

WESLEYAN PROFILES

Twin Sisters Face Each Other for Final Time on the Court

By Mary Cat Davis
Senior Staff Writer

A piercing noise interrupted my last moments of sleep. I rolled over, grabbing my glasses and my phone from the bedside table. It felt early. I was sure that I had five more minutes to sleep. I rubbed my eyes as I checked—it was 9:35 a.m. and she was already calling



Mary Cat Davis faced off twice this fall against her twin sister, who's a senior at Greensboro College. Photos courtesy M. C. Davis.

me. I accepted the FaceTime call, my twin sister's face filling the screen. The blurry video stream showed her on the team bus, going from Greensboro to Rocky Mount. Barrett panned the camera to her right. A teammate smiled through the screen with her. "You're going down," they said in unison. Their loud laughter made

me lower the volume.

I shook my head, rolling my eyes. We do this every season. "Yeah, right," I replied. Barrett updated me on their location as I yawned. I reminded her that we needed to snap a picture together after the game. "We play Salem first, so I'll see you after," I said. She nodded

as the connection started to worsen. "Love you, bye," she chimed. I repeated the words back to her and hung up. Gameday conversations end just like all our other ones.

FaceTime calls have become the only way we spend time together during the school year, but as kids we were inseparable. We were born 11 weeks early on November 16, 1999, in Chapel Hill. Barrett was born at 5:06 a.m. and I followed 38 minutes later at 5:44 a.m. The first months of our lives were spent in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. I was allowed to go home after three months, leaving Barrett alone there for the last month. When I look at my mother's photos of us in the hospital, I can't tell us apart, though my mother always can.

When we were children, our lives and our clothes were always coordinated. If I wore green, Barrett wore blue. If I was in pink, Barrett was in purple. We were alike, but not the same. This lasted until first grade when we decided we wanted to pick out our own clothes. We always shared a room, and still do when we're home from college. Until a few years

ago, our beds matched as well.

Everything was equal between us. Our parents made sure of this. Holidays meant spending the exact dollar amount on each child. If we didn't want the same gifts, then money would be substituted to make up the difference. "I think that made it easier on them," Barrett said.

Our daily schedules matched as well. We played the same sports, took part in the same recreation leagues, and attended the same camps. We sat in the same classrooms from kindergarten until senior year of high school. We were viewed as a pair. Walking down our high school's hallway together, we would hear twin greetings: "What's up, Davises?" "It's the Davis girls," and "Hi, twins." We were seldom separated, and if we

heard our names, they were often together in a sentence.

This was fun most of the time, but it was also one of the worst parts about life as twins. There were activities we were expected to do because the other one did it, like applying to programs or joining clubs. Once in high school, I decided to run winter track instead of playing basketball, and that was a big deal. I was on a team without her, and it felt weird.

Most of our interests were the same in high school, and we were seldom separated long enough to find new ones. Running in the same circles could be awkward at times because of our slightly different tastes in people. We shared common friends, but we were each closer to some than others. "We were always sort of awkwardly

See TWINS pg 4

Vanessa Batchelor Returns To NCWC as Assistant Coach

By Mary Alice Butler
Decree Staff Writer

On a recent mile-long walk around campus, I was able to learn more about Vanessa Batchelor, the new assistant women's soccer coach. At 5'9" with brown eyes and black hair, and dressed in a navy NCWC soccer pullover, she radiates confidence, though not in a conceited way. Her demeanor is casual, and she possesses the ability to make others feel comfortable around her, as I did during our interview on that sunny afternoon. We walked at a slow and steady pace, in part so we could hold a conversation and in part due to her consideration for my recent leg injury.

A native of Rocky Mount, Batchelor was born on August 23rd, 1994. She has a younger sister and stepsister and an older stepbrother. As a child, she liked to play soccer and basketball in the backyard with her siblings. "I guess I've always been competitive," she said.

When she was young, she had multiple careers she wanted to pursue. Her most passionate goal was to be an architect like her dad. She told me that she was really into art and design and thought architecture would allow her to express her creativity.

Batchelor remembers going on annual vacations with her whole family. She said she has been on

four cruises, but she hated them all. "I don't like the feeling of being crammed on a boat," she related.

Growing up she played organized basketball, soccer as well as tennis. She started playing soccer when she was around six years old, even though her father wanted her to focus on basketball because it was his favorite.

Year later, while attending Nash Central High School, she played both tennis and soccer. "I almost didn't even try out for soccer," she recalled. "I went to the very last day of tryouts."

A goalkeeper, Batchelor said she was not serious about soccer until the end of her junior year, so she started the recruiting process later than most high school students who aspire to play college sports. It was her participation in club soccer that helped her get recruited by Wesleyan, because her coach, Beverly Biancur, was Wesleyan's head coach.

At the time, Batchelor was taking private lessons from a Wesleyan goalkeeper, who had been talking to her about playing at the next level. When she finally committed to play at Wesleyan, Batchelor's parents were happy that she was staying close to home. "I lived on campus, so I was able to have some freedom and keep my parents happy," she said.

