), Tara Lamberti (field hockey), Vicky Luan (women's swimming & diving), Matt Mender (football), Ben Shapiro (men's tennis).

2016: Sayaka Abe (field hockey), Kyle Allegrini (football), Michael Cross (men's soccer), Eric Franklin (men's cross country/track & field), Samantha Kitchen (women's cross country/track & field), Ryosei Kobayashi (squash), Brynn Lauer (women's basketball), Danielle Neu (women's swimming & diving), Ben Swanger (men's soccer), Eleni Wechsler (softball).

2017: Gabriela Alatorre (softball), Wesley Clayton (men's track & field), Olivia Denny (field hockey), Aleks Dombrowski (men's soccer), Arlen Fan (men's swimming & diving), Paige Gloster (women's soccer), Alexandra Leslie (women's basketball), Luke Meyerson (baseball), Alexandra Nelligan (volleyball), Andrew Nunno (men's tennis).

2018: Kylee Bartlett (women's track & field), Eric Feirouz (men's swimming & diving), Christina Feller (women's soccer), Aiden Finch (baseball), Bryce Ikeda (men's soccer), Harleigh Kaczegowicz (softball), Miranda Lakis (field hockey), Benjamin Martell (men's cross country/track & field), Courtney Vidovich (volleyball), Jacob Wittig (men's basketball).

2019: Michaela Burrell (women's track & field), Noah Chartier (men's track & field), Jorie Freitag (women's soccer), Beth Ghyzel (volleyball), Zach Lawlor (men's soccer), Colleen Maillie (field hockey), Garrett Renslow (baseball), Stephen Savchik (men's swimming & diving), Jamison Seabury (women's soccer/lacrosse), Devin Woodyard (football).

2020: Ryan Algier (men's basketball), Eileen Bequette (women's cross country/track & field), Kathryn Colone (field hockey), Hugh Curran (men's soccer), Declan Hickton (golf), Renae Lapins (volleyball), Tessa Ludwick (women's basketball), Mary Panepento (lacrosse), Alexis Pope (softball), Jon Turk (baseball).

Brian Amabilino Perez

BASKETBALL

HOMETOWN: Sant Cugat Del Valles, Spain MAJOR: Biological Sciences

QUOTABLE:

I am really looking forward to carrying out my independent research project at the Munger lab, where I will be investigating the structure of two HCMV proteins

Did you have a chance to play over the summer? Where did that occur?
Yes, this summer I was back in Barcelona on an internship at the University of Barcelona and in some of my spare time I played on the courts I used when I was younger with some of my old teammates. I also practiced with the senior team of one of my previous clubs, Sant Cugat, which was nice since I had wanted to play with them when I was on the youth team.

Tell me about finally getting back on the court in February, 2021.
Getting back on the court felt really great and I was really excited to play the games we did. I missed the competition and having fun out there with my teammates, and I enjoyed every minute. I was very grateful we got to play them since it involved an amazing organizational effort in the middle of that complicated year, and I can't thank enough all those who were involved in putting it together.

You're a senior now. What extra responsibilities does that mean for you?
I haven't noticed that much of a difference so far to be honest. Just representing our team in the best way possible, working with and encouraging the other players and keeping up with the high rigor of the basketball program as always. Naturally the senior year is a highlight and there will be a high expectation. I'm confident in our team and enjoy a lot playing with the guys. We have a great understanding and I think the team can do really well this season.

Do you have a favorite course that you have taken at Rochester? Or a favorite professor? What did you like about the course or the prof?
I think my favorite courses have been Cell Biology and Biology of Aging. I really like learning about molecular and cellular mechanisms and their involvement in disease, and these classes have touched on topics in biomedical research, which is one of my main areas of interest.

Some of my favorite professors have been Professor Goldfarb, Professor Sia, Professor Hafensteiner and Professor Nilsson, and I really just enjoyed the passion with which they talked about their subjects and the way they thought about science.

Which courses are you looking forward to this semester?
I am really looking forward to carrying out my independent research project at the Munger lab, where I will be investigating the structure of two HCMV proteins. I am also really excited and motivated by my advanced biochemistry class at the medical center where a few professors from the Biochemistry and Biophysics department will be lecturing.

You were an organic chemistry workshop leader last year. What did that entail?
It meant having some responsibility to my fellow students to try and help them learn about organic chemistry as best as I could through problem sets. It was challenging because it made me examine the course further in detail and to be accountable to know the content as best as I could so I could be as good a resource as possible to others, as well as going through the process of gaining the necessary skills to lead the workshop and create a positive learning environment. I found it really enriching.

Caden Cole

FOOTBALL

HOMETOWN: Lehi, Utah MAJOR: Computer Science

QUOTABLE:

I was planning on majoring in Electrical and Computer Engineering and spent my freshman year working towards that major. I realized I was enjoying all the parts of my courses involving programming and software and not so much the sections involving hardware and that's when I knew I should make the switch. I've been a computer science major ever since sophomore year.

