

Published September 16th, 2009

One Girl, Two Sports; a Rare Feat

By Mikaela Cowles



Alita Fisher (12) with Megan York (8) and Lauren Corp (1) last Thursday playing Eastern Washington Photo Doug Kohen

Diving for digs on the volleyball court wasn't enough for Alita Fisher. She is the rare division 1, two-sport athlete. She moves from the volleyball court to tennis court and back again.

This senior Gael arrived on full volleyball scholarship in 2005, as the team's designated defensive specialist (libero). She has led the Gaels in both her sophomore and junior seasons in digs. Although averaging an impressive 3.76 digs in the West Coast Conference (WCC) last year, something was missing in Fisher's life. She says tennis is "something I've done my whole life and I would feel sort of empty without it."

In eighth grade Fisher quit the constant search for national rankings in tennis, and left the competitive training to others. While at Bellarmine Preparatory High School in Tacoma, Washington, Fisher earned four varsity letters in both volleyball and tennis. In 2004 and 2005, she was named the Most Valuable Player of the Narrows League for volleyball. Playing tennis just for fun, Fisher won the Washington State 4A doubles championship in 2003, 2004, and 2005, along with the Narrows League and District Championships.

Last year Fisher approached head volleyball coach Rob Browning about joining the tennis team. Fisher laughed as she recounted his two stipulations, "He told me if I play tennis there were two conditions: we have to go out and get some doubles going, and he would teach me how to

serve." Speaking with her teammates, Fisher found them "all super excited."

Fisher recalls the women's head tennis coach Lisa Alipaz telling her, "that exceptions could be made and volleyball would remain my first priority."

Fisher said, "I just went out and hit tennis balls and played. I was really excited to be doing just that and I wanted to see how much I could improve from the beginning to the end of the season." So far she has not had the chance to earn points for the Gaels on the tennis court, but looks forward to someday having the opportunity. Fisher finds time to add in an extra sport to the juggling act of being a student athlete. As a kinesiology, sport and recreational management major, she works hard both on and off the court. Fisher said, "My social life was kind of lacking. I get some if it by being on two teams with my friends."

What isn't lacking is her performance on the volleyball court this season, which she attributes to her mental game. Fisher said, "I sort of entered training camp and this season with a different mind set, because this is my last year and there's no point in wasting time on negative emotions." Fisher earned her fifth game in a row of double digit digs. The proud and beaming Browning said of Fisher, "She's just really good at what she does."

With no specific idea where her life is headed, she has considered pursuing a Master's degree so she could keep playing tennis and, "after that I want to travel, because I've never really gotten the chance."

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