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TEAM PLAYER

Whether it's on the lacrosse field or in the community, Lisa A. Foligno '08 is conditioned to lead.

Sports have always played a significant role in Lisa Foligno's life. In fact, the Class of 2008 marketing major hails from a family of professional athletes. Throughout middle school and high school, Foligno competed in ice hockey and softball. Then she switched gears and tried out for the women's lacrosse team when she came to Canisius. Although she was relatively new to the game, Foligno was determined to play on the Canisius women's team, alongside her sister, **Cara '06**.

"Many of the players had more lacrosse experience than I did," recalls Foligno. "Therefore, outside of practice, I spent a lot of extra time on drills to improve my stick-handling skills."

Foligno's commitment paid off. She not only made the lacrosse team but the defensive mid-fielder grew to become a key contributor, a team captain and an award-winning player. In 2007, the National Strength and Conditioning Association named her an All-American. That same year, the Canisius lacrosse team presented Foligno with its Kathy Fiore Memorial Award, which recognizes the most dedicated player. Foligno was also named to the Metro Atlantic

Athletic Conference (MAAC) All-Academic Team (2006 and 2007). She just concluded her final year on the women's lacrosse team, which finished the season with a 9-9 record and made it to the MAAC semi-finals. Despite a valiant effort, the team lost to Marist, 15-10.

"Lisa is a heart and soul player," says Scott N. Teeter, head women's lacrosse coach. "She progressed into a tremendous leader and is someone on whom her teammates and coaches can rely."

Foligno takes her leadership role seriously.

"It's important to pay attention to the team as a whole and to the individual players," says Foligno. "Sometimes a younger player will have a problem that she needs to talk about. I am more than happy to be a good listener."

Foligno's leadership is not limited to the lacrosse field. As president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), she organized and led two new initiatives between the departments of Athletics and Campus Ministry.

"Lisa ensures a high level of participation in events and runs meetings in a very organized manner," says SAAC member **Katie L. Miranto '08**. "She energizes fellow student-athletes so that no matter what the goal, it is accomplished."



Head Coach Scott Teeter says Foligno made a positive impact every time she hit the field.

Sudbury Wolves. Foligno's two brothers also play hockey: Nick for the Ottawa Senators and Marcus for the Sudbury Wolves.

Foligno and her siblings were born in Buffalo and the area served as their "home base," until 1997, when their father accepted a coaching job with the NHL's Colorado Avalanche. But the Foligno sisters chose Canisius College for their educations because they were familiar with Western New York and its people. Foligno says Canisius also reinforces many of the values her parents instilled in her from an early age.

"I feel a personal need to perform service work because it fulfills me and helps me to grow in my Catholic faith," says Foligno, who recalls helping her mother deliver food for the Meals on Wheels Program. "I want to spend as much time volunteering as possible."

She already does. Foligno participated in several of the college's outreach projects and charity fund raisers, including the Thanksgiving Food Drive and the Cancer Relay for Life. She also participated in a service-learning project at the Niagara Lutheran Church Home, where she played bingo, sewed quilts and kept the elderly residents company. If time allows, Foligno volunteers with the Buffalo Sabres Alumni Foundation, an organization she has a particular affinity for considering her father's history with the team and its influence on her family.

Her father's hockey career required the family to move nine times to six different cities in the United States and Canada over the course of 18 years. It was the nature of the game and it came with challenges.

"The experience made me stronger and able to quickly adapt to new situations," says Foligno. "My parents and three siblings became my five best friends."

Foligno plans to pursue a career in sports marketing and athletic promotion. Most recently, the Department of Marketing recognized Foligno with its Academic Excellence Award. And no matter where her career takes her, Foligno's heart will remain close to her family, which now calls Sudbury, Ontario home.

As for Canisius, the college and its greater community are fortunate she decided to call Buffalo 'home' one more time. ■

Foligno volunteered at the Niagara Lutheran Church Home on Delavan Avenue, during the spring semester.



Foligno's negotiations with the 31 other SAAC representatives established community service requirements for each of the college's 16 sports teams. All student-athletes now participate in Canisius College Community Day and Habitat for Humanity. They must also volunteer regularly at a local soup kitchen. Foligno also collaborated with campus ministry to establish a volunteer program within Catholic Central School, the Jesuit San Miguel Middle School in Buffalo. Canisius student-athletes play sports with the students and assist them with their homework after school.

"As college students, it is our responsibility to share with younger kids the positive impressions that we received growing up," says Foligno. "If we can inspire them to think about going to college, that's even better."

Those who know Foligno say her enthusiasm is infectious.

"Lisa is very outgoing and vocal," says Traci E. Murphy, associate director of athletics, who supervises the SAAC. "She easily raises the level of intensity and excitement."

Foligno's passion on and off the field may be genetic. Her great uncle, Eddie Giacomini, was a popular goaltender for the NHL's New York Rangers during the 1960s and early 1970s. Many Buffalonians remember her father, Mike Foligno, a feisty forward for the Buffalo Sabres from 1982-1991. He now coaches the Ontario Hockey League's