

Double Trouble

DeeDee Arnall: Just your typical two-sport athlete

By Blake Timm '98

Put a ball, a javelin or a book in her hand and she is all business. Place her on the basketball court, in the Library or in the Pacific Athletic Center's exercise science labs, and she is all business. No matter what the task, whether it is athletic or academic, DeeDee Arnall '06 is nothing but focused.

"Whatever I am doing, that's what I like to give 100 percent attention to," the Warrenton, Ore., native said. "When I am unable to focus is when things really become frustrating."

That focus and a driving competitive nature make Arnall that rare specimen: a national caliber two-sport athlete and a superstar in the classroom.

In the athletic arena, Arnall has nearly done it all. In basketball, she was twice named First Team All-Northwest Conference (NWC), three times All-West Region, and capped off her senior season by earning Third Team All-American honors. In her junior season, Arnall was among the leaders in the nation in scoring – at any level of collegiate basketball.

On the track, Arnall has been nearly as dominant. The three-time NWC champion in the javelin earned All-American honors as a sophomore after placing third at the 2004 NCAA Championships. During her senior season this spring she had two standout performances: winning the prestigious Texas Relays and finishing second at the NCAA Division III Track & Field Championships. To top it off, Arnall was the winner of the Ad Rutschman Award, a statewide award honoring the top small college athlete in Oregon.

Then there is the classroom. A double major in exercise science and biology, Arnall graduated magna cum laude in May, twice earned selection to the *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-American Women's Basketball Team, and in June was named a track Academic All-American.

It all comes back to focus and a deep internal desire for Arnall to compete against herself. "It's a highly competitive drive in me in everything I do, whether it is on the court competing against another team or just competing against myself in the classroom," she said.

THE TYPICAL TWO-SPORT ATHLETE

That competitive spirit has driven Arnall to become the rarest of student-athletes. In today's age of sports specialization and the push by coaches to concentrate on one discipline, very few athletes make the crossover between seasons.



While two and three-sport athletes were common in the early years of Pacific athletics, Arnall was one of only three Boxers during the 2005-06 season to play two sports. To excel at a national level in two sports ... well, your chances at winning the lottery might be better. An informal poll of Division III sports information offices found only four two-sport All-Americans over the last year, all of them football players crossing over to track or wrestling.

The pressure to specialize in one sport, especially at high levels of competition, is greater than ever. In a study of sports participation among college basketball players in Montana, David Susanj and Dr. Craig Stewart state that coaches and parents point to examples of highly successful professional athletes. "With the stunning success of high profile athletes such as tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams, golfer Tiger Woods, and basketball's Michael Jordan, many feel that emulating the achievements of these athletes can only be achieved by early specialization in one sport."

However, contrary to the belief of many coaches, specialization may not make the better athlete. "Bill Rodgers, New York and Boston Marathon winner, began his running career at age 15, and basketball great Michael Jordan wasn't good enough to make his varsity high school team until his junior year," Susanj and Stewart note. "There are also many examples of U.S. athletes, such as Jim Thorpe, Babe Zaharias Didrickson, John Elway, Bo

Jackson, and Deion Sanders, who achieved high levels of skill and professional success while participating in more than one sport.”

Performing at a high level in multiple sports was nothing new for Arnall before she came to Pacific. With an enrollment of just 267 students, athletes at Warrenton High School are looked upon to fill spots on two or three teams. In addition to becoming the school’s all-time scoring leader, she earned the 2A state championship in the javelin in her senior season as was an all-league and all-state selection in volleyball.

Despite her athletic prowess, it appeared that basketball would be it for Arnall when she arrived in Forest Grove in 2002. By the end of her freshman season, however, an invitation by Head Track and Field Coach Ron Tabb convinced her to give college track a shot. “If it wasn’t for (Tabb), I don’t think I would have come out for track,” Arnall said. “I didn’t think it was going to be possible. I didn’t think I would be able to compete at this level.”

