The first in a new series

Outside the Lines: Kim Richard

MEGHAN NESBITT
THE BRUNSWICKAN

She is one of, if not the most, praiseworthy athletes at UNB. Her commitment, dedication, skill, perseverance and work ethic are mind boggling and incredibly difficult to match. While some might view her story as near tragic, she makes you believe it is a victory.

You won't hear her name paired with MVP, top goal scorer, or any other honour. Unlike Frank LeBlanc, Marc Aubé, Charla Currie and other highlighted stars, if you heard her name, it is likely you wouldn't even recognize it. Still, Kim Richard represents the best of Varsity Reds. No personal awards hang on her wall, but Kim is a silent hero.

Kim, a fifth-year chemical engineering student, started her field hockey career 11 years ago in grade 7. Before playing for UNB, Kim played at the provincial level, including participating in the New Brunswick Canada Games team of '93. Over the years Kim, has developed into one of the most skilled field hockey players around.

With her remarkable speed, Kim blows past most people on the field. As well, her stick work is fantastic. Coach Stacey Bean claims "Kim's stick work is one of the best on the team." With such a talented team, that is quite the compliment.

Bean also commends Kim's game sense. She is a very smart player with a lot of experience. But the one thing that frustrates Kim's opposition more than anything else, is "*The Move*".

Kim has this one move that is amazing. Stacy Gallant, co-captain and a fifth year vet on the team, could remember "*The Move*" even from playing against Kim in high school: "She comes down the field on her reverse stick, then one bullet draw around you totally catches you off your feet. You're stunned. It burns you every time".

Another fifth-year vet, Becca Wright, exclaims, "It's that one move that burns *everybody*, regardless if you are prepared or not." Had coaches seen "*The Move*" at the AUAA or CIAU championships last year, maybe Kim would have gotten the All-Star she deserves. But Kim, like so many athletes, got seriously injured and didn't get to play.

The last game before the AUAA championships, Kim was on a breakaway against SMU. Right before she crossed the ball, she planted her right foot and twisted her body. Her leg didn't follow.

At the hospital, X-rays didn't show that anything was wrong. The doctors told her that she wouldn't be able to play the next weekend at the AUAA's but God willing, she might be able to play the following week at CIAU's.

So Kim trained. She did all the training and rehab she could to build up her leg and knee. She was in the Athletic training room for hours, and she kept practising in whatever capacity she could. "I was more motivated than ever before. I had to get the range and motion back in my knee," Kim said. When the team departed for the CIAU's, Kim stayed behind an extra day just to do extra rehab and training.

When Kim arrived in Toronto the next day, Stacey Bean took her directly to a doctor at the U of T clinic. There, Kim was told that her injury was more severe than previously thought. She had a partial tear on her ACL. That is the ligament behind the knee that prevents the knee from slipping sideways when moving laterally. The treatment for a partial tear is only to strengthen the muscles around the knee, rest and wear a custom fit brace.

Kim couldn't play at CI's. She was out for the rest of the season.

The remarkable thing is, even on the sidelines, Kim made a substantial contribution to the team. Teammate Jody LeBlanc recalled, "Kim kept her spirits high. She didn't bring anyone down, she helped people stay focused." Charla Currie agreed, "She really helped people. She was always there to give you advise or just pat you on the back." Stacey Bean commented, "Kim's always being positive improved the team's morale."

While Kim's positive attitude and constant support did help the team, she was determined to make a contribution from the field for her last year of eligibility. She went to the therapy room daily as well as attending indoor practises. While the rest of team was practising in the gym, Kim did whatever training she could, even if it meant standing in one little spot and just doing stick work. She did all of this with a smile on her face.

Kim's intensity and motivation kept up over the summer, "I was religious with the training schedule this summer," she said. She wanted to return in best possible shape.

With her leg in a brace, Kim was back for training camp looking stronger than ever. She was undoubtedly one of the fittest players on the team. Kim got to play as a member of the team for first time in almost a year on the pre-season tour to the States.

The first game, Kim was flying up the field. She did *"The Move"* against 2 Providence defenders. In the backfield, Gallant and Currie looked at each other smiling, "Kim's back!" they said.



Kim Richard PAT FITZPATRICK PHOTO

The second game of the season, Kim was in for about 30 seconds when she twisted her knee again. She would learn later that, this time, she had completely torn her ACL. It was her fifth (and final) year, and she was out.

Most people would give up. Would Kim? "I couldn't! It was never an option," Kim said strongly. "I was actually really lucky in the way it happened. Because I only played 2 games, I didn't use up my eligibility. I'd already decided that I was coming back next year and graduating at Christmas."

So Kim is doing it all over again.

This time, she's getting surgery to reconstruct her ACL. Then it is going to be 6 weeks of crutches and training, training, training. Now, she goes to therapy and practise everyday.

In therapy, Joe Glen says Kim, is "exemplary" in her dedication to her recovery.

At practises, she does whatever she can. She does warm up laps and stretching with the team to make sure they're ready for practises. If someone comes late, she does the warm-up laps with them to make sure they do it. She'll take practise shots on the goalies to get them ready.

All the while, she is completely positive and never focuses the attention on herself. "I don't want the team to worry about me, they have a job to do," Kim says.

The only time you can detect the slightest disappointment and sadness in Kim's voice is if she talks about the other fifth year players. "I started with them, and I wanted to finish with them." This is echoed by all the fifth year vets on the team.

Yet always keeping that positive outlook, Kim thinks next year she is going to have her best season yet. Laughing, she says, "I'm going to be a Super Senior!"

Kim's unbelievable motivation and constant positive attitude has revealed her as one of the most admirable and respectable athletes at UNB. She may be a silent hero, but she is a hero, even though she is standing on the sidelines.

X-Country - Second again

PETER J. CULLEN
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Both the men's and women's teams finished a strong second at StFX this past weekend. Pushed to the limit by chief rival Dalhousie, the team gained more experience to prepare them for their AUAA meet here in Fredericton next weekend.

Meghan Roushourne, who has shone for the women's team this season, finishing second among university runners. Coach Tim Randall expressed pleasure at her performance this weekend and throughout the year. "She's just doing really well," he said. "She's had an outstanding year."

Randall also noted the success of Louise Robichaud this year. Four of the top five women on the team are returning runners from last year. Robichaud fits in the select group nicely, having placed seventh in StFX.

For the men, James Murphy continues to lead the UNB group this year. "[James] is leading the men by a fair amount," Randall states. Murphy raced to a seventh place finish in the 6.9 km event. Mike Burgess, a new addition to the team, finished twelfth at StFX. "Even better than expected," Randall added.

The women have consistently ranked second throughout the season, marginally losing each race to Dal. Despite their runner-up finish, Randall believes the women still have a chance of upsetting their competition during the AUAA championship. "the girls are certainly trying to win. . . . Everything you do throughout the season brings experience, and you just do the best you can do on that day."

Although hope might seem faint after playing second fiddle to Dal all season, Randall thinks that anything can happen on a given day. "You've simply got to make it to the finish line. Somebody might fall down, or step on a rock, or twist their ankle. . . . If Dal falls and breaks four sets of legs, we'll win for sure," he laughs.

"It's not like track. In cross country you've got to be able to handle the terrain; it's part of the deal. The winner is the [team with the] first five men across the finish line. It's not the fittest or the fastest - it's who survives."

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