# 2020 Senior Spotlight: Carlee Gassman



*Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.*

From the day she joined the Louisburg track and field team, Carlee Gassman made an impact for the Lady Cats.

After joining the team as a sophomore, Gassman would go on to break the 300-meter hurdle record four times that season and finish as the state runner-up in the event, along with medaling in the long jump. A year ago, Gassman captured three more state medals and a fourth place finish in the 300 hurdles.

Those two years with the Lady Cat program has given Gassman a multitude of memories to look back on and she was looking to add many more for her senior campaign.

“During the winter months, track is all I thought about and I had already started my training,” Gassman said. “So to say I was looking forward to track is an understatement. I was already in track season working towards my goals that I had set for myself. With this season being my last, I had set some very ambitious goals. I had talked to coach and I really wanted to see what I was capable of doing in the 800-meter run. I have never ran an 800 in my whole track career so I was curious and set a very ambitious goal, along with my goals for

the 300 hurdles."

The 300 hurdles has provided Gassman the most success, and it is the hurdles she will continue to do when she moves on to college at Northern Iowa. It is an event that fuels her drive to succeed.

"No doubt the 300 hurdles is my favorite race, as it brings so much joy to myself," Gassman said. "I had some pretty ambitious expectations. I wanted to set a new school record and I most definitely had a state title in my eyes. After my 300 hurdle state race last year, I was very disappointed in my performance, only because the girl who won the race ran a slower time than my PR and that was really frustrating to me.

"I was also happy that it set off a spark in myself and gave me the confidence that I needed to know that I could be standing where she was this year. I also knew I needed to work on some things and change some of my training strategies."

Gassman made some of those important changes and was ready to take off for the 2020 season, but it was ultimately cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That meant the final two months of her senior year was gone, including her final track season.

"I'll be completely honest, I haven't always liked school, so to hear that school was cancelled didn't bother me as much," Gassman said. "I was homeschooled until sixth grade, so it's kinda fitting to end my senior year with online school at home. But I will say that when I heard the news of school cancelling, I actually cried because I knew that was the end of track and it only just started. I would have much rather suffered through school, knowing that I would still have a track season."

It has been a rough couple months as Gassman knows she was supposed to be using this week to prepare for the state track meet this weekend in Wichita. Instead, she has those memories

to help get her through it.

“I love everything that comes with participating in track,” Gassman said. “With that being said, I have to say my favorite memory and or moment is simple – everything that happens while being a part of the track team. Every practice and meet is so memorable and so much fun. The track team is one big family and I love how everyone cheers for each other during races and how we push each other during practices. Also, if it wasn’t for Sydni Keagle, I wouldn’t have had so many fond moments while participating in track the last two years.”

Gassman’s track career is far from over, however. She will make the transition to Division I track in college next year and is excited to continue her journey one hurdle at a time.

“I never ran hurdles in middle school because my coach wanted me to run relays,” Gassman said. “However, my freshman year of high school I had an amazing coach, she believed in me and pushed me to be the hurdler I am today. At that time, I lived in Iowa and they didn’t run 300 hurdles, instead they ran 400 hurdles. It was the beginning of track season and Bart came over to me and asked if I wanted to try hurtling and of course I was intrigued. After that practice, I absolutely feel in love with them.

“Track is a huge part of my life and I’m blessed to be able to say I get to continue my track adventure in college. Track has been the best way I cope with things and how I make friends. I wouldn’t be who I am today without having participated in track for those six years.”

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Carlee on how she has been coping with an early end to her senior year and some of her other interests. Here are her responses from the rest of our Q&A.

**LSZ:** What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

**CG:** I have been missing track practices the most honestly, along with Sydni Keagle. She always brings so much joy to my days. I also miss Tom (Koontz) and the hurdle practices. When all three of us are together we have a lot of fun and I wish we could have continued our water spitting war to see who would have won at the end of the school year.

**LSZ:** What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

**CG:** Most memorable moment as an athlete – you would think would be when I placed second in hurdles at the state meet. However, when I read this question my mind went straight to a soccer tournament I participated in a few years ago. The tournament was called Iowa games and I just remember having so much fun and I didn't want it to end. Each game we played was thrilling.

**LSZ:** What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

**CG:** I don't have many hobbies outside of sports, but I do enjoy taking photos of my siblings at their athletic events. I also love to walk for hours and I enjoy teaching myself American Sign Language.

**LSZ:** I know you are going to Northern Iowa next year, but with everything going on, have you been able to do much to stay shape and train for track?

**CG:** I have most definitely been able to stay in track shape. My dad crafted some hurdles out of blocks of wood and I have been using those to continue my hurdle training. With all this time I have on my hands, I have been running a lot actually. Living across from the lake has also been very beneficial. I have gone over and measured out 200 to 400 meters and ran repeats as a workout. I have college to look forward to, but my dad knew how disappointed I was and so we have scheduled our own track meet to end my senior year. Not sure where this

track meet is going to be held but its keeping me motivated and will be a lot of fun.

**LSZ:** What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

**CG:** My greatest accomplishment outside of athletics is most definitely my decision to get baptized at the age of 12.

**LSZ:** What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

**CG:** Probably that I was home-schooled until my sixth grade year.

## Carlee's Favorites

**Pro athlete:** Tom Brady

**Pro team:** New England Patriots

**College team:** University of Northern Iowa

**Movie:** Footloose (1984)

**TV Show:** Friends

**Song:** Collide by Jars of Clay, Restless by Switchfoot or Forget And Not Slow Down by Reliant K

**Band/Musician:** Jars of Clay, Switchfoot and Reliant K

**Pregame meal/snack:** Blueberry bagel with ham on it

**Class/subject:** Science

**Teacher and why?** Andy Wright – I don't have him as a teacher, but it always brings me joy when I see him in the hallway.

### Previous Senior Spotlights

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball

Michael Waldron – Track and Field

Avery O’Meara – Soccer

Ryan Haight – Golf

Andie Masten – Soccer

Lauren Cutshaw – Softball

Trent Martin – Track and Field

Erin Lemke – Soccer

Luke Wickersham – Golf

Skylar Bowman – Soccer

Gabby Dugger – Softball

Sydni Keagle – Track

Olivia Chase – Soccer

Colin Cook – Golf

Morgan Messer – Soccer

August Daniels – Softball

Carter Anglin – Track and Field

Hannah Straub – Soccer

Reilly Ratliff-Becher – Softball

Madden Rutherford – Baseball

Lily McDaniel – Soccer

Garrett Harding – Track

Mackenzie Scholtz – Soccer

Calvin Dillon – Golf

Kat Coolidge – Softball

Charlie Koontz – Track

Ashley Moore – Soccer