As she became more involved in both sports, it became a balancing act not only for Arnall, but her coaches, to make sure that she had time for basketball, track, and her academics. “We’ve worked with her schedule,” Tabb said, “and that’s one of the things a coach has to do is realize that academics is first and athletics is second.”

Despite the demands on her time, Arnall still had the focus to concentrate on her studies. “I don’t ever recall one practice or one time where she said, ‘I’m overloaded. I need time to study today,’” said Pacific Head Women’s Basketball Coach Jeff Thompson.

But Arnall admitted that there were times, especially during January and February when the basketball and track seasons cross over, where finding time to fit it all in became difficult. “There were times when we had a big game coming up and you should have been getting rest, going to the training room or getting extra shots, but you had a big test coming up,” Arnall said. “Whenever you have that conflict, where do you sacrifice? Usually it ended up being sleep.”

Looking back, Arnall said she realized that she gave up a chance at other opportunities for her two-sport success, but she wouldn’t have had it any other way. “I have thought about what would have happened if I focused on just one sport year round. How would it have been different? But I would not have been happy because I don’t like giving up on things, especially if they are things I love doing.”

HOOP DREAMS

The accolades and records might not have been possible had it not been for John Mattlia, Arnall’s basketball coach at Warrenton. “John would bring his players to different college campuses, depending on where they were going to play a game, just to expose them to the college atmosphere,” said LeeAnn Kriegh ’94, Pacific’s women’s basketball coach from 1999-2003.

Mattlia introduced Kriegh to Arnall, who had become Warrenton’s all-time scoring leader. From that point on, Kriegh sent letter after letter and did her part to sell the senior on not only the team, but also the school as a whole. It worked. Even though she had never heard of Pacific University until her junior year, Arnall was set to become a Boxer.

During her freshman season, however, Arnall spent most of her time adjusting from the slower pace of Class 2A high school



DeeDee Arnall discusses strategy with Head Track and Field Coach Ron Tabb.

hoops to the more rapid pace of Division III basketball. In hindsight, this was a benefit. “If I had been in the games more when I was a freshman, I would not have learned everything I know now,” Arnall said. “I took beatings in practice. People don’t believe me when I tell them now, but I used to get it handed to me daily, and I can’t thank those players or coaches enough for that.”

Those freshman year lessons translated into sophomore year results. She led the Northwest Conference in scoring and earned national recognition on the D3Hoops.com “Team of the Week” after scoring 68 points in three games. She was a First Team All-NWC selection and earned the first of three All-West Region selections.

“During those first few games the game started feeling easy again and feeling natural. That’s what I missed most in my freshman year,” Arnall said. “In those first couple of games, it just clicked. It was like I was playing in high school again.”

Things only got better in her final two seasons. In 2004-05, Arnall spent most of the season ranked in the top-five in scoring at any level of collegiate women’s basketball. She finished the year averaging 21.2 points per game. In her senior season, Arnall once again led the NWC in scoring, set a school record in scoring average, and came within 20 points of the all-time scoring mark. She captured All-Conference, All-West Region, and *ESPN The Magazine’s* Academic All-American selections both years. In 2006, Arnall capped her hoops career with a Third Team Academic All-American selection, the first ever pick for a Pacific women’s basketball player.

BACK TO TRACK

Arnall’s standout career on the track might not have taken place had it not been for “Boxer Backtalk,” a live radio show featuring Pacific athletics. The women’s basketball team was featured, as was the Pacific track program. That led to Tabb’s first meeting with his eventual two-time All-American.

Thankfully for Tabb, Arnall needed something that she could focus on once basketball season ended. “It was the day after our last basketball game that I realized that I didn’t have basketball practice to go to anymore,” Arnall said. “I was going to be bored out of my mind.”

It ended up a win-win situation. By the end of her freshman season, Arnall had won the NWC championship with a throw of 125 feet, 8 inches. In her sophomore season, she earned her first

taste of the national meet and experienced immediate success. Her mark of 141 feet, 7 inches was good enough for third place and garnered Arnall her first All-American trophy.