You have been a starter since you arrived on this campus. Tough job?
It was definitely tough coming in as a young guy and getting thrown right into the mix, but it forced me to adapt to and learn the college game quickly. This has helped me become the player I am today.

When were you first approached by the University? Can you talk about the recruiting process?
I got a call from an unknown number one day and happened to answer it, and on the other end was a U of R football coach who was able to convince me to visit the school. After my visit, my parents and I knew this was the place for me and I never looked back. The campus was beautiful, the facilities were amazing and everything was driven home by the coaching staff who sold me and my parents on their vision to turn around the program.

Linebacker's a pretty tough job on the field, isn't it?
Yes, I believe linebacker is the most demanding position on the defense since we have to be able to play well in all aspects of the game, both the run and the pass. As a linebacker we are also expected to make many of the calls and checks for the defense putting a lot of responsibility on us.

Think about opening night of your sophomore year came against Case Western Reserve. Emotionally, what was it like when you came out of the locker room and on to the field? *(Ed. Note – The attendance of 3,131 was the largest home crowd in 11 years.)*
Pure excitement, there is nothing you can do to get rid of the butterflies in your stomach it's what you prepare all year for, the opening game. Though I was filled with excitement I'm still completely focused and know exactly what I need to do to succeed that day.

Where did the interest in computer science come from?
When I arrived at Rochester I was planning on majoring in Electrical and Computer Engineering and spent my freshman year working towards that major. I realized I was enjoying all the parts of my courses involving programming and software and not so much the sections involving hardware and that's when I knew I should make the switch. I've been a computer science major ever since sophomore year.

What are some of your favorite courses that you've taken? Favorite professors?
I have enjoyed almost all of my computer science courses I have taken but my favorites would definitely be the artificial intelligence course I took and my web development course. A professor I thought was really good was professor Ferguson who taught two of my computer science classes including artificial intelligence. He was able to make class both engaging and interesting in Zoom during the pandemic.

Will Eisold

SOCCER

HOMETOWN: Pipersville, Pennsylvania MAJOR: Engineering

QUOTABLE:

This summer was very eye opening. I worked in Minnesota at a Biomedical Device company...as an optical engineer... I worked with MechE's, ChemE's, ECE's and everything in between. I helped them with their specific projects, and then when an optics issue arose, I dealt with it.

You have developed a knack for making saves on the goal line. How does that instinct develop?
I am not entirely sure. Sometimes I just see where the forward is aiming and if I feel that my goalkeeper cannot get to it, I move to block the shot. It is no different from blocking shots further up the field. If you just get in front of it, it makes it much harder to score.

As a first-year, you played in one of the most dramatic victories in program history: a 2-1 UR win over defending national champion Messiah College at the Brian Prince Athletic Complex. It sent UR to the Final Four. What do you remember about that game?
I remember quite a lot about that game actually. We were supposed to take a trip down to Messiah that year to play that round, however, the east coast got hit with a massive snow storm and we were more equipped to deal with it as opposed to Messiah, which was how we ended up hosting the round. Then on the day of the game, we all watched Tom and Jerry in the locker room to relieve some nerves. I am not sure who put it on, but it was definitely needed. As far as the game goes, I just remember defending most of the time and shifting up and down and left and right. I also remember the elation and pure joy that I felt after that final whistle blew.

What does it take to be a successful defender in college soccer?
There is no set mold to be a successful defender in college. Defending is all about discipline and hard work. Everybody has their own tendencies and preferences for how they play. However, for me, I just try my best and leave everything on the field. As long as you make sure that the opposition isn't scoring as much as your team is, then you must be doing something right.

You are majoring in Optical Engineering. Please describe briefly what that is.
Optical Engineering is the study of light and how it interacts with its surroundings. It is basically using light to understand more about a certain object or to use light to solve a problem. I know that this seems very vague and

broad, however, it is extremely open ended.

You've been a teaching assistant for two classes – Geoometrical Optics and Physical Optics. What do those classes cover?
Geometrical Optics is the study of light in its most basic form; a ray. However, Physical Optics is the study of light in a wave. Light is very interesting because it behaves differently in certain conditions. These classes help demonstrate that.

You had the opportunity this summer for some real-time experience in your field. Please tell us about that.
This summer was very eye opening. I worked in Minnesota at a Biomedical Device company. I worked as an optical engineer which was interesting. I was kind of like a Swiss Army Knife. Since optics encompasses many things, I worked with MechE's, ChemE's, ECE's and everything in between. I helped them with their specific projects, and then when an optics issue arose, I dealt with it. For example, I aligned lasers as well as other optical systems. I also did some lens design to improve on the existing design. I also worked alongside the MechE's and designed fixtures, which were then 3D printed. I also did all of the testing on them to make sure they fit the specifications required.

Adam Hopson

SWIMMING & DIVING

HOMETOWN: Ithaca, New York MAJOR: Biological Sciences

QUOTABLE:

Everyone has a different approach to their education and their values, and if you have a specific goal for yourself in academics you will accomplish it if it's the right path for you because this school sets you up with such amazing resources and opportunities to be happy and successful.

