

REWRITING THE RECORD BOOKS

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When Jeff Carpenter decided to attend Rivier College, he set a few goals for himself: to earn a 2.0 or better in all of the classes in his major (nursing), to have a job lined up in his field before he graduated, to help the men's basketball team win a conference championship and to accumulate at least 1,000 rebounds.



Photos by Jodie Andruskevich

see what we had to offer. She said she would convince his family to come for a visit and the rest was up to us.”

“With some advice from my athletic director, Ann Galligan, I gave Rivier another chance,” says the Inter-Lakes High School graduate. “I met with Coach Morrisette and Coach Nucas and I was immediately sold on the school.”

While Carpenter was an all-state player in high school, finishing his career second in school history in scoring (1,174 points), it was the intangible qualities that attracted Morrisette. “The reason we wanted Jeff to be a part of our program was his presence,” says the coach. “He was smart, hard-working, wanted to learn and had a calming influence on everyone. He never panicked under pressure. We knew he would be a role model for this program.”

As talented and mature as Carpenter was, he needed to make some adjustments in his game to be successful in college. “I was no longer the biggest, strongest guy anymore,” recalls the 6’4” forward. “I came to college barely weighing 200 pounds and was 18 years old playing against men who had been in the weight room and were fully developed.”

For most people, coming close to these goals would be a great accomplishment. But Carpenter (*photo at left*) isn’t like most people. Not only did he become the first player in conference history to eclipse 1,000 rebounds (he finished with 1,001) and lead Rivier to its first conference championship in 2006-2007, he also graduated with a 3.12 GPA and lined up a job as a registered nurse in the Concord Hospital Intensive Care Unit.

What turned out to be a spectacular academic and athletic career at Rivier almost didn’t happen.

“Coach (David) Morrisette and Coach (George) Nucas began recruiting me in December of my senior year,” recalls Carpenter. “I already planned on going to another college, so when I received the recruitment letter and application from Rivier, I threw them out.” Luckily for both parties, that wasn’t Morrisette’s only attempt.

“I attended one of Jeff’s games again in February to look at another potential student-athlete on the other team and ran into an old friend, who was the director of athletics at Jeff’s school,” says Morrisette.

“I asked her if she would help me get Jeff to visit Rivier,” says Morrisette. “All I wanted was for him to



Jeff Carpenter and some of his classmates show off their diplomas at graduation.

“Midway through his freshman year he was tired of being pushed around,” says Morrisette. “He vowed to never let it happen again.” Carpenter added the muscle that he needed, bulking up to 225 pounds. He also added range to his jump shot.

“When I came in as a freshman I was lacking a jump shot,” admits Carpenter. “The coaches worked a lot with me to develop my outside game.”

While Carpenter has always had a quiet demeanor, his work ethic on and off the court made him the perfect role model for his teammates. “Jeff worked so hard that it rubbed off on everyone else,” says Morrisette. “He would talk to the younger players all the time about the importance of school work and putting in the time to make basketball a success.

“His leadership is unmatched at Rivier,” Morrisette says. “He never even had to say anything. Everyone looked up to him. But when he did say something, everyone listened.”

His teammates weren’t the only ones who looked up to the Meredith, N.H. native. Jeff’s sister, Blair, will be a junior at Rivier in September. Blair, who plays on the women’s basketball team and is studying elementary/special education, has been inspired by her brother’s accomplishments.

“I have always pushed myself in hopes of achieving some of the same success that JC has in basketball,” says the younger sibling. “When he excelled, it motivated me to do the same.”

While Blair didn’t choose to attend Rivier because her brother did, his presence has been invaluable to her career. “JC has not only helped me gain skill and knowledge about the game, but he has also been one of my biggest supporters,” says Blair. “He is one of the major reasons I have taken my game to such heights.”

Jeff’s work ethic has also made a lasting impression with his sister. “What impresses me the most is his dedication to be the best in whatever he does,” Blair says. “Whether he is on the basketball court, in the classroom or working in the hospital, JC always strives to be the best.” ■

Basketball Honors

- First player in Great Northeast Athletic Conference (GNAC) history with 1,500 points and 1,000 rebounds
- GNAC Rookie of the Year, 2005
- GNAC All-Conference, 2006 (third team), 2007 (second team), 2008 (first team)
- New Hampshire Division III Coaches Association All-Star, 2007 (first team), 2008 (first team)

Rivier Records

- Highest field goal percentage for a season, 60.9% in 2005
- Highest field goal percentage for career, 57%
- Most field goals made in a season, 198 in 2008
- Most offensive rebounds in a season, 97 in 2005
- Most offensive rebounds in school history, 330
- Ranked third in scoring (1,532) and second in rebounds (1,001) in school history

* After graduating with a bachelor’s in journalism from Roger Williams University in 1992, **NEIL NACHBAR** covered high school sports for weekly and daily newspapers in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, before becoming an associate editor at a weekly newspaper in Rhode Island. That experience led to a public relations and marketing position at a YMCA in Rhode Island, where Nachbar was responsible for the content and design of all marketing material, as well as writing press releases. Prior to writing articles for Rivier, Nachbar served as a writer/editor for Johnson & Wales University’s design and editorial services department. Nachbar lives in Nashua with his wife, Jennifer. When he’s not writing, Nachbar enjoys coaching volleyball, which he’s done for 13 years.