

Sports

Colpitts named C.B. Girls Athlete of the Year

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It would have been easy for Chelsea Colpitts to give up.

On a cold, January evening in 2009 during her junior season of basketball, she suffered a severe ACL tear that not only ended her season on the hardwood but also might have jeopardized her effectiveness as an athlete.

A three-sport standout, Colpitts also shined in volleyball and track. The timing of her injury and subsequent surgery meant she wouldn't be throwing a discus that spring, and nobody – not even Colpitts herself – knew what her future would hold.

"I honestly didn't know what to expect at all," Colpitts said. "I was a little more apprehensive, but I think the situation with my injury made me appreciate (sports) and just want it more. I was much more driven."

She used that drive to endure a rigorous rehab in the spring and summer and was back on the volleyball court that fall for her senior year.

That season started a memorable final prep campaign for Colpitts that saw her earn a state volleyball berth and first-team all-city honors in the fall. She followed that by scoring 11.5 points a game while again garnering first-team city honors in the winter on the basketball court.

She saved the highlight of her career until May when she earned a Class 4-A state championship in the discus. That dramatic turnaround in just over a year's time earned Colpitts The Daily Nonpareil's City Athlete of the Year.

She'll remain in Council Bluffs and throw the discus next spring at Iowa Western. And if her prep performances continue into college, Reiver fans surely will like what they see.

Colpitts said that being on the sidelines with an injury gave her a new appreciation for not only athletics but also the work that goes into the competition.

"I learned not to take things for granted and really appreciate what I have while I have it," Colpitts said. "I also learned that life does go on without sports, but it made me realize that it was a major part of my life and I didn't want to let it go."

Neither did her coaches. A.L. volleyball coach Yvonne Carson benefited from her services last fall. Colpitts averaged 2.4 kills per set while helping the Lynx to a 37-12 record and their second state berth in three years. While Carson had initial concerns about Colpitts' knee, she also knew how much determination drove her senior.

"She rehabbed so hard that, after I saw her, I knew she was going to come back," Carson said. "She came back just as strong as she was before she had the surgery, which was remarkable. There were times she was sore, and you could tell that, but she never complained once. She never talked about how bad she hurt."

"Chelsea Colpitts doesn't do anything halfway. When she came into that first practice, she wasn't tentative at all; she was going all out. She was going to go after it."

Basketball season gave Colpitts a chance to display her leadership role. The Lynx struggled to just one win in 2009, with roughly half of their season remaining after Colpitts' injury.

She came back to lead the team in rebounding and to a 10-12 record, monumental progress compared to the previous



Staff Photo/Cindy Christensen - Chelsea Colpitts of Abraham Lincoln is the 2010 C.B. Girls Athlete of the Year.

season.

She saved her best for last. In the spring, Colpitts earned her 4-A discus title by throwing a career-best 148 feet, 8 inches. That toss, her last of the competition, was more than eight feet better than her previous best.

Not bad for someone who hadn't competed in nearly two full years.

"I've had maybe 10 state champions, and she was by far the most consistent and the hardest worker I had," A.L. throws coach Larry Argersinger said. "She was extremely consistent and talented. She listens better than anyone I've had.

"She had a champion's heart; that's all I can say. She's that kind of competitor, and when the chips are down, that's the kind of kid you'd like to count on."

It would have been easy for Colpitts to give up. But that didn't fit her character.

"Chelsea Colpitts is one of those athletes where you have maybe two or three like her in your lifetime," Carson said. "She's one of those athletes I'll always remember. She added a lot to the program at A.L. and affected me as a coach."

Council Bluffs Girls Athlete of the Year

2010 – Chelsea Colpitts, Abraham Lincoln

2009 – Abby Schlater, St. Albert

2008 – Mallory Husz, Lewis Central

2007 – Sarah Milner, Abraham Lincoln

2006 – Val Robinson, Thomas Jefferson

2005 – Courtnie Dennis, Lewis Central

2004 – Sammi Fetch, Abraham Lincoln

2003 – Eve Johnson, St. Albert

2002 – Shannon Eggers, Lewis Central

2001 – Melissa Respeliers, St. Albert

2000 – Brandy Ficek, St. Albert

1999 – Kristina Quigley, St. Albert

1998 – Molly Parrott, Lewis Central

1997 – Annie Heithoff/Melissa Kroll, St. Albert

1996 – Keri Feilen, Abraham Lincoln

1995 – Kellie VanNordstrand, Lewis Central

1994 – Katie Heithoff, St. Albert

1993 – Mindy Patten, Abraham Lincoln

1992 – Paulette Mitchell, Abraham Lincoln

1991 – Suzanne Riche, Lewis Central

1990 – Kristine Heller, Lewis Central

1989 – Amy Midkiff, Thomas Jefferson

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