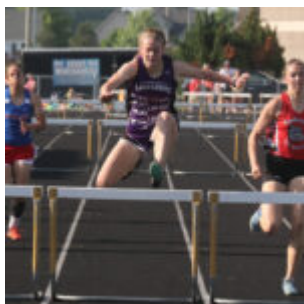


Gassman excited for opportunity at Northern Iowa



Louisburg senior Carlee Gassman, who recorded three state medals last year and is the school's record holder in the 300 hurdles, signed to run track at the University of Northern Iowa on April 20.

As a freshman in high school, Carlee Gassman knew what her ideal college was, but at that time there were a lot of unknowns.

A lot can happen in three years. For Gassman, however, everything seemed to fall into place.

The Louisburg senior found her perfect school and will get the opportunity to compete in the athletic arena on top of it all. Gassman made it all official on April 20 when she had a signing ceremony outside of Louisburg High School and signed her letter of intent to run track at the University Northern Iowa, a Division I program in the Missouri Valley Conference.

"I was a freshman and my best friend and I at the time really wanted to be teachers, and if you know anything about UNI it's that they have the best teaching program," Gassman said. "That's really when I started dreaming of running at UNI. My best friend and I are now going to college together and I get to compete in the 400 hurdles. How could it get better? It was always a dream to run in college, but I wouldn't say at a D1 level. I honestly don't care at what level as long as I'm able to continue to hurdle."

She will definitely be able to do that as Gassman made a name for herself when she joined the Wildcat track team as a sophomore. Early in that sophomore year, Gassman went on to break the school record on four different occasions in the 300-meter hurdles and finished at second at state.

As a junior, Gassman earned three state medals, including a fourth place finish in the 300 hurdles and had hoped to compete for a state title in the event this year before spring sports were cancelled due to the spread of COVID-19.

All that success led to options for different college choices for Gassman, but in the end there was one that stood out among the rest.



Carlee Gassman (middle) signed her letter of intent with her family in attendance to run track at the University of Northern Iowa. Seated next to Carlee are her parents Tara and Brent Gassman. Standing (from left) is her sister Bree and her brother Cade.

“It honestly wasn’t that hard of a decision,” Gassman said. “After I visited UNI I already knew that’s where I wanted to

continue my adventures. I did have another college interested in my athletics and what was appealing about that one is I would've been able to compete in both track and soccer. Being able to play soccer and run track in college made the decision a bit harder.

"However, they didn't have my major and I would've had to take some rough paths to get to where I wanted to go. And with UNI they offered the exact major I wanted so I chose my education over athletics and I couldn't be happier. The only downfall is I'll be five hours away from my family."

Currently, Gassman is trying to get in as much training as she can as she begins her transition from the 300 hurdles to the 400's in college. There could also be other options for her once she arrives on campus.

"As of right now I'm not sure what they are going to have me do," she said. "I know 400 hurdles is my top event and I could be doing some long jumping and 800s. As of right now everything is on schedule and hopefully it stays that way."

"Right now I'm on the bubble of being able to score points for the team, so my top goal is to bring my time down in the 400 hurdles to be able to score points. I would also like to see what I can do in the 800."

Education was also a big factor in her decision and Northern Iowa seemed like the perfect fit for Gassman.

"UNI is not too big and not too small," she said. "It's location was also appealing to me and having extended family around there is an extra bonus. Another thing that makes UNI such a great fit is the major I want to go into. At UNI, they offer the nitty gritty specifics that go along to my major. I want to go into communication disorders specializing in American Sign Language. I imagine myself teaching children in the deaf community or even being an interpreter and they have a clear cut path for that."