You have performed in some high-level meets between the UAA Championships and the NCAA Zone qualifiers. Any butterflies before the meet begins?
Oh yeah, there are always butterflies for me. I used to be a competitive swimmer growing up and would compete at lots of big meets, so I'm used to the feeling. Sometimes it can be hard for me to separate the two sports, because when I was a swimmer my body would be trained to race and get pumped up and nervous before a big race. For diving, my body naturally does the same thing, but I have gotten much better and telling myself to relax, because diving is much more focused on finesse and patience rather than speed and racing. That's something that I've had to really train my body and mind to realize in switching between two different sports.

Divers are their own social group because of the specialty. During a big meet, will you talk with the other divers or does everyone keep to themselves?
Yeah I love talking to other divers! I am a very social person, so it's fun for me to get to meet new divers and chat with them during warmups. It's a great way to make some friends as well, because we dive against some awesome divers who you know you're gonna see again at the end of the season when it comes time for Zones *(Ed. Note – NCAA Zone Diving Championships)*. When it's time to dive though, for me it's time to focus. I always love cheering on our other divers after they hit something amazing, but I am not a big talker once we start competing because I need to be in the zone.

You are standing on the three-meter board just before you make your approach. What are you thinking about?
That's a funny one for me because I used to have fear and panic standing up there. My freshman year, it was such a new experience for me learning an entire new diving list on 3 meter (because nobody competes 3 m in high school) and I would often feel overwhelmed trying to be perfect and to not hurt myself up there. It used to be really anxiety-inducing for me. Now, I love it. My hardest dives that I do all come from 3 meter now, and I'm throwing dives up there that are really high degrees of difficulty without the same anxiety that I used to have. Three meter is a blast for me now, and I feel like I have more time in the air to focus on the minute details of diving like my hand and foot position and the technique that I use to kick out of fast spinning dives. It's such an awesome feeling to nail a dive on 3 meter, and it really gets you in your element for the rest of the meet when you nail that first dive. That's what I love about 3 meter the most: the exhilaration that you get while you're spinning high up in the air, there's nothing like it.

You were named as a Provost's Circle Scholar last year. How do you balance the academic challenges with the sport itself?
I was so honored to get the Provost Circle Scholar award. It was such a great affirmation that everything that I do as an athlete and a dedicated student is purposeful. Going to an intense school like the U of R, you really get the imposter syndrome feeling where you feel inadequate and that you cannot separate yourself from your classmates because everyone is phenomenal at something here. My goal now as a senior and a captain on the team is to teach our underclassmen and younger teammates that it is okay to feel anxious about academics because it is a lot to handle, especially as an athlete. But what students need to realize is

that you represent so much more than a grade that you get in a class, and that there is no one correct way to do things. Everyone has a different approach to their education and their values, and if you have a specific goal for yourself in academics you will accomplish it if it's the right path for you because this school sets you up with such amazing resources and opportunities to be happy and successful.

I think learning how to study smart and not hard has really helped me, and I know that's a cliche but it is so true for college. You can't spend time focusing on memorizing everything for an exam and then throwing the information out the next day so you can cram more into your brain for the next exam. You really need to put time in during lecture asking good questions and taking good notes actively so that when it comes time to study, you have a great framework of side notes and background information that will make it much easier to understand the information as a whole and apply it to other topics you have learned.

What is your academic specification in biological sciences?
My specialty is in Microbiology, and I'm also majoring in Environmental Studies (B.A.). I love microbio because it really focuses on bacteria and pathogens and how they contribute to the plethora of diseases that we see in today's society. It's a very applicable major for COVID-19 as well, and has really taught me the specifics about how these pathogens cause the damage that we see in our populations.

Which courses have you really enjoyed – and why?
I had a blast my freshman year for sure, and loved the first class that I ever took in college which was Introductory Biology (BIOL 112). Dr. Goldfarb was my professor and he was the professor that I needed and was lucky to have during my first semester of college, because his class forced me to learn how to study and think critically as a student, which was different from in high school when they train you to regurgitate information like a robot for the exam and then you move on to the next one. Dr. Goldfarb taught me that science is interconnected and that everything that you learn plays off of each other, sometimes between different disciplines as well. I also loved my Comics and the Moving Image course that I took my Junior Spring. We got to watch awesome movies and read comic books and then come to class and talk about them and the art that goes into making these blockbuster films that everyone loves so much. I've had such a great time in college learning from so many brilliant professors that I honestly have not had a class that I have not enjoyed. Organic Chem was the bane of my existence, but, hey, it is for everyone so I can't complain too much.

Eleanor Mancusi-Ungaro

ROWING

HOMETOWN: Marblehead, Massachusetts MAJOR: Chemistry & Environmental Sciences

QUOTABLE:

I've been taking piano lessons since my first year here, and I've also been in collaborative Eastman and River campus choruses every year. Actually, one of the last things I did before campus shut down in March 2020 was perform in Kodak Hall with the Eastman-Rochester Chorus (and then fly to Tampa the next day for spring training).

