

News Release



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For Immediate Release: February 7, 2008

Katie Cerling Named Recipient of NCC Inspiration Award

Sioux Falls, S.D. -- University of South Dakota soccer and track & field student-athlete Katie Cerling has been selected as the recipient of the Inspiration Award by the North Central Conference. The announcement of the award coincides with the National Girls & Women in Sports Day on Wednesday.

The selection by Senior Women's Administrators at NCC institutions was made on the basis of significant contribution to her team along with contributions to her home and college community, while showing courage in overcoming adversity that influenced their collegiate career. The female athlete must be in her senior year of eligibility and have a minimum 3.00 grade point average.

Cerling is an Academic All-NCC selection in both soccer and track & field as well as a CoSIDA/ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American in track & field. Her active, athletic lifestyle was challenged when she tore her anterior cruciate ligament while playing soccer last fall.

"When I tore my ACL playing soccer last fall, the image I had of myself was challenged and my expectations for both soccer and track in the coming year were shattered. The only options available were to play out the season, have surgery later and miss both of the track seasons, or to have surgery immediately in the hopes of being ready to pole vault for the outdoor track season," said Cerling.

Opting to have immediate surgery, Cerling was further challenged when, after six weeks of rehabilitation, arresting scar tissue resulted in further surgery to clear up the joint and allow full mobility.

"During the seven weeks that led up to the second surgery, I had ample time to rethink my place in the world of collegiate athletics. Never before had I imagined a life without sports. For the first time as I imagined a far different kind of life, I made the conscious resolution to continue athletics. I learned a hard lesson that cannot be fully appreciated except through the horror of the experience; you can't always control the injuries that happen, and you have even less control over the way the body heals, but you can keep fighting for the life that you want."

With resolve like that Cerling was able to pick up the pole and vault after six months of rehabilitation.

"Never had a two-step approach felt so wonderful! The first track meet that I was able to compete in, it rained. I hate getting wet, but there I was, standing under the shelter, itching to get out in the rain and vault."

Cerling has been active in the Vermillion community as well. She has been a participant at the Vermillion Welcome Table, a member of the accounting fraternity Beta Alpha Psi and a leader in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance project.

Cerling is the daughter of Larry and Wanda Cerling of Plymouth, Minn. and holds a 3.657 GPA while majoring in accounting and history.

The NCC Inspiration Award Honor Roll

2008 - Katie Cerling, South Dakota, soccer/track & field
2007 - Carissa Jahner, North Dakota, Basketball
2006 - Angie Hummel, Augustana, Volleyball
2005 - Chelsie Groslie, Nebraska-Omaha, Basketball
2004 - Jackie Hingst, Augustana, Volleyball
2003 - Aleasha Jacobson, South Dakota State, Volleyball
2002 - Emily Birkholz, Minnesota State, Basketball
Anne Bomstad, Nebraska-Omaha, Basketball

2001 - Krista Niezwaag, Nebraska-Omaha, Volleyball
2000 - Kim Birkel, Nebraska-Omaha, Basketball
1999 - Theresa Lang, North Dakota State, Basketball
1998 - Missy McVoy, Northern Colorado, Basketball
1997 - Hiedi Reed, Augustana, Cross Country/Track
1996 - Stormie Wells, Northern Colorado, Volleyball
1995 - Sarah Johnson, Morningside, Softball
1994 - Melissa Laatsch, Minnesota State, Softball