The junior season saw Arnall experience a rare moment where her focus was not 100 percent on the task at hand. For the only time in her career, she did not win the conference title, scrapping to a third place finish. Arnall rebounded in May to post the nation's best mark, 150 feet, 3 inches, but failed to advance to the finals at the national meet.

The season was a disappointment. "I had a lot of trouble putting it aside and saying this is my time for the javelin and this is my time for studying," Arnall said.

When spring 2006 came around, Arnall found new focus thanks in part to a golden opportunity. After an average first month of the track season, Tabb took a chance and entered Arnall and Lucas Setere '06 in the Texas Relays, one of the top college track meets in the nation. It was just the thing she needed to take things to the next level. With perfect weather conditions, Arnall held her own as the only Division III athlete in a field of Division I competition. Her Division III leading throw of 152 feet, 11 inches won the "B" section of the event.

"There wasn't a lot of pressure on her because she didn't have anything to prove by being there," Tabb said. "But there is one thing you can't account for in an athlete and that is pride. She didn't want to do down there and not show well."

Arnall's third NWC title paved the way for her best performance of the year at the May Division III Track and Field Championships. Ranked No. 2 entering the competition, she put together the best series of throws of her college career and entered the finals ranked third.

Although she saved her best throw for last, and threw a lifetime best, in the end she had to yield to a freshman from Gustavus Adolphus College. However, the second place finish earned Arnall her second All-American trophy and capped her collegiate athletic career on a high note.

THE FUTURE

For a woman who has spent most of her life focusing on the next task, Arnall is at an unusual point where she doesn't know what's next. After the national track meet, she returned to Forest Grove where she is spending the summer working with exercise science Professor Phil Schot on research related to walking efficiency. After that, who knows?

"This is probably the first time in my life where I don't know what to do," Arnall said. "This is a difficult decision because I feel like I have a lot of different options."

Many of those options are academic. Arnall said she plans to attend graduate school, but is not clear what for. Many of her options are also athletic. Tabb said Arnall could make the U.S. Olympic Trials in the javelin if she wishes to focus on that. Thompson, of course, would love to see Arnall focus on basketball and, perhaps, explore options of playing in leagues overseas.

Whatever Arnall decides to do, one thing is clear – it will be all out. "I have no set plans, but I am really keeping my doors open and I want to make sure the next step is somewhere I really want to be." ■

On the Web: Three-sport athlete Lisa Harings '97 found Boxer teams a great fit. Visit www.pacificu.edu/magazine.



BOXER HALL OF FAME

Once upon a time in the history of Pacific Athletics, the two and three-sport athlete was the rule and not the exception. Prior to the 1980s, many Pacific male athletes participated in two or more sports. In the early days of women's athletics in the 1970s and 1980s, three sports were the norm for the top female performers.

Many of the members of the Pacific Athletic Hall of Fame have been recognized for their efforts in multiple sports.

Athlete	Sports
Victor Adams '51	Football, Basketball, Baseball, Track & Field
Peaches Bode '82, M.A.T. '90	Basketball, Softball
Brenda Wall Brosseau '80, M.S.T. '87	Softball, Basketball
Frank Buckiewicz Sr. '53	Football, Basketball
Nely Agbulos Caberto '82	Softball, Volleyball
Susan Chaffee-Armstrong '83, M.S.T. '87	Track & Field, Volleyball, Basketball
Kris Chatari-Sanchez '78	Volleyball, Basketball
Jim Corrigan '36	Football, Basketball, Baseball
Dick Daniels '66	Football, Track & Field
Jon Elston '66, O.D. '67	Football, Track & Field
Dan French '56, M.S. '64	Basketball, Football, Track & Field
Nancy Jewett '74, '78	Volleyball, Softball
Karen Lally '79	Volleyball, Softball, Basketball
Lloyd Little '75, M.S. '79	Football, Baseball
Gerald Millis '55	Football, Track & Field
Chuck Peterson '60	Wrestling, Football, Track & Field
Cindy Schuppert '83	Basketball, Softball
Steve Sherrill '73	Baseball, Football
Nancy Vanderwerf-Edwards '86	Softball, Volleyball
Robert Wendel '62	Football, Baseball