

Winter Sports Senior Spotlights

By LEA GOLD

NCSSM not only fosters students with exemplary academic pursuits but also students with amazing athletic abilities. These talented individuals dedicate their time and effort to practices and games after school, show high flying school spirit when they play an intense basketball game, give it their all to swim the final lap, struggle to bring down their opponents to the mat, and lift their spirits to cheer other athletes. The senior athletes highlighted here, in addition to many young NCSSM athletes, have shown the true meaning of teamwork and passion in every game.

Women's Swimming - Karis Robertson



Favorite pre-meet ritual – “I don’t have one unless you count excessive stretching.”

Role model – “Janet Evans! In 1987, she broke the world records in the 400-, 800- and 1,500-meter freestyle events. At the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, she won three gold medals.”

Best season quote – “REAL MEN WEAR SPEEDOS!” (Referring to Clint Miller, the only boy to wear a speedo instead of a jammer during meets.)

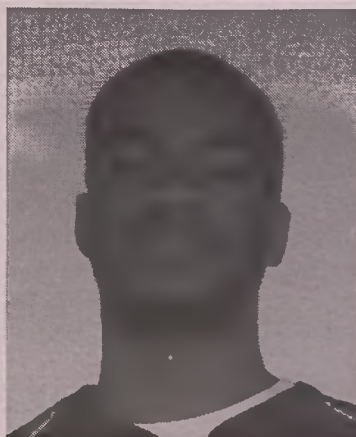
Best song to work out – “We can’t listen to music! But I’m always glad to have anything third eye blind stuck in my head.”

Favorite workout or exercise – “Distance freestyle sets.”

Favorite experience of this season – “The Unicorn Invitational. We hosted a meet with three other huge teams. It was a blast! Great competition and a great atmosphere.”

The early beginnings – “I started swimming when I was 5 for my neighborhoods summer league team but it wasn’t until I got hurt doing gymnastics at the age of 12 that I became really serious about swimming and joined a year-around team. Best decision of my life!”

Men's Basketball - Edwin Simpson



Favorite pre-game ritual – “Going to the training room before home games.”

Role model – “Kevin Garnett because he is a good all around player.”

Best season quote – “You should be happy I’m yelling at you. It’s when I stop yelling at you I don’t care.”

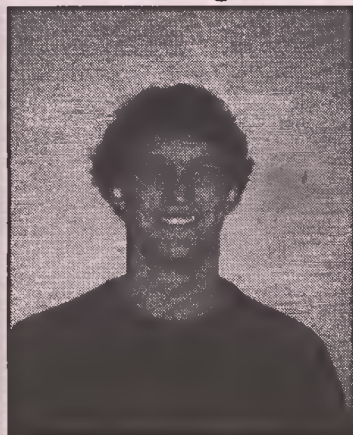
Best song to work out – “The Bad Side” by Lil Wayne and Juelz Santana.

Favorite workout or exercise – “Playing pick-up games.”

Favorite experience of this season – “When I scored 30 points against Raleigh Charter to set the single game scoring record.”

The early beginnings – “My mom and dad signed me up for a recreational league when I was 6 and I’ve been playing ever since.”

Men's Swimming - Joe Gitt



Favorite pre-meet ritual – “Before each event I jump into the air several times, throw my arms around, and kick my legs out to pump myself up. Then I have a superstition about always stepping onto the block with my right foot or jumping into the water to the right of the block.”

Best season quote – “Well, if I can get them in the water, I can take out at least 15 of them.” – Coach Adam Gerken

The early beginnings – “My parents signed me up for swimming in a summer league when I was little and the longest event was 25 yards, it was great. I’ve only been serious about competitive swimming since freshmen year though.”

Favorite experience of this season – “Doing drylands with the team on campus and convincing our coach we should play Ultimate Frisbee instead of more exercises.”

Role model – “Nicholas Talluri was the captain of my old team who could swim a 100 free in under 50 seconds. He practiced hard, went on strict diets, showed great sportsmanship, and was just a determined and disciplined athlete overall.”

Best song to work out – “Sweetness” – Jimmy Eat World.

Women's Basketball - Jessica Anderson



Favorite pre-game ritual – “Shooting around before our actual warm-ups so that I can get focused.”

Role model – “Alana Beard, Duke player from 2001-2004. She was the first Duke women’s player to get her jersey number retired.”

Best season quote – “You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated”-Maya Angelou. I really liked this one because it applies to basketball and life.”

Best song to work out – “Business Time” by Flight of the Conchords

Favorite workout or exercise – “Hands down: Scoops. If you don’t know what they are, ask Coach Dave to show you.”

Favorite experience of this season – “Senior night when we played against Durham School of the Arts. We didn’t win, but we came together and played as team in a way we hadn’t before.”

The early beginnings – “I really don’t remember how I got started, but when I started playing, I couldn’t stop. I’ve been playing since I was 7 years old.”

Men's Wrestling - Jordan Pearson



Favorite pre-match ritual – “Listening to my iPod before we get there, then a PBJ sandwich after weigh-ins. Then it’s back to the iPod to get focused for the match.”

Role model – “I’ve always looked up to Tim, a wrestler at my old school who graduated in ‘06. He’s a great wrestler, an outstanding leader, and a stellar person, both on and off the wrestling mat.”

Best season quote – “Our mat on three.”

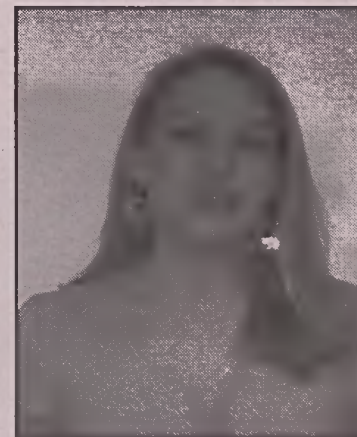
Best song to work out – “Remember the Name” by Fort Minor

Favorite workout or exercise – “My favorite drill in practice is 30 Second Outs, where we start from a specific position, then wrestle live for 30 seconds. Then we start over again, and again, and again, and again...”

Favorite experience of this season – “The day we convinced coach to let us play Mat Rugby for an hour and a half instead of practicing.”

The early beginnings – “I started wrestling freshman year when the wrestling coach recruited me after soccer season. I went to a few practices and have loved it ever since.”

Varsity Cheerleading - Katie Brown



Photos by Kara Tinker

Favorite pre-game ritual – “Eating lots of junk food with Sarah Whalley!”

Role model – “Grand senior Stephanie Laboy. I admire her dedication to the sport and hope to continue cheering in college just as she has done.”

Best season quote – “Afterclap...”

Best song to work out – “Stronger” by Kanye West

Favorite workout or exercise – “I love running, even though I’m quite slow.”

Favorite experience of this season – “We were at practice and the security guard came over the intercom and was flipping out about being on lockdown. The entire squad bolted out of the wrestling room and dispersed across campus. Great idea! Also, Senior Night was amazing!”

The early beginnings – “Thanks to my brothers’ involvement in sports, cheerleading seemed like the natural thing for me to do. I started cheering at my elementary school when I was in the 3rd grade. I fell in love with the sport and joined a competitive squad and have been cheering ever since.”