

Role Model On and Off the Ice

Athlete-scholar semifinalist for citizenship award

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Talent is God-given. Be humble. Fame is man-given. Be grateful. Conceit is self-given. Be careful. —John Wooden

Talent. Humility. Gratitude. Sara Carlson '16 has all three. A standout athlete on the women's ice hockey team for four years and now a member of the women's volleyball team, Carlson has earned her share of accolades during her time at UNH, most recently

the 2015-16 Women's Hockey East Sportsmanship Award. Team captain for two years, Carlson has received the Sue Merz Award twice.

What's more, she is one of only 17 student-athletes nationwide to have been named a semifinalist for the Coach Wooden Citizenship Cup Award, given annually to a player who is deemed a role model among her peers. The group Athletes for a Better World launched the award in 2004 in honor of the late legendary basketball coach John Wooden. Each year since, a student and a professional athlete have been recognized for their contributions to sports and to society.

"Sara Carlson is an amazing person who would always put others ahead of herself. She supports, protects and pushes the people around her. I have been lucky to have had the opportunity to coach her and get to know her," says Hilary Witt, head coach for the UNH women's ice hockey team.

Carlson — and this is where the humility comes in — says, "It was an immense honor to be nominated for this award. These last four years I have been surrounded by amazing student-athletes who have inspired me to be my best, so being nominated to represent my fellow athletes is something that I don't take lightly."



SARA CARLSON

But there is more to her than her athletic prowess. A dual major in business administration and international affairs with a minor in French, Carlson is a student advisor for Paul College's new First-year Innovation and Research Experience (FIRE) program, which aims to maximize students' potential for success.

"We provide them with resources and knowledge to gain the skills to better navigate their way during their time here and to get the most out of their college experience," says the Hutchinson, Minnesota, resident who is working with 19 first-year student-athletes. "We want to aid in their personal development to help them be successful throughout their four years in Paul College and beyond."

In addition to FIRE, Carlson volunteers with the Oyster River student mentor program and spent three of her spring breaks conducting community service with Athletes Intersarsity, a campus organization that promotes community among Christian athletes. Come June, she and seven other UNH students will travel to Uganda for three

weeks with the Newmarket-based ChildVoice International to aid children who have been impacted by war.

Oh, and she also has a 3.67 GPA, was named to the Hockey East All-Academic Team three times and earned a UNH Hockey Team Academic Excellence Award. All of which exemplifies the Wooden award's code of living that led to Carlson's nomination, and gives credence to what her hockey coach says about her.

"Her work ethic and her commitment to community is unmatched," Witt says. "She will do amazing things in this world to help those who cannot help themselves."

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