Batchelor played four years as a member of Wesleyan's team. She said her favorite memory was from her junior year, when the Bishops made it into the final four of the USA South Conference tournament. During 2015, her senior season, the goalkeeper compiled a 1.17 goals-against average, a .787 save percentage, and five shutouts, as the team finished with a record of 7-9-2.

Making the President's Honors List in all four years, Batchelor graduated from Wesleyan in 2016 with a B.S. in Exercise Science.

Asked if she ever regretted not playing soccer for a Division I or II program, she said that she would have enjoyed competing at a higher level, but that a DIII school was the best option for her and that she enjoyed her time at Wesleyan.

Following graduation, Batchelor took a gap year. During this time, she served as a volunteer coach to train Wesleyan's goalkeepers. She said that this was more difficult than her current position, because

See BATCHELOR pg 3

INVOLVED from pg 1

friends that stay with you throughout college," she said. "It's more important to nurture those friendships rather than try to keep up with a bunch of people."

Sophomore Sloan Martin expressed a similar view about first-year relationships. "You'll meet a lot of people in college, and friends come and go," she said. "There's no need to stress about being best friends with everyone so soon into your college journey."

Augusta Preston is now pursuing her MBA after four years at Wesleyan as an undergraduate student. She recognizes the value of "true friends" during the college experience. "They helped me to have fun when I needed it the most," she said. "College is hard. Have good friends around that keep you going every day."

Preston encourages freshmen to be authentic in their efforts to meet people on campus. She believes this is the best way to ensure one is building true, enduring friendships. "Be unapologetically

yourself," she said. "You'll meet some of the best people that will be in your life forever."

Like Preston, junior Hunter Duprey believes relationships are an important part of campus life, though building them can be difficult at first. He advises freshmen to persist through their first semester, which will likely be the hardest semester as they adjust to college. "You've come to a place where you don't have any of your friends from high school," he said. "If you're not the most social person, then it's gonna suck at first, but it gets better."

While many students suggested steps for freshmen to become engaged in campus life, all offered practical advice to help freshmen succeed in their classes. Duprey and Harrell agree that time management is vital in college.

Duprey advises freshmen to get a planner to solve this problem, while Harrell recommends working ahead of schedule so that students have time to rest and avoid stress before due dates. "Time management is the key to success," Harrell said.

Senior Olivia Pittman serves as a resident advisor in Roberson Hall, a freshman dorm. She agrees that getting homework done in a timely fashion is a must. "It will keep you from failing in life and in school," she said.

Pittman also advises freshmen to make positive choices inside and outside the classroom.

She said she has seen peers placed on academic probation due to decisions they made as underclassmen. She warns freshmen to avoid distractions. "You don't need to do everything that everyone else is doing," she said. "Keep focused. Don't let people get you off your game."

Aside from keeping up with classwork, junior Han Jumashov tells freshmen that it's not too early to explore career options and other personal interests in preparation for graduation. A computer information systems major, he feels it's important to gain industry knowledge early. He recommends expanding one's knowledge by doing research beyond what's required in coursework. "To be a strong applicant in

the job market as a CIS student, I have to know more than I'm learning at school," he said.

Sophomore Blake Scott, a criminal justice major, stressed that it's vital that freshmen get off to a strong start. Scott said a solid GPA was critical for him to make a smooth transition into his sophomore year. "The classes I'm taking this semester are harder than the ones I took as a freshman," he explained. "Having a high GPA has helped me by taking away some of the stress."

Scott also acknowledged that writing papers can be much more difficult than it was in high school. He said that he wrote constantly in first-year classes and learned through trial and error. "I wish I would have reached out for help to become a better writer instead of putting so much stress on myself to figure it out on my own," he said.

Junior Michelle Chambers concurred that academics can be much more challenging than in high school. The biology major wants freshmen to know that professors expect hard work and effort. "If students want a degree, they have to put in the work," she said.

Preston's best advice is more about self-care than planning. Recalling the energy crash she experienced during her sophomore year from a lack of sleep, she warns freshmen that not resting is bad for your mind, body, and grades. "If you want to do well in any area, you have to be 100 percent prepared," she said. "That means being well-rested."

Senior Nolan Weloff wants freshmen to know that college is worth the challenges. A triple major in organizational administration, business and marketing, Weloff believes a college degree will translate into a rewarding career. He noted that he almost did not attend college, and he's glad he decided to go for it.

After seeing former roommates and friends drop out, Weloff encourages freshmen to complete their degrees. "Stick with school," he said. "Even if you don't end up staying at NC Wesleyan, don't give up on school."



Russell Rouse returned to Wesleyan over the summer, joining the Student Success Center as a First-Year Advisor and Coordinator of Academic Intervention Services. The 2010 graduate, a former member of the Bishop football team, has taught math and coached basketball and football in area public schools during the past 11 years. Randolph-Schoneck photo

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