

Lacrosse player near the top of his game



PHOTO COURTESY OF JONNY VALENTINE

Valentine climbs real rocks and metaphorical ones on his way to the top

BY MATT WAGGONER
THE DEVILS APPRENTICE

Jonny Valentine scales the seven-foot fence separating us from our dorm room as I dig for the keys in my left pocket.

"Dude, that's the second time I have climbed that today," he tells me with a smirk of satisfaction creeping up his face.

The last six months have provided him with an ample amount of time to get his climbing technique together.

"It is a great feeling to get to the top of a climb," Valentine says, while pointing out yet another barrier that he had previously ascended. "It's a rush. You can see how your work has paid off."

It is easy to see that the work has paid off for Valentine just by looking at his 6 foot, 140 pound frame that carries less

fat than a vegan diet, and just slightly more than a bottle of Aquafina.

Aside from the urban climbing he has done at the ASU campus, he also tries to climb daily at the Phoenix Rock Gym, and has climbed rocks near Payson and just outside of Cimarron, N.M.

"Climbing is perfect because it is always challenging and it is actually really strengthening," he says.

Valentine's work away from climbing also has yielded great dividends.

His writing for his school newspaper has prompted serious changes with his school's sports program. Valentine, who received the only "superior" rating for an opinion piece at the JEA/NSPA National High School Journalism Convention

in November 2003, helped Tempe Corona del Sol High School to develop a lacrosse program, which will begin its inaugural season in January 2005.

"The column got a lot of people talking about lacrosse," Valentine says. "A lot of the other big schools around the Valley have lacrosse programs, and it is good that we finally can compete with them."

Valentine first became interested in the sport a few summers back in Pennsylvania, where the sport is popular with high school students. He found that the sport is actually America's oldest and that he really enjoys the game.

"Lacrosse is a really cool sport that is a combination of a lot of different games," he explains. "It's fast paced, hard-

hitting and a lot of fun."

As for Jonny Valentine's future, he says, "anything is possible." Among the colleges he is considering are Penn State, Washington and Lee University and the University of Maryland, but for financial reasons Valentine believes he will probably end up at ASU. And as for a career, he says he wants to work somewhere within the field of journalism, whether it be for a newspaper or a magazine.

Valentine's dream jobs are to be a car reviewer for a major newspaper or a travel writer for a magazine.

"Journalism offers a lot of room to move up, and I look forward to trying to do so," he says.

Just one more opportunity for Jonny Valentine to climb.

Student emerges himself in academics and journalism

BY JONNY VALENTINE
THE DEVILS APPRENTICE

Matt Waggoner had a promising soccer career in front of him, playing goalkeeper for one of the top national teams – that is, until he badly injured his knee.

Now, a new Waggoner is forced to approach his future differently, but has found he enjoys his academic pursuits.

Waggoner, soon to be 18, started his soccer career at age 5 when his parents signed him up for a local recreational league. It was over the ensuing few seasons that he found his appreciation for the sport.

"At the time, it just seemed like a fun sport that I could go somewhere with," he says. "I liked it more than the other sports (my parents) signed me up for."

At age 11, Waggoner tried out for the Ahwatukee Assault, a serious club soccer team where he began his competitive club soccer career. And although his coaches told him he was too short to play his desired position of goalkeeper, he persisted and was able to outperform the other candidates.

"I really like playing in goal," he says. "I was never that big so my only chance to excel was through the mental part of the game."

Waggoner continued to improve his game and found himself on increasingly more competitive Valley club teams, including the elite Sereno Golden Eagles and eventually, at age 15, the U.S. western region Olympic Development Program team. He also was the captain of Arizona ODP team.

"There is something truly exciting about playing goalkeeper," he notes. "You get to use your mind over your body, unlike most of the other positions."

His soccer career was cut short abruptly, however, when he tore his lateral meniscus during an ODP matchup between Oregon and Arizona. He underwent surgery to repair it for the first time in October 2002, then, upon completion of a rehabilitation program, returned to the field and reinjured the same muscle.

This forced a second surgery, after which he was able to return to the field again. Unfortunately, he then tore is



JASMINE WIGGINS/THE DEVILS APPRENTICE

Who YOU lookin' at? Waggoner shows us the business end of his wiffle bat during ASU's Summer Journalism Institute June 6 – 18.

lateral meniscus for the third time, at which point doctors told him he would not be able to play soccer, or any other physical sport again.

