

Crosse-ing into college

Story By:
Meredith Johnson

Design By:
Megan Murphy

The intensity escalates as senior Kallie Britton catches the ball in the pocket of her lacrosse stick. Her graceful motions are juxtaposed with aggressive plays, Britton said, exuding a sense of power which dominates the field. She said she relishes the litness of the sport, yet craves the difficulty of the game.

Britton is the first student in the Blue Valley School District to sign at the collegiate level for Division I Women's Lacrosse.

Signing at the collegiate level was the final step in a time-consuming process, Britton said. She committed to Liberty University, a school in Lynchburg, Va., on July 1. According to Britton, she discovered Liberty University at a lacrosse camp in Gettysburg, Pa. The Liberty coach approached Britton after seeing her play, and encouraged her to consider the university.

Becoming the first girl in Blue Valley to sign for collegiate lacrosse was special, Britton said, because it made her a part of BVNW history. She is excited about the opportunity to play at the collegiate level.

"It's definitely an experience I won't have again, but I'm very glad I was a part of [lacrosse]," Britton said. "It is cool to be able to be the first girl [to sign] because I am able to be a role model for the younger girls who are playing lacrosse right now."

According to Britton, signing for collegiate lacrosse was a milestone for herself and in a way, for the sport in the Midwest. As more girls sign at the collegiate level, Britton said lacrosse will hopefully become a sanctioned sport in the district.

Britton began to play lacrosse when she was in the second grade. Her passion for the sport developed from her dad, Dan Britton. He had a professional career playing lacrosse, and now coaches the Blue Valley Titans Women's Lacrosse team.

As a coach, Dan said a player signing for collegiate lacrosse adds credibility to the lacrosse team and causes excitement among the younger players. According to Dan, playing lacrosse

instilled discipline and work ethic in Britton, especially with Britton being captain of the team, and has prepared her for the future.

"It's her dream and her desire to go to the next level of lacrosse," Dan said. "I am excited to see her hard work pay off."

In addition to Britton, senior Jenna Snider is scheduled to sign a letter of intent to Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio on May 2. She will be playing Division III Women's Lacrosse next spring.

"It's really exciting, it makes you feel wanted," Snider said. "[Signing to play collegiate lacrosse] makes you feel like a good player, especially because I never wanted or expected it to happen."

Snider's mom, Carolyn Snider, said she is very excited for Snider, and said her experience playing lacrosse has molded her into a young adult.

According to Snider, Britton was responsible for sparking Snider's interest in the sport. She began playing lacrosse her sophomore year. After playing for the Kansas City Orange lacrosse team in a tournament last fall in Naples, Fla., Snider received numerous emails from university coaches asking her to play for their college.

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—Senior Kallie Britton

"[Signing was] more of a goal than a dream," Snider said. "In Florida, I really just wanted to play my best and get something out of it. I wanted to see if I could draw some attention from college coaches."

Britton's recruiting experience was quite different. She would fly out on weekends for lacrosse tournaments on the East Coast to speak with college recruiters, and then Britton said she would fly back to go to school during the week.



During her lacrosse game on April 23, senior Jenna Snider throws the ball with her lacrosse stick. "My favorite part of lacrosse is having a really great game," Snider said. "Not necessarily scoring goals, but having a good passing game and making clean checks and being able to make something of it" (photo by Jordan Reinhardt).

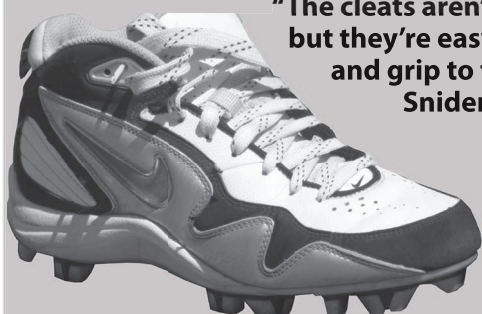
The amount of time and dedication increases from high school to collegiate level, Britton said.

"Collegiate level lacrosse on Division I becomes your job," Britton said. "It becomes your life. It's a drastic difference, but it's the next step up."

Despite the time-commitment, playing lacrosse at the collegiate level has been a dream of Britton's for most of her life, she said. Britton wants to follow in the footsteps of her dad, and is excited for the lacrosse season next spring.

"Personally, it's just a relief," Britton said. "I have wanted to play collegiate lacrosse since before I can remember, especially at the Division I level. So, being accepted is really like fulfilling a dream come true."

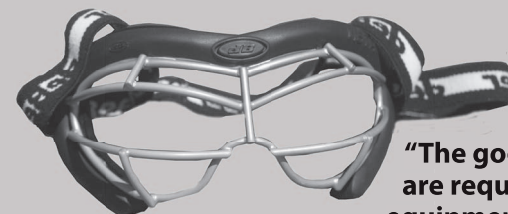
sporting the gear



"The cleats aren't required but they're easy to run in and grip to the ground," Snider said.



"I bought the pieces [of my stick] separately," Snider said. "The shaft has a smooth finish, less defined ridges and tapers toward the top, which I like because it makes it easy to cradle with."



"The goggles are required equipment," Snider said. "They're kind of geeky, but they protect your eyes and nose when you take a stick to the face."