You walked on to the team and found a home as the coxswain. How did you adapt to the challenge?

I was on the sailing team in high school, so I already knew a lot of boat terms, which helped a lot at the beginning. Because our team has a lot of walk-ons, we learned how to row together, so I always felt supported by the people in my boat and by the coaches. The hardest part for me was being more aggressive--you have to yell a lot and really motivate the people in your boat. But the rowers do a good job of telling me what makes them feel motivated, and then it's easier for me to give them what they need during races.

As the races get underway, the coxswains have to make quick decisions don't they?

Yes! Before the race starts, we meet up as a boat and decide what our plan is going to be: sometimes we want to start out really fast and try and maintain a lead, or other times we want to save our energy in the first half of the race and then get progressively faster for the second half. Once we're on the water, though, having other teams around you and having the changing weather conditions on the water mean that you might need to change the plan. Because everyone else is rowing, the coxswain has to make the decision for the whole boat. Sometimes we start with a plan, but if I realize that we're neck-and-neck with another team, I'll push the boat harder so we can try and get a lead. Other times, if the weather is really bad, I won't focus on the other boats on the water and I'll just encourage my boat to focus on themselves.

As you are guiding the UR shell in the race, what factors are you seeing on the water and then communicating to the rowers?

Something people might not know about rowing is that the rowers sit backwards, so they can't see what's in front of them. In a race, my job is to tell them where the other boats on the water are, especially if we're about to pass one of our rivals! I let my boat know about big landmarks like bridges or buildings that we passed on our way to the course, so the rowers have a sense of where they are on the river. I also have a small "speed coach" which tells me how fast the boat

is going and how many meters we have left in the race--so if I notice the boat getting slower, I can motivate them to go faster.

You are carrying a double major of chemistry and environmental science. Do those specifications work hand in hand?

Because UR lets you do a lot with your elective choices, I have a very environmental science-y chemistry major and a very chemical environmental science major. I'm hoping to go to graduate school for chemistry after college and focus in sustainable and green chemistry.

Which courses have you taken that you have really enjoyed?

This semester, my favorite course so far is Environmental Economics, with Professor Rizzo. I've also really enjoyed Science and Sustainability with Professor Borelli and Climate Futures with Professor Nadir.

You've studied music at the Eastman School of Music. Which areas are you concentrating on?

I've been taking piano lessons since my first year here, and I've also been in collaborative Eastman and River campus choruses every year. Actually, one of the last things I did before campus shut down in March 2020 was perform in Kodak Hall with the Eastman-Rochester Chorus (and then fly to Tampa the next day for spring training). After a year and a half hiatus, I'm excited to sing with them again this fall! A lot of my teammates are also involved with music on the River Campus and at Eastman, so we've gone to each other's recitals and concerts, which has been great.

Kudzai Mbinda

TRACK & FIELD

HOMETOWN: Harare, Zimbabwe MAJOR: Chemical Engineering

QUOTABLE:

I have really enjoyed my engineering classes but the highlight for me has been the opportunity to take classes from a department that's not engineering. Of particular interest were the classes that I took for my Political Science cluster because they gave me an appreciation of a discipline that implicitly and explicitly affects our daily lives.

Was it tough to bounce back after a year away from the team (during the pandemic)?
As an international student, I couldn't go home when all in-person activities were stopped, so, fortunately, the university allowed us to stay on-campus. Since everything was closed, I could not continue lifting or getting treatment for my strained groin. This meant that I spent the greater part of that time unable to do anything meaningful in terms of maintaining my fitness. So by the time we came back, I had lost a lot of the gains that I had made since I joined the team.

You established yourself as one of the best sprinters in the Liberty League. How difficult is it to reach that level – and to stay there?
It was both difficult and easy. Difficult because the Liberty League has strong sprinters every year so if you're not at your best someone else will be. So each time that I get injured, I miss weeks of practice which puts me at a disadvantage and requires me to find different ways to cross-train to stay fit and work even harder to catch up once I'm cleared to run again. It's easy because I enjoy training hard and my goal is always to be a better sprinter so I don't dwell on the rankings too much, I just enjoy the process of training.

In the spring, you said one of the keys to success is the need to be explosive. How do you learn to do that and to maintain it?
We work on explosiveness mainly in two ways. The first is the weight room. Coach Albert writes lifting programs which focus training and strengthening the right muscles and motions. The second is drills that train the relevant muscles to make the appropriate movements for explosiveness - such as, skips, bounds, hurdle hops, sled pulls, etc.

How did the interest in chemical engineering develop?
Growing up I was always fascinated by large processing plants that made everyday goods from natural occurring

materials/substances. So that was the initial interest. As I learnt more about the field, I was drawn to its application in a lot of industries which made it attractive because of the wide range of things that I can do with it.