"It was tough for me to not play soccer anymore because I had been playing my whole life, so I tried coaching a younger team for a while," Waggoner says. "It was just as hard as playing the game."

Waggoner now has the time to pursue some of his academic and extracurricular interests, including journalism. He joined the paper at Dobson High School and quickly began writing for the sports section.

"I have always been around sports, so it was easy for me to write about and understand all the different games," he says.

Since joining the Dobson Mustang Roundup, Waggoner has found a passion for journalism and has earned himself a

spot as one of next year's editors in chief.

Although his future remains largely undetermined, he is considering a variety of different colleges, including Arizona State University, Syracuse, Northwestern, the University of Southern California and the University of Missouri. Waggoner plans to major in journalism.

"I had a lot more options for college before my injury, but now college will be more rewarding because I am getting there for academics," he says.

Waggoner says he is "truly pretty excited" about pursuing journalism in college and beyond.

"I've had to change a lot of things about the way I live, but I look forward to the future even more now," Waggoner says. "(The injury) was really a blessing in disguise, I guess."

Ramirez: Overcoming discrimination

BY RAFAEL CARRANZA
THE DEVILS APPRENTICE

"We're always faced with that question: what side are you with [Mexican or American]? It makes me angry, it's not fair to put a 17-year-old in that position."

Hispanic youth living in the United States are often faced with the same question, and while some choose a side immediately, others such as Sandra Day O'Connor High School senior Maria Ramirez put more thought into it, often times ending up with answers such as hers.

So what side is Ramirez with? "I think it's stupid to nationalize ourselves within a border."

I'm both Mexican and American. I was born in Mexico, and no one can take that away from me, but I have taken up all opportunities here, therefore I am American as well."

At the age of 8, Ramirez and her family immigrated to the United States, seizing the opportunity to search for a higher quality of life and greater educational opportunities.

Born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, in the central region of Mexico, her family's financial situation, along with her country's economy, began to deteriorate. In addition, a quality education became harder to obtain. A need for change became evident.

Overwhelmed by the difference between Guadalajara and what was to become, and continues to be, her home, Ramirez was unable to understand the changes around her and desired to know why things were happening.

She specifically recalls, upon arriving in the city of Phoenix, seeing the difference between its spelling and its pronunciation, "I remember hearing the word Phoenix and I thought it was spelled with an 'F' not 'Ph,'" Ramirez says.

As a third grader, it took Ramirez large amounts of dedication and effort to adapt to her new home; she not only had to deal with an entire new culture, but also with the "close-minded" people immersed in that culture.

She would often face the feeling of alienation from not being able to communicate with other students, reason to work hard at improving herself and to understand people



MIRIAM HERNANDEZ/THE DEVILS APPRENTICE

Maria Ramirez chats to her family and friends... all at the same time at SJJ.

at a different level, Ramirez states.

"When I arrived here, people treated me like crap," she adds. "There was a girl who would make fun of me because I couldn't speak English. She would tell her friends not to talk to me. I felt scared but it made me work harder to prove to her I could speak English; that I could do what she did."

Nine years later, as a student at Sandra Day O'Connor High School, she is confronted with a similar situation.

The newly created school, despite its tender age, contains a population of 1,644 students, out of which 115 are Hispanic, less than 7 percent of the student body.

Being one of few Hispanics within a predominantly Caucasian community, Ramirez does not spend much time exploring her culture, the same reason she feels her appreciation of it is greater than before.

At the same time, developing an appreciation for the American culture comes with ease to her; at O'Connor High School, she participates in band as a drum major, hones her athletic abilities through tennis, and, in the upcoming year, Ramirez will serve as

the Co-Editor in Chief of her school's newspaper, the Talon.

To Ramirez, who plans to pursue a career in journalism, writing has become more than a passion, it's a necessity. It helps her overcome any obstacles, she explains, and describes it as an escape and motivation.

Through journalism, Ramirez learned to take pride in herself and to keep an open mind to new concepts and ideas.

As a journalist, Ramirez considers it an advantage to be bicultural, "I am bilingual; I speak English and Spanish. Also, I've got experience other people haven't had."

Furthermore, having the knowledge of two cultures allows her to better communicate with others and avoid being biased.

Having experienced two cultures, Ramirez feels better prepared for the future. She not only feels proud of her heritage and culture, but also aims to use up all her knowledge and impart it upon the people around her.

"[I] want to teach them what they don't know, at the same time, learn things I don't know," she says. "I've been exposed to the best of two worlds."