

Heart of an Athlete - December 2010

Rachel Hockaday
Iowa State University
Volleyball

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.” -
Ephesians 6:10 (NIV)*

By Clay Meyer *originally published in the November 2010
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This season hasn't exactly turned out the way Iowa State volleyball player Rachel Hockaday planned. As a junior outside hitter, Hockaday was set to be a key component in the Cyclones' success but suffered a season-ending knee injury just 12 points into the first match of the year. As STV's November "Heart of an Athlete," Hockaday had fielded our interview before the season, but, after the circumstances changed, she was kind enough to give us a few more minutes on the phone and tell us how the Lord has worked through this new challenge.

STV: When we last spoke, the season was about to begin and you had high expectations. What went through your mind when you got hurt?

RH: The first thing was disappointment that my season was over. I had jumped for a hit—something I had done a million times—but I landed weird on my left foot, and I knew something was wrong right away.

STV: Given your faith in the Lord, how has your perspective on the injury changed over time?

RH: Watching instead of playing has definitely given me a different perspective. I used to apply Ephesians 6:10 ("*...be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power,*" NIV) to my performance during games. Now I have a new role on the team: to be a leader and stay strong by cheering the team on from the bench.

This injury has given me a chance to show the other girls on the team that my life isn't over. It is a faith-tester and a time for building my character because I know that God has a plan even greater than what I pictured at the beginning of the season.

STV: How does your faith affect your relationship with your teammates?

RH: Many of my teammates are strong in their faith already but want to know more. We recently watched *The Case for Christ* video by Lee Strobel, which was great, and we just started reading the book of Ruth, which has generated a lot of questions. And hopefully through the positive light in our lives, others will see it and want to be a part of it, too.

STV: How has being involved with FCA helped you share your faith?

RH: After going to FCA my freshman year, I started growing closer with the people and getting to know Kevin Lykins, our FCA leader. Later in the year, he invited me to the leadership group meetings. I was nervous at first because I didn't know if I could actually stand up in front of people and share my faith. But Kevin and the other leaders have helped me along the way. I'm comfortable sharing as a leader now and am encouraged that most of my teammates come to the FCA meetings and to our team Bible studies at the Lykins' house.

This summer I also served as a coach at a weeklong FCA Power Camp in Ames (Iowa). The girls ranged in age from third grade to junior high. It was awesome helping them play their sports and teaching them about the Lord.

STV: How have you changed spiritually since coming to Iowa State?

RH: I've definitely grown and matured, and God has put so many great people in my life here and given me so many great opportunities. I grew up in a Christian home, and I've always been around church, but it wasn't until I got to college my freshman year that I really started growing in my faith, especially through FCA.

Now, God is the center of my life—in sports and school. As athletes, we can get caught up in the importance of winning, but, in the end, all that matters is our relationship with Christ.

About the Athlete:

Hometown: Decatur, Ill.

Class: Junior

Position: Outside Hitter

School: Iowa State University

Notes:

All-Big 12 Honorable Mention (2009)

Big 12 All-Freshman Team (2008)



FCA Staff Quote: “Rachel is an outstanding Christian lady whose growth in the Lord can be seen in her daily walk and in her desire to be a spiritual leader for other athletes. She has been instrumental in starting a Bible study with the volleyball team and has really been a blessing to the entire FCA Huddle at Iowa State.” - Kevin Lykins, FCA Area Representative, Ames, Iowa