

Sheridan in running to represent the U.S. in women's lacrosse

By Sam Feeley

This article appeared in the June 23, 2015 edition of the Lowell Sun.

CHELMSFORD -- In some sports, if you're assigned an unusual jersey number in training camp, you may not be expected to make the team.

So imagine Chelmsford native Kelsey Sheridan's surprise when her number -- 88 -- was called for the final 36-player roster for the U.S. women's national lacrosse team for the 2015-16 campaign after tryouts in Baltimore earlier this month.

"At first I was in shock," Sheridan said. "Once I realized it wasn't a mistake and it started to settle in, I was pumped!"

The ensuing team orientation brought back years of memories and accomplishments for Sheridan.

"All I could think of was when I was a little kid the national team seemed like a dream and something I could never reach," she said. "Standing up and saying my information made it reality and gave me a sense of accomplishment; that all my hard work had paid off. I definitely have more training and competing left in me and to be doing it with the most elite group of lacrosse players is so exciting."

Sheridan certainly has the track record to be considered among America's best. She was a four-year varsity letter winner at Chelmsford High, where she was MVC player of the year and team MVP as both a junior and senior. She finished her career with 153 goals and 101 assists, and was an All-American nominee. She was also a four-year varsity swimmer and three-year varsity basketball player, and captained all three teams her senior year.

She continued her athletic prowess at UMass, where she was an Atlantic 10 all-conference player and all-tournament team member her junior and senior years, and an A-10 all-academic team member and Maroon and White scholar athlete as a senior. She also ran the 400 and 800 on the track and field team.

Sheridan said she hadn't played lacrosse in a while before the tryout, so she was "pretty sore" when all was said and done.

"The tryouts were extremely hard," she said. "Before I went I counted up how many hours we would be playing lacrosse for; there were six sessions over the course of three days and it consisted of 18.5 hours of lacrosse. We had drills during the day and scrimmages at night, including a run test on Saturday morning ... I was fortunate enough to run track this year, and I definitely think that helped with my stamina throughout the course of the tryouts. It was definitely the hardest three days of my career, but it was worth it."

One aspect of women's lacrosse that some may see as a challenge is the fact that, unlike the men's game, there is no professional women's lacrosse league in the United States, so opportunities to play competitively after college are not as plentiful. However, Sheridan says a love for the game is all women need to keep playing.

"I think women who continue to play past college have to be extremely motivated and passionate," she said. "Since you aren't competing as frequently as college players, you have to stay focused on why you are training and what that means for the future. Having a love for the game of lacrosse and being competitive is also a huge component when competing at such a high level. You have to maintain a competitive edge without competing often. It is definitely tough but finding what keeps you motivated is key."

The journey is not over for Sheridan. She still has work to do before the roster is cut to the final 18 for the 2017 FIL World Cup in Guildford, England, where the U.S. will seek its third consecutive and eighth overall championship. But she believes she has what it takes to get there.

"Right now there are 10 defenders on the team and they will most likely only take five for the World Cup," she said. "I think in order to be among the top five, I will have to keep my stick in my hand as much as possible and stay fit. The defense Team USA runs is a high pressure, fast defense. Luckily, the way they play fits into my strengths, and I think that will help me in the future."