

THE DAILY SHOW

COURTNEY WINTERS SETS THE TONE EACH AND EVERY DAY FOR ST. MARY'S BY WORKING HARD ON THE ICE AND KEEPING THE ATMOSPHERE LOOSE IN THE LOCKER ROOM

WORDS BY DAN GUTTENPLAN - PHOTOS BY MATT TEUTEN



IT'S MIDWAY THROUGH THE FIRST PRACTICE OF THE SEASON for St. Mary's, and the players are taking part in a routine three-on-three drill. Senior Courtney Winters soon finds herself in a familiar position, darting toward a loose puck in front of the goal with a chance to light the lamp.

With a flick of the wrist, she deposits the puck in the back of the net and immediately raises her arms in celebration. Watching the way she energetically rewards each of her teammates with a high-five and brief word of encouragement, you'd think she was rallying the troops in the midst of a state championship game.

"At practice, we always play mini-games, and we split into two teams," says teammate Courtney White. "Whichever team loses has to do push-ups. The winner gets bragging rights. You won't see Courtney doing push-ups very often. It's a serious drill the moment she gets on the ice."

That competitive spirit has been integral to Winters' game ever since she began playing hockey against the boys as an 8-year-old. And it was kicked up a notch when she arrived at St. Mary's as a freshman and immediately began sharing the ice with Abby Gauthier, the state's all-time leading scorer who now plays at Providence.

Sparked by Winters' drive to be the best, the Spartans have been unbeatable the past two seasons. Literally. St. Mary's went 51-0 in that stretch en route to a pair of Division 1 state championships. The St. Anselm recruit paced the team's offense last winter with 37 goals and 28 assists to finish as the leading scorer in Eastern Mass. and earn *Boston Globe* All-Scholastic honors.

"I want to win everything," says Winters, a 5-foot-2 forward. "Every drill in practice, every game of pick-up basketball with friends at the gym and every hockey game I've ever played. It's all about winning."

Winters always puts herself in the best position to win by making sure no one in the state is working harder than she is. The three-sport athlete (soccer, hockey and lacrosse) goes to the

COURTNEY WINTERS

School: St. Mary's // Class: 2010 // Position: Forward
Ht: 5-2 // College: St. Anselm // Nickname: Court

	Goals	Assists	Points	Team Record
Fr.	22	19	41	21-2-1
So.	29	33	62	25-0*
Jr.	37	28	65	26-0*

* WON DIVISION 1 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Coach Pagliuca on Winters' development as a player: "When Courtney came in as a freshman, she settled in behind all of the other great players on our team. She's always been able to score goals, but she's put tremendous work into her game in the defensive zone, and she's a much stronger skater. I'm looking forward to seeing what she can do now that it's her team."

"PEOPLE WANT TO FOLLOW HER."

gym every day in addition to attending practice with her school teams. She lifts weights, runs, plays basketball and does anything else she feels will translate into victories.

And though she's ultra-competitive in even the most minor of endeavors, Winters is also one of the most fun-loving members of the team and is quick to engage her teammates by showing off her less-than-serious side. For instance, when she tumbled to the ice at high speed during the first practice of the year, she enjoyed the slide along the ice with a smile on her face rather than getting frustrated.

She razzes teammates who wear red gloves that clash with the Spartans' school colors of navy blue, gold and white. But she happily takes as much abuse as she dishes out. Even the youngest players on the team have no qualms about making fun of Winters. She takes the most heat about her car — her grandmother's old 1993 Ford Tempo — and because she'll eat everything in sight that's not nailed down.

FAVORITES

TV SHOW: "Grey's Anatomy"

ACTOR: Mark Wahlberg

MUSICAL ARTIST: Kenny Chesney

RINGTONES: "Party in the USA"
by Miley Cyrus

ATHLETE: Jason Varitek

CLOTHING LINE: Forever 21

BOOK: "Eleven Seconds"
by Travis Roy and E.M. Swift

"Everyone makes fun of me for that," Winters says. "I work out so much, I never stop eating."

St. Mary's fifth-year coach Frank Pagliuca says Winters is one of the most personable, approachable star athletes he's ever coached.


"She's been blessed with an ability to put the puck in the net in the biggest games," Pagliuca says. "That's very visible to our freshmen, and that can be intimidating. But she bridges the gap in any differences in personality we may have on our team. She has such a strong personality, it makes people want to follow her. She doesn't care about goals or assists. The only thing she wants is for the team to get better."

Winters' leadership qualities spread far

beyond the hockey rink. She is a member of her school's student council and student admissions board. She also takes part in the Rachel's Challenge program, which is composed of student leaders nationwide who honor the legacy of Rachel Scott, who was killed in the Columbine school shooting in 1999. When she graduates from St. Mary's, Winters hopes to be remembered as an engaging person who helped others, not as a standout hockey player.

Her contributions on the ice, however, can't be understated. She recorded 88 goals and 80 assists in her first three seasons with the Spartans and helped lead the team to a 72-2-1 record. She also has a knack for rising to the occasion in big games for the perennial state title contenders. In last year's state championship game, Winters registered an assist in the team's 1-0 victory over Woburn at the TD Garden in front of more than 2,000 fans.

"There's no better feeling than winning a state championship," Winters says. "We work so hard all season to build to that last moment. Then you get to prove yourself."

If Winters is able to finish her career by leading the Spartans to a third consecutive state title, it won't come as a surprise to her teammates or coaches. She sets the tone for winning in everything she does. 



"THERE'S NO BETTER FEELING THAN WINNING A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP."