Kelli Pawelko is the UC Scholar-Athlete of the Month for September

Kelli Pawelko, defender on the women’s soccer team and a secondary education student in the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services (CECH), is the Scholar-Athlete of the Month for September. Now in its fourth year, this award recognizes an athlete in a different sport each month who has demonstrated success on the field and in the classroom.

By: Lauren Koch Photos

By: UC Athletics Department

“Being a Bearcat student athlete gives me a lot of pride”

Kelli Pawelko, a senior on the UC Women’s Soccer team is making her mark. Originally from Lemont, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, Kelli started her soccer career at Lemont High School where she won seven state club championships.

Kelli is a crucial member of the UC Women’s Soccer team. As a defender on the women’s soccer team, Kelli’s primary goal is to stop the other team from scoring and begin counter-attacks. She has to employ tactical and technical capabilities such as speed, game reading, anticipation, positioning, tackling, and good ball handling skills.
The talent of a student athlete does not develop overnight. It takes hard work, commitment, and practice. The level of dedication, organization and balance these students possess is inspiring. Kelli states, “Being a Bearcat student athlete gives me a lot of pride because of all the great traditions that have gone on here at UC.”

Kelli identifies juggling the high pace of college soccer, the ability to stay organized, and the skill to balance school while traveling as the key challenges she faces as a student athlete. Despite these challenges, Kelli has impressive accomplishments as a defender on the women’s soccer team. Even more exemplary is that she has done this all while maintaining a 3.6 GPA in the Secondary Education program in the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services, CECH. Kelli lists remaining Academic Ohio and Big East Academic each year at UC as her main academic achievements. Furthermore, Kelli lists her team being nationally ranked in 2010 and personally being named twice as the Big East Defender of the Week as some of her proudest moments as a Bearcat.

Kelli has proven to be a talent on the women’s soccer team. As a true freshman, Kelli started in nine games in addition to stepping in for an injured teammate on the backline. She says, “One of the toughest adjustments I have made on the field was learning to play a new position.” In 2009 Kelli played in all 19 games that season and started 18. In 2010 Kelli proved herself “a force to be reckoned with” by providing the assist on Logan Ballinger’s game-winning goal in overtime at Bowling Green, scoring the game-winning goal in UC’s 1-0 victory over nationally ranked Wisconsin, and being named the Big East Conference Defensive Player of the Week in August. This season, 2011, Kelli has already taken 19 shots on goal and provided an impressive four assists.

While at UC, Kelli has focused her studies on math, language arts, and social studies with the hopes of becoming a middle school math teacher. Kelli has been provided with opportunities to learn and grow in areas other than just the soccer field. She is currently student teaching at Kilgour Elementary School in Hyde Park. Through her student teaching, she is constantly reminded to remain patient. She has taken on the motto, “If you don’t get it right the first time, adjust and try again.”

Time management is vital as Kelli balances the demands of athletics with her teaching major and student teaching responsibilities. She says, “You have to be on top of everything, keep everything organized ... whatever you have to do to make sure everything gets done on time”

Organization is a skill that Kelli has perfected over her years at UC. She says, “Advice I would give to every freshman would be to keep a planner, and highlight and check off everything to make sure everything gets done on time and you are not late for anything.”
The College of Engineering and Applied Science Honors Scholar-Athletes

Dean Carlo Montemagno of the University of Cincinnati’s College of Engineering and Applied Science and Bob Arkielpane, Interim Director of the UC Athletics Department announced that the college is sponsoring the UC Scholar-Athlete of the Month award in the 2011-2012 academic year. This is the fourth year that CEAS has sponsored this honor.

Each month of the academic year, the College of Engineering and Applied Science, CEAS, will recognize a UC scholar-athlete who has demonstrated success both in the classroom and in an athletic arena. To be eligible for the award a scholar-athlete will have completed 2 years of education at UC, have a defined major, a cumulative grade point average (or GPA) of 3.25 or better, be in good standing, and have achieved athletic success.

"CEAS is pleased to recognize scholar-athletes from across the university who stand out both academically and in athletic competition. Their dedication, competitive fire and ability to balance the demands of classroom, athletics and life parallel our own students," stated Dean Montemagno. "Our students balance work and class schedules on a daily basis and are rewarded with top jobs upon graduation."

On behalf of the College of Engineering and Applied Science, I am honored to announce that CEAS recognizes Kelli Pawelko as the UC Scholar-Athlete of the Month. Kelli is a defender on the Women’s Soccer Team. She is an outstanding competitor on the field and a leader in the classroom with a solid GPA in Secondary Education in the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services. Kelli Pawelko has earned our acclaim.

"With a GPA of 3.6 and her solid performance on the field, Kelli Pawelko continues to prove that scholarship and athletics do go “hand-in-hand”. Her dedication to excellence during matches and in class is a model for all of our student-athletes," affirms Mr. Arkielpane.

"It is an honor to have one of our collegiate partners, the College of Engineering and Applied Science, stepping forward to recognize our scholar-athletes."

Each UC Scholar-Athlete of the Month is awarded a clock during the Athletics Recognition Banquet in the spring. Additionally, a tribute to each scholar-athlete is made by the college during a home game of each active sport that month.