Which courses have you really enjoyed? What made them special to you?
I have really enjoyed my engineering classes but the highlight for me has been the opportunity to take classes from a department that's not engineering. Of particular interest were the classes that I took for my Political Science cluster because they gave me an appreciation of a discipline that implicitly and explicitly affects our daily lives.

The Chemical Engineering majors work on the Chem E-car team. Please talk a little bit about that project.
The purpose of the project is to make a small model car that will compete at the annual Chem-E car competition. As a team we are responsible for all aspects of the car: the design, production, power source, stopping mechanism, etc. The goal is to design a car that will travel and stop after a set distance using chemical reactions as the power source and the stopping mechanism. So we spend most of the year running trials for different reactions in order to model how each will behave so that we can determine the correct reactions and amounts once we are given the target at the competition.

Julianna Okoniewski

BASKETBALL

HOMETOWN: Selkirk, New York MAJOR: Brain & Cognitive Science

QUOTABLE:

I've always found the brain super interesting, especially the biology aspect, but after taking BCS 110 (Neural foundations of behavior) my freshman year, there was no turning back. Along with my Biology minor, I'm hoping to use my degree to attend PA school in the next few years to specialize in sports medicine and orthopedics.

You've established yourself as one of the best post players in the East and in the UAA. How much of a challenge has that been?

I don't know if I'd call it a challenge, but it's definitely been a really great learning experience. I think coming in as a freshman, I really had no idea what I was getting myself into. The UAA is probably one of the most competitive leagues in D3 basketball and it has shaped me into the player I am today. It's definitely taught me that in order to play at this level you need to be stronger, faster, and more physical and those just happen to be some of the things I love about playing in this league.

Is there a game that really sticks out in your mind? What do you remember about that game?

The UChicago and WashU sweep we had at home my sophomore year certainly sticks out in my mind. As a young team, we were all very talented players individually, but we still had yet to play to our full potential, until that first game against WashU. In our 20-point win, we dominated offensively and defensively for 40 minutes, and I just remember feeling so proud of my team that day. Two days later, we played another phenomenal game and won against nationally ranked UChicago. That then began our winning streak and it felt so good to finally have all our hard work pay off. Especially after coming off multiple injuries that year, it was definitely a great feeling to have.

You are a member of VSAAC, a building manager in the Goergen Center, an intramurals supervisor, and a successful student. How do you do it?

Especially in season, it can be challenging at times, but I always like to keep myself busy. I've also managed to drastically improve my time management skills since high school, and this allows me to stay on track.

When did you develop the interest in Brain & Cognitive Science? Where will that take you?

I've always found the brain super interesting, especially the biology aspect, but after taking BCS 110 (Neural foundations of behavior) my freshman year, there was no turning back. Along with my Biology minor, I'm hoping to use my degree to attend PA school in the next few years to specialize in sports medicine and orthopedics.

Which courses have you taken that you really enjoyed?

I really enjoyed BCS 110 (Neural Foundations of Behavior) and NSC 201 (Basic Neurobiology) with Dr. Davis and both Anatomy and Physiology with Dr. Holtz. Although they were all very difficult classes, I really enjoyed the content and how the professors taught the classes.

Both educationally and athletically, what goals have you set for yourself this year?

I'm hoping to finally get a 4.0 semester. I've gotten close but I've always fallen just short. It may happen my last semester but it's something I've always wanted to accomplish at least once in my college career. Athletically, I want to win the UAA title and make a far run in the NCAA tournament. I've never been to the tournament and I really want my last year at Rochester to end on the highest note possible. An Elite Eight or Final Four run will do I suppose.

Joseph Rende

BASEBALL

HOMETOWN: Babylon, New York MAJOR: Political Science

QUOTABLE:

I'd say the course I enjoyed the most that was tied to my major was Discrimination (PSCI 248) with Kevin Clarke. I learned so much in that class and Professor Clarke is one of the cooler people you'll come across here.

As a FY, you played on a Liberty League championship team and in the NCAAs. Then the 2020 season was lost to the pandemic. Was it tough to come back this past spring?

I was very fortunate to come in my first season and play a role on that 2019 team. It was a really special run we had, and was an awesome feeling to help give Coach Reina his first Liberty League title. The lost season in 2020 was definitely tough because outside the obvious reasons (5 game season / COVID) we felt like we were poised to make another deep run. So I wouldn't say it was that tough to come back this spring and win it because we felt like we were still defending the title. We were all just hungry to repeat and keep the winning culture alive. Thankfully, we did.

It was a dynamic spring (24-10, Liberty title, NCAA appearance, team batting average of .347). What made everything click?

Even though we did come short of our goal in Ohio, that doesn't take away from the damage we did in New York. We were two innings away from being 20-0 in league and that is just a testament to every coach and player top to bottom. Coach Reina put us through a very long fall of multiple intra-squads a weekend for about three months. That fall allowed us to get really close as a team and build on our culture. We parlayed that into a really successful spring season where we all got even closer. We have a team full of selfless guys that want to win. That is usually a pretty good start.

What did the upperclassmen talk to the first-years and sophomores about?

We let them know what the standard was, and what were the right and wrong ways to do things. Whether we're on Towers Field or in the Weight Room, we're all there to win a championship. Credit to the first-years and sophomores because it was all their first times playing league games, but they responded well and came right in and all made an impact one way or another.

You've always liked working with youngsters – at camps, at clinics, etc. What's the most enjoyable part of doing that?

Working with young athletes, no matter the sport, is truly one of my favorite things to do. Seeing their unconditional love for the game is always so refreshing. At that age, their love for the game is always the number one priority, so when I'm in the role of counselor or coach I try to helpthem enhance that love and teach them a thing or two. At the end of the day, all you can hope for is that you're a shining light for these kids and hope they love the game more than they did prior to meeting you.

Which courses – tied to your major or not – have you enjoyed the most – and why?

I'd say the course I enjoyed the most that was tied to my major was Discrimination (PSCI 248) with Kevin Clarke. I learned so much in that class and Professor Clarke is one of the cooler people you'll come across here.

As you head into your last year as a Political Science major, which courses are you looking forward to?

I spent most of my sophomore and junior years taking Poli Sci classes, so as I head into my senior year I am all but done with those requirements. That being said, the class I am most looking forward to this fall is Public Speaking with Curt Smith. I have taken a class before with Professor Smith and I could just listen to him all day. He is full of stories and knowledge and not to mention, has lived an awesome life.

Emma Schechter

SOCCER

HOMETOWN: Belleair, Florida MAJOR: Data Science

QUOTABLE:

Since we have practice and games after classes most days, I try to take advantage of my free time in between classes to get work done, so I can fully shift my focus to soccer when practice time comes. I am someone who likes to get things done and not leave things lingering, so I commit to completing tasks when I have the opportunity to do so.

How do you go about preparing for opponents?
While I think it's important to have a good understanding of the opponent's tendencies, strengths and weaknesses, I like to focus more on myself and my team because ultimately that is what is in my control. Going into games with confidence and belief in ourselves is something very important to me, and I believe is integral to the success of the team. Making sure to build this in the practices and moments leading up to games is a key focus of mine.

At the start of the match, where is your concentration focused?
The first few minutes of a game always set the tone, so I really try to concentrate on doing what I can to make sure that they are positive. As a goalie, I'm not always involved in every play, so making sure I am especially vocal in the first few minutes is important. If I am on the ball, I try to put my teammates in good positions to make a play and if I am not, I focus on helping people with their positioning, which can sometimes be confusing right at the start.

Are you taking any courses this semester that you are really anticipating?
This semester I am taking a Data Mining course which I am very excited about. In this course, we learn how to create a data science project pipeline by working with real-world data and problems. After spending much of my time here taking prerequisites and developing the base knowledge for my major, I always get excited to work on practical problems.

You have a very strong GPA and you play one of the toughest schedules in the nation. How do you strike a balance with all of that?
Since we have practice and games after classes most days, I try to take advantage of my free time in between classes to get work done, so I can fully shift my focus to soccer when practice time comes. I am someone who

likes to get things done and not leave things lingering, so I commit to completing tasks when I have the opportunity to do so. I am very passionate about both soccer and school, so I never have any issues devoting my time and effort to both.

How do you find the time to relax?
As I have grown in college, I have learned how important it is to allow yourself some downtime and relaxation. It is easy to get sucked into your work or sport, especially as the semester goes on, but in order to perform your best in both, you have to be balanced. I always make sure to pay attention to what I need and be proactive by allocating time to spend time with friends or do something lighthearted before I start getting overwhelmed.

Do you have any special projects tied to your Data Science major?
This summer, I had a data science internship at Verizon where I worked with their wireless customer service troubleshooting team to identify areas for improvement. I used data visualization software to analyze metrics and create data-driven stories, which I then presented to many senior executives. It was really exciting for me to apply the skills and knowledge I have gained here at the UofR in a real business setting, and start learning the differences between data science in a school and work environment.

Kailee Sowers

SOCCER

HOMETOWN: Wheaton, Illinois MAJOR: Psychology

QUOTABLE:

My class on Developmental Child Psychopathology appeals to me because I am very interested in eventually working with children with developmental disabilities and this class focuses on the interplay on genetics and environment in determining a child's psychological well-being.

Why did you choose Psychology as a major?
As an aspiring physician, I feel it is important to care for patients in a holistic manner rather than focusing purely on the biological components of health. I also feel like my psychology classes have provided me with a greater understanding of myself and my relationships with others which enables me to identify my own strengths and weaknesses, specifically in a team environment.

You are assisting UR Health Labs to develop a cognitive behavioral therapy app for anxiety/depression. What is involved in that research?
My work with UR Health Labs has consisted of evaluation of telehealth interventions currently available to patients seeking remote care for physical and mental health. My chief role in this project has been reviewing prior publications regarding virtual healthcare, brainstorming features to engage users in our app, and articulating a plan of action to developing and refining prototypes. This experience has also taught me a lot about the power of interdisciplinary collaboration as the Health Lab environment is made possible by the combined efforts of professionals with backgrounds from engineering and statistical analysis to medicine and social work.

