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Midfielder Persists Through Obstacles

Olivia Mapplethorpe, 20, is no stranger to difficult experiences. From childhood teasing to a recent injury, the soccer player has come through various challenges while still maintaining a friendly positive attitude.

Mapplethorpe faced her first challenge early in life. When she was very young, her parents found out she had a condition called Marcus Gunn Jaw-winking Phenomenon. Mapplethorpe explained the condition simply.

“It means that when I’m chewing, my eye goes up and down,” she said, expressing the problems she encountered as a child. “I used to get made fun of [for the Marcus Gunn],” she said, “Kids can be really mean.”

The midfielder turned the other children’s teasing into constructive criticism and learned not to take herself too seriously.

“[The Marcus Gunn and the teasing] taught me the ability to laugh at myself,” Mapplethorpe said.

This skill paid off as Mapplethorpe is now able to dismiss any awkward moment and even make jokes about her discomfort. She admitted she is clumsy and joked that she falls a lot. Mapplethorpe said this had led to many embarrassing moments.

This clumsiness has not seemed to affect her athletic performance. In high school, she was a Willie Jenkins Soccer Award and All-Western Massachusetts Honor recipient. She additionally participated in the track and field team. She was on the Northeast-10 All-Rookie Team her first year at Pace. That year, she started 17 games and took part in 18 overall.

Her favorite individual moment on the field took place in a 2010 game against Assumption. She scored to tie the game with fifteen seconds left. Unfortunately, despite their best efforts the team lost in double overtime.

Last year, Mapplethorpe’s optimistic attitude was tested once again. In the first ten minutes of a game, Mapplethorpe broke her fibula bone. She was extremely upset. She was out for three months and missed the final three games of the season. Mapplethorpe was frustrated and more than ready to come back for the 2011 season with the Setters.

In the 2011 season, Mapplethorpe’s injury didn’t slow her down. In October, she scored two goals against Le Moyne contributing significantly to Pace’s win. Working together, the team advanced to the NE-10 quarterfinals before losing to Merrimack.

Mapplethorpe is looking forward to her senior year on and off the soccer field. She is proud of the team and its’ improvements over the past few years.

“I think we won one game freshman year,” she said but “we can play with the top teams now.”

After graduation next year, she hopes to work at a magazine, ideally becoming an editor one day. Her perfect job would be *People* magazine as she said they have a nice blend of different items, such as celebrity gossip, news, and entertainment stories.

“I’ve always known I wanted to write,” Mapplethorpe said, “I always hated math and science.”

Mapplethorpe has been offered an internship opportunity at *This Week on Martha’s Vineyard*, where she would be working with the editors and be published. She is considering the offer.

Mapplethorpe shows that while challenges might seem insurmountable, someone who is willing to work hard with a positive attitude can achieve great things.