

All in the family

All four Newmans are JMU varsity athletes

By CARRIE KLAMUT ('10)

Back in the '80s when JMU football uniforms were more mustard yellow than shiny gold and women were recruited to play both field hockey and lacrosse as two-sport athletes, Charlie Newman ('83) and Robyn Dunn ('85) found themselves sharing the same practice field.

"We met on the turf," says Robyn, now a Newman herself, pointing to a team photo of when Charlie played for JMU. "I married that big guy right there."

JMU athletics are sure happy she did. Charlie Sr. and Robyn realized they just could not leave the area and nestled into the Shenandoah Valley. Here they raised two children: not-so-little Charlie ('10) is now playing football for the same school where his parents tore up the turf, and Nikki ('13) joins the women's basketball team as a freshman this season.

From the very beginning, Charlie and Nikki became big fans of JMU. Their mom surrounded their house with gardens full of flowers in every shade of purple and yellow imaginable. There are countless childhood photos with Duke Dog, and Charlie and Nikki spent a lot of time on campus as children. "We went to all the home football games and most of the field hockey and lacrosse games when they were little," says Robyn.

JMU was not the only place little Charlie was running around. He spent many days on the high-school football field where his dad was an assistant coach. As he began to play and move through the school years, little Charlie was not so little, and colleges became interested in signing him. JMU coach Mickey Matthews was quick to start recruiting. "Charlie is now a cornerstone of our program. He is the hardest worker on the team and never makes any mistakes. He is just fun to coach," says Matthews.

Charlie is proud of the role model he has become for his sister, and he hopes his

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et al.: All in the family



The Newman family of Harrisonburg now includes four varsity athletes as Nikki joins the women's basketball team this fall. Left to right are Robyn ('85), Charlie ('10), Charlie Sr. ('83) and Nikki ('13).

outlook on being a college athlete will rub off: "I am truly passionate about the game, and I understand the time and effort you have to put into it. I have a huge respect for football, but I have grown to realize it is not my whole life."

A finance major, Charlie remembers that the change in the overall strength and size of the competition was not only on the field but also in the classroom. "Getting used to the workload of student-athletes is a real eye-opener, but Nikki will be fine. Our parents have always stressed that we are students first," he says.

With such a strong reputation as a family of JMU student-athletes, Charlie certainly did not show any lack of ability to succeed. He expects his sister will not disappoint.

"I was really excited for her to sign with JMU," he says. "I'll get to see her play a lot more. We definitely anticipated her playing at the college level, and she really has lived up to some big expectations already."

JMU women's basketball coach Kenny Brooks ('91) could not agree more. "We're so excited about having her on the team. She is the kind of player who makes other players around her better and that makes our program better."

Nikki's decision to play for Madison came easily. She started coming to JMU

open gyms when she was a high-school sophomore, and that's when she showed up on coach Brooks' radar as someone with a lot of potential. The Newmans have been big supporters of the JMU basketball program for many years. "The atmosphere is just so much fun," explains Nikki.

The Newman family will, without a doubt, be in attendance for every women's basketball game possible. And Nikki is certain that her mom has the wardrobe to cover each contest. "She has so many purple and yellow and gold earrings, she can wear a different pair to every game."

Watching their kids play today versus when parents Charlie Sr. and Robyn played almost 25 years ago, there have been many changes not only in styles of play but also in styles of uniforms. "The cool thing to see from our era is how the uniforms have evolved," says Robyn, who donned a skirt as a JMU lacrosse and field hockey player.

Now Charlie Sr. and Robyn will get to see their children model Madison uniforms a bit longer.

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2009 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

SEPT. 12	AT MARYLAND
SEPT. 19	VS. VMI
SEPT. 26	AT LIBERTY
OCT. 3	AT HOFSTRA*
OCT. 10	VS. RICHMOND* (Family Weekend, TV at noon)
OCT. 17	VS. VILLANOVA* (Homecoming, TV at 3:30 p.m.)
OCT. 24	AT WILLIAM & MARY* (TV at noon)
OCT. 31	AT DELAWARE* (TV at noon)
NOV. 7	VS. MAINE*
NOV. 14	AT MASSACHUSETTS* (TV at noon)
NOV. 21	VS. TOWSON*

Check [JMU Sports.com](http://JMUSports.com) for the most up-to-date times and information regarding Duke Club, tailgating and parking details.

Listen to [Dukes Sports Center](http://DukesSportsCenter) Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays on MadiZONE.

*CAA games