When were you contacted about attending the University?
I was first contacted in my sophomore year of high school, and made my first visit in the summer before junior year (2016).

You have been part of some strong defensive units. What's the key to a defense playing well as a unit?
I think the number one key to a strong defense is communication. The back line does not work if even one person is out of place, so it is crucial that every defender on the field is constantly checking the positioning of their teammates and actively communicating where and when to move. I also think it is really important that every defender stays mentally "checked-in" and demonstrates grit throughout the entirety of the game because one breakdown can completely change the momentum of the game.

Which courses are you taking this semester that are really appealing?
I am really enjoying all of my classes this semester. Specifically, my class on Developmental Child Psychopathology appeals to me because I am very interested in eventually working with children with developmental disabilities and this class focuses on the interplay on genetics and environment in determining a child's psychological well-being.

What goals have you set for yourself and for the team this season?
Struggling with injury in my first two years and losing my junior season due to (the) COVID (outbreak), my personal goal for this season is to have fun and cherish every moment. This will be my last competitive season of soccer and I want to leave behind a legacy of commitment to the program and fundamental love for the game. As a team, we face the challenge of having two classes that have never played a traditional college season. My hope is that the team will support and encourage one another so that younger players are empowered to play their best and share this support with future generations of Jackets.

Amanda Strenk

FIELD HOCKEY

HOMETOWN: Baldwinsville, New York MAJOR: Chemical Engineering

QUOTABLE:

I am planning on entering the pharmaceutical industry after graduation this spring. Even though I don't plan on working directly towards environmental initiatives, being aware of and understanding how different actions impact the environment is essential in any industry... Most of the classes I have taken towards my minor have involved chemistry and fundamental engineering concepts that I have learned in my Chemical Engineering coursework, so there is a strong connection between the two.

You were a co-author of some research work that you did in Prof. Yates' lab. Where was the work presented and how did that go?
During my sophomore spring and junior fall semesters, I worked as a research assistant in Professor Yates' lab on paper-based microfluidic devices. These devices can assist with medical diagnoses by indicating different properties of a sample. Working on this project helped validate my interest in entering the medical/pharmaceutical industry after college. I will be a co-author on this project but it is still in progress, so it has not been published or presented yet. However, when it does get to the point where it is ready for publication, I will be listed as a co-author on the paper for the work that I contributed.

How do your major (Chemical Engineering) and your minor (Environmental Engineering) tie together?
Currently, I am planning on entering the pharmaceutical industry after graduation this spring. Even though I don't plan on working directly towards environmental initiatives, being aware of and understanding how different actions impact the environment is essential in any industry. I have always been passionate about the environment and learning more about it because I didn't get the opportunity to take a deeper dive into these kinds of courses in high school. Most of the classes I have taken towards my minor have involved chemistry and fundamental engineering concepts that I have learned in my Chemical Engineering coursework, so there is a strong connection between the two.

As one of the captains last year, you helped to adapt the first-year students into the program while dealing with the pandemic. How has this pre-season been different?
The tone and focus of this preseason has certainly been different than last year. Since we have a full game schedule and are anticipating the normal opportunity at a post-season, our focus has been to create a cohesive team that is at the caliber to make it to the NCAA tournament. We have already contributed a substantial amount of time on our corner plays and how we want to set up our defensive press against different teams. Whereas last year, these two areas did not get as much attention since we didn't have games to prepare for. Rather than focusing more on set pieces last preseason, there was a much greater emphasis on building a positive team chemistry and fine tuning our stick skills. This was a great opportunity to work on building basic skills and cohesiveness within the team that is coming in handy for this season.

What goals have you established for yourself and for the team in 2021?
Like always, our goal is to get the Liberty League championship title. We were the last team to win the league before the pandemic in 2019, so we are looking to keep that title this year! We have been putting in a lot of work to get to a place where that goal is achievable. Winning the Liberty League would give us an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament. We made it to the Elite 8 my freshman year, so it would be great to go even further this season!

Which courses have you studied that you really enjoyed?
One of my favorite courses I have taken in college so far is Fluid Dynamics taught by Professor Foster. I took this class my sophomore year. It is the class that really solidified my decision to continue majoring in Chemical Engineering. I got to be a teaching assistant for it my junior year which I was really excited about because it gave me an opportunity to refresh my knowledge on the subject. I also really enjoyed Chemical Reactor Design taught by Professor Tenhaeff. I got to see a lot of real world applications in this class which helped me start to piece together how I can apply my undergraduate coursework to a career in industry. Lastly, I am currently in a Bioprocess Engineering class which I am already enjoying. Since I want to enter the pharmaceutical industry after graduation, this class is great preparation for my future career because it gives a really solid overview of the manufacturing process of pharmaceutical drugs and the science behind it.

Did you have any chance to play over the summer?
I helped coach my high school's summer practices this summer. That was a great opportunity to support my high school's program and spend time with my high school coach! I didn't get the chance to play in a league this summer, but I was able to practice a lot at my high school's turf field. Shoutout to my mom for spending countless hours with me at the turf to help me with drills by throwing balls to me so I could work on different shooting and receptions! I hope to get involved in an adult league or start reffing once I graduate.

Olivia Waysack

TENNIS

HOMETOWN: Las Vegas, Nevada MAJOR: Environmental Health

QUOTABLE:

As an Environmental Health major, the (HEAL) program has truly allowed me to explore my passions of nutrition, health in the home, and global community health. If I could give a little plug, I would highly recommend that any current undergrads take a look at graduate programs in both Epidemiology and Toxicology... UofR offers a vast network of esteemed faculty and a plethora of opportunities for students in the health sciences.

When you began playing tennis as a youth player in Las Vegas, you admittedly were passive. How did you overcome that passivity?

I embraced it. I embraced my inherent desire to be kind to my fellow players and turned my passivity into respect and sportsmanship. Also, I developed a lot more confidence in my game, with the help of many coaches, teams, and players, which has allowed me to create a more offensive and aggressive game style. I overcame that passivity by not trying to change it but instead turning it into something that made me successful on the court.

The women's tennis team was 5--0 against Division III opponents in Spring 2021. How does each player contribute to that success?

I absolutely love being a part of my team and each one of them makes sacrifices and pours their heart into their passions both on and off the court. They each work amazingly hard to prepare themselves physically and mentally to bring our team success. Their dedication, energy, and laughs have always encouraged me when I needed it most and is the only reason that we were a successful team, not only on paper but through our connections with each other.

You are a member of the Health and Epidemiology Advanced Learning Program (HEAL). What does the program achieve?

The HEAL program is an accelerated program that gives students the opportunity to graduate with a BS in either Environmental Health or Epidemiology and an MS in Epidemiology in a total of 5 years. As an Environmental Health major, the program has truly allowed me to explore my passions of nutrition, health in the home, and global community health. If I could give a little plug, I would highly recommend that any current undergrads take a look at graduate programs in both Epidemiology and Toxicology and any current high school students look into the HEAL program if you are even remotely interested in public health. UofR offers a vast network of esteemed faculty and a plethora of opportunities for students in the health sciences.

As a sophomore, you traveled to India with GlobeMed to learn about and design community public health programs. How did that trip go?

My experience in India was incredibly humbling and fascinating. I traveled with four other UR students in GlobeMed who taught me so much about working on a public health team in a new community, embracing new situations, and adapting quickly. With their support and the generosity of the administrators of the Social Organization for Voluntary Action in Odisha, India, I gained a great deal of knowledge that I will certainly take with me into my future endeavors. One of the biggest takeaways was the necessity of asking and listening to the communities you are collaborating with if you truly want to help develop long-term solutions. And it also warmed my heart to connect with, learn from, and grow alongside people of all ages and of communities different from what I have known.

Based on your academic accomplishments, will you see a position in public health?

Absolutely. I have found a passion in connecting science and community outreach through the public health program here at UofR. My experience in classes, in the lab, and in communities across the globe have generated this fire inside of me to address the systemic influences of eating habits, environmental exposures, and control we feel we have over our health. But it is still just the beginning, and I have much more to learn and many more sectors of public health to be awed by. I am grateful for my experiences so far and look forward to learning from and listening to academics and community members in the way that they seek to improve our health, political, and societal systems.

What goals have you set for yourself on the tennis court this coming year?

The reason I play tennis at all is for the purpose of growing into the best person I can be. On the tennis court this year, I seek to be a hard worker, a good person, and a stronger, kinder, and more authentic individual. I seek to let the passion for the game guide me to fighting for every point, respecting my fellow players, and improving my game through hard work and care for my body and mind. This is the only way I could see myself making any quantitative progress but, even more importantly, the only way that my season would count as a success in my book. All in all, my goal for this coming year is to ground myself in my purpose for the sport, as I work to take this growth with me for the rest of my life.

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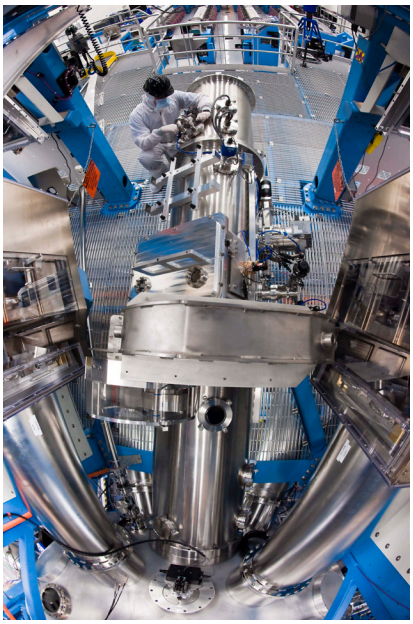

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