Standout Spiders

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The best athletes UR has to offer

Amazing people are doing incredible things all over campus. Each issue, we recognize a few students or alumni that are working to make their lives—and our community—better through self and social improvement. Here's how these four students have excelled in sports.

**REBECCA BARRY ’75**

Junior Rebecca Barry has a unique story of her journey to UR from Northern Ireland, where she served as captain of the under-18 national field hockey team. Rebecca was first introduced to field hockey through her aunt. She played locally with her aunt as a coach, and her mother and grandmother right along with her. Although many of her relatives have played, she is the only one to play at the college level. Ryan Elliot, the assistant field hockey coach at UR, contacted Rebecca in April of 2011. Before the initial contact, Rebecca had made plans to study back home. After speaking with Elliot, she then decided to come to the University without ever visiting or meeting any of the coaches or teammates face-to-face. Just two months later, she was on campus training for her freshman year season. She is very confident in her team's ability to push through the A10 championship and return to the Sweet 16 like they did her freshman year. Rebecca hopes to go home and play on Ireland's national team after college. As an athlete, she initially only committed to Richmond for one year, but through the support of her coaches and teammates, she plans to spend her entire undergraduate career at U of R. Rebecca was also nominated for an ESPY for best play in spring 2013.

**KENDALL GASKINS ’12**

For Kendall Gaskins, football has become more than a hobby. As a fullback, Kendall has been playing the game for most of his life. After leading his high school team to an impressive 8-1 season, Kendall began playing for the Spiders. While on the team, Kendall was a four-year starter and finished his college career with 38 touchdowns, the second highest in Richmond football history. His senior year, Kendall was named a captain of our CAA champion team. Kendall also received the honor of First-Team All-CAA game. Kendall became an undrafted free agent and ultimately signed with the Buffalo Bills on April 29th this year. He was among 17 athletes who were released from the Buffalo Bills' roster on August 30th and who are now free agents.

**COOPER TAYLOR ’13**

For Cooper Taylor, football excellence runs in the family. His father was a quarterback at Georgia Tech and then spent one year in the NFL with the Baltimore Colts in 1983. Cooper originally went to his father’s alma mater, Georgia Tech. However, after being diagnosed with a heart excitement condition, he spent his 2009 and 2010 year on the bench. He then transferred to Richmond for his final two seasons. His final season he received several All-American nominations that included participation in the East-West Shrine game this past year. The East-West game was where Taylor gained the interests of NFL scouts. Taylor was selected in the 5th round, pick number 152, by the New York Giants for the 2013-2014 season.

**NICOL TRAYNOR ’12**

Nicol Traynor spends most of her time on the go. She was on the Cross Country team, the Indoor Track and Field team, as well as the Outdoor Track and Field team. On every team, she was named an A-10 Performer of the Week: Cross Country in 2008, Indoor in 2012 and Outdoor in 2012. As she led each of her teams to victory for the five years she participated, her love of sports did not fade. She continued her passion at the 2013 USA Outdoor Track and Field Championships this past June. While competing in the Women's 3000M Steeple Chase, she placed 2nd in her preliminary round, advancing her to the finals. She then placed 5th in the final race. Her time placed her just outside of the top three, each of whom earned spots on the USA team for the IAAF World Championships in Moscow.

- CHRISTOPHER ACQUAFREDDA

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