

AnnClaire MacArt's recruiting visit to Dartmouth was made possible by the generosity of the Class of 1974 and Peter H. Benzian '64 through the Athletic Sponsor Program.



Fueled for Success

Dartmouth swimmer AnnClaire MacArt did not grow up a baseball fan. Far from it.

“I didn’t like it at all,” the sophomore from Sacramento admits with a sheepish grin. “But when my brothers were going off to college I started watching more with my dad and I fell in love with it.”

On a beautiful spring day, although champing at the bit to get outside to watch the Dartmouth baseball team play a key Ivy League game, she speaks enthusiastically about her dream of giving professional pitchers and catchers, infielders and outfielders, an edge on the competition.

Within the sport’s rules.

By simply eating smarter.

MacArt has developed a keen interest in nutrition since arriving at Dartmouth and she knows first-hand the value in the athletic arena of eating right.

A freestyle specialist, MacArt set the school record in the 500 free as a freshman and broke her own mark this winter. She is quick to credit a change in her own nutritional habits for at least some of her development as a collegiate swimmer.

“I have been swimming since I was five, so I have been an athlete my entire life,” she says. “But I didn’t realize until coming to college how a big of a deal nutrition really is, and how often it is forgotten about or not looked at.

“I took it upon myself, especially in the past year, to look more into it. To kind of experiment to see what works and what doesn’t work.

“I’ve had blood work done to get a look at what’s happening inside. I’ve done stuff with a naturopathic doctor. I had some underlying things that were causing me to have fatigue and I studied how to fix that holistically, instead of going the conventional medicine route.”

As a DP2 intern during the spring, MacArt worked on helping to revamp the College’s annual Celebration of Excellence event, but that’s only part of what kept her busy. She has taken to heart something Donnie Brooks, the former associate AD for Peak Performance, told her when she stopped by his office to say she wanted some day to work in athletics and he signed her up to help the DP2 effort.

“Donnie Brooks told me, ‘I don’t want you just sitting in a chair all week,’” she says. “He said if I saw something I thought needed to be done to go do it.”

Which has led to the recipient of Winter Academic All-Ivy League recognition becoming an adjunct nutritionist of sorts for the Dartmouth athletic department, dovetailing her findings with those of Peak Performance nutritionist Claudette Peck

“The great thing with DP2 is I have been able to explore the whole department, not just what I’m doing with Katelyn (McPherson) or with Ali (Hart),” MacArt says. “I have talked with our head of strength and conditioning. I’ve gone to Boston twice now. Once was for lunch at InsideTracker (a science-based blood analytics concern in Cambridge), which is mostly for runners. Once was a baseball operations night.

“DP2 has given me the liberty to explore the things that I am interested in. And they have given me the chance to research nutrition and bring a student’s input into improving our snacks, and even our focus on nutrition.”

To that end, one of the initiatives she has been exploring is the possibility of incorporating a “fueling bar” at Dartmouth.



It’s been so special being on campus, not taking classes, but having my eyes opened to so many different things I am able to do.”



“It’s kind of like a concession area,” she explains. “You can go ‘swipe’ and get the right kind of snacks. I would love to see something like that get started here and maybe get even better snacks in the back of the weight room for after lift.”

MacArt feels lucky not only that DP2 has taken root over the past few years, but that her intern position has allowed her to explore and bring her interests and concerns to an interested audience.

“It’s cool because I get to the weekly DP2 meetings and have the chance to be an integral member of that,” she says. “They have said they are trying to get more funding for nutrition and asked if I can do research on it. I keep giving more ideas about how can we approach this, and have volunteered myself to help if we get something started.

“I can’t even tell you how fortunate I am,” she adds. “It’s been so special being on campus, not taking classes but having my eyes opened to so many different things I am able to do.”

Such as possibly work in the game that once bored her.

“I talked with the assistant GM of the Red Sox when I was at that baseball operations night about nutrition specifically,” she says. “It was real interesting to hear that even in the minor leagues they struggle with getting that health track started. You hear about Pablo (Sandoval) struggling to lose weight right now and that’s something that somebody should be able to come in and addresses. How can we help you be better be a better athlete just by tweaking something that you are eating? Look at Hunter Pence. He lives off of kale. He’s a madman but it’s true.”

Sandoval, of course, is the property of the Boston Red Sox but when MacArt was discovering baseball he played alongside Pence on the Bay Area team for which she now refers to herself as a “diehard” fan.

Where will the talented artist who once illustrated the cover of a children’s book on celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson be in 10 years if she could draw it up?

“I would love, love to work in any area of athletics, college or professional, hopefully baseball, in the future,” she says. “If I could combine nutrition with that it would be wonderful.

“I don’t want to say the word nutritionist, but maybe sports nutrition coach. Whatever you want to call it, doing it for the San Francisco Giants would be a dream come true.” **DP**