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'Cat Tracks

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Flying to victory



Catherine Street with Coach Travis Olsen '98 at the indoor finals.

Catherine Street '12 has made a name for herself flying down the runway, planting a flimsy pole in the ground and flipping upside down to clear a bar nearly 14 feet in the air.

But she also has her feet firmly planted on the ground. She cared for sick children at Portland's Emanuel

Hospital this spring as part of her senior practicum to complete her nursing degree at the Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing. Even with a demanding academic schedule, she has been one of the nation's best in the pole vault, earning both the indoor and outdoor NCAA Division III titles, was named the National Women's Field Athlete of the Year, the West Region Women's Field Athlete of the Year, is a seven-time All American and holds the Linfield record and the Division III national indoor record and outdoor championship meet record. And she's not yet finished, hoping to qualify for the U.S. Olympic Trials.

Street began pole vaulting at Wilsonville High School, after eight years competing in gymnastics.

"Being a pole vaulter and being in the air upside down is just natural for me," she said. The pole vault is different from any other track and field event, combining jumping and sprinting.

"You have to have some sort of craziness in you to be able to run full speed toward a box and go upside down on this tiny pole," she said with a laugh. But it also takes great mental concentration and she's learned to focus on the physical and technical aspects to try to block out nerves.

Balancing her training and academics has been challenging and she organized her life nearly down to the minute. Despite being the only intercollegiate athlete on the Portland Campus, she's found her professors supportive and among her biggest fans.

"Every semester I think there's no way I can keep pole vaulting and somehow it works out," she said. She worked 12-hour shifts at Emanuel spring semester and squeezed in practice whenever she could, sometimes early in the morning, or on

weekends. The Linfield coaching staff and her coaches at her Oregon City club moved their schedules to accommodate hers.

"I could not have done it without the support from my classmates, my professors and especially my coaches," she said.

"It takes a team to get through nursing school and be a collegiate athlete.

"As much as I love pole vaulting and want to make it my first priority, it's not," she added. "Nursing is my first priority, my patients and my future patients are my first priority. Pole vault is just pole vault."

But nursing and pole vault are common in some ways. Both are always changing with new challenges each day. With nursing it's new patients, new diagnoses and you have to follow the evidence to find the answers. With pole vault, each meet is different, with different weather, wind or rain.

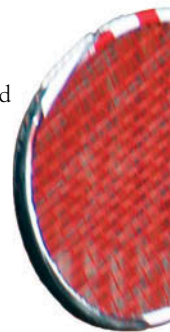
Street hopes to work in pediatrics, although she admits she has enjoyed every rotation she has experienced.

"I've been to all the different hospitals and systems in the Portland area and worked in all the different areas that encompass nursing," she said. "There really hasn't been any area that I don't like."

Flexibility is at the center of her success.

"I have learned to always try to better myself," she said. "I have learned that you have bad days and that you can't do it by yourself. It's okay to ask for help." 🐾

— Mardi Mileham



National competitors across the board

From softball to track to golf to tennis, a variety of spring athletes advanced to nationals. Read more about your favorite Wildcat team at www.linfield.edu/sports.



Softball

The Linfield Wildcat softball team cleared all but the final hurdle necessary to claim a second consecutive NCAA Division III championship, battling through the losers bracket before finally falling to Northwest Conference rival Pacific Lutheran 3-0 in the title game May 21 at Salem, Va. Led by five outstanding seniors, the Wildcats (46-7) enjoyed a watershed season in reaching the title game for a third straight year.

Golf

One of Linfield's greatest golfers made a strong showing at the national championship.

Alex Fitch '12 shot a 4-over-par 76, tying for 22nd with an overall score of 299 at the NCAA Division III golf championships in May. The Linfield College senior was named a third team All-American by the Golf Coaches Association of America, becoming the first Linfield men's golfer to receive All-America recognition.

The play further solidified Fitch's position as perhaps the greatest golfer in Linfield program history. His placement of 22nd marked the highest finish at nationals by a Linfield golfer in NCAA competition, exceeding the previous high-water mark of 44th shared by his brother, Andrew '09, and Tyler Nelson '10.

Tennis

Abby Olbrich '12, one of Linfield's most decorated tennis players, was one of 32 singles players selected to compete in the individual tournament at the 2012 NCAA Division III Women's Tennis Championship in Cary, N.C. Although she did not progress, Olbrich came home

a winner after amassing numerous awards during her Linfield career. She was named the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Division III Women's West Regional Senior Player of the Year, is the recipient of the 2011 Linfield College Female Athlete of the Year Award and is a two-time All-American in singles. She leaves Linfield with the sixth-most career singles victories in program history and is tied for the fifth-most doubles victories (56).

Track and field

In addition to Catherine Street's national pole vault title (see facing page), Misty Corwin '12 placed eighth in the same event, clearing 12-5 1/2 to earn All-America honors for the second time.

