



ASU Archery bounces back, returns to glory

Campus' most successful team restarted after 11-year hiatus

by Steven Bohner

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When Ted Harden II came to ASU as a freshman two years ago, he was determined to bring back the most successful team in the history of Sun Devil athletics.

ASU Archery, a team responsible for 56 of the university's total 129 national championships, was cut from the intercollegiate slate in 1993 for financial reasons.

Harden II, nostalgic for the days of dominance over the archery community, reinvented it as a club sport in the spring of 2005. He was the only member.

"Traveling was not fun because I had to go by myself to all the places," he said. "But I made it there."

Harden II's interest in archery started in his backyard, where as a kid he would construct crude bows with sticks and whatever else he could find.

The business major started competing when he was 12 years old and hopes to stay involved in the sport after college.

"It's one of those things where you really can't be a professional," said Harden II, the club president. "But I could definitely see myself doing the national circuits for years after I get out of school."

By year two, Harden II managed to recruit students Lindsay Pian and Ashley Votruba, and the trio picked up the team right where it left off.

They each won his or her respective division at the regional championships, and Harden II and Votruba went on to become All-Americans.

"Suddenly everyone in the West went, 'Holy cow you guys have only been back for a year and you've got three Western Regional champions,'" said 40-year-old Kari Granville, ASU archery coach and chairwoman of the Collegiate Division National Western Region.

Kari Granville, a former rock band roadie and ASU alumna, has been named the Western Region Coach of the Year, and achieved level three coaching status, which makes her eligible to take the helm of U.S. teams competing internationally. The club's early success has sparked several transfers, and today it boasts 30 members, though only a handful attend the regular practices, Kari Granville said.

"People want to come here because they remember the legacy," she said. "Every Olympic team member from the past, except for one or two, came out of ASU. We have the weather to shoot all year long and the facilities out here to do it."

"There are some extremely talented coaches in Arizona as well."

One of the club's top newcomers is freshman Maggie Huff, the 40th ranked archer in the world.

Huff, an undeclared major leaning toward nursing, said she chose ASU in part because its archery club is larger than the sparsely populated UA club in her hometown of Tucson.

"I wanted the bigger road trips and all that fun stuff," she said.

Huff, who began shooting when she was 11, was not always at the top of her class.

"I was horrible the first year," she said. "I didn't hit a single target. I was shooting at birds. It was bad. My parents kept talking about how bad I was and so they signed me up for a JOAD (Junior Olympic Archery Development) class."

For Huff, the rest has been history. She became a Junior National Champion at the 2006 National Target Championship and has represented the U.S. at world tournaments.

But not all of the club's members are involved to compete at the highest level. Kolby Granville, a law student and the younger brother of Kari Granville, said competing is not the appeal for him.

"I just like shooting," he said. "The people that are the Olympic-type shooters kind of like shooting, but mostly they just can't stand to lose. And I'm not really that worried about it."

Other members enjoy it as a social vehicle.

"I really don't do much in college besides school," sophomore Andrew Reading said. "Not only is it a break from studying, it's a place to meet new people, and I'm honestly not good at meeting new people."

Reading, a double major in mathematics and computer science, said he can also apply his field of interest.

"It's mathematically appealing," he said. "You can predict exactly where [the arrow] is going to go."

And senior Mike Speck, a construction management major, likes to apply the sport on the hunting grounds.

Speck went on archery elk hunting trips with his father when he was younger and has been drawn from Arizona's hunting lottery system once himself.

"I think it's a lot more exciting compared to rifle hunting because you have to get so close," he said. "In archery hunting a long shot is considered 40 yards, whereas in rifle, it may be two or three hundred yards."

But one thing every member agreed on was the dominance of the mental game over the physical.

Even though archers are sometimes required to shoot targets up to 90 meters away - roughly the length of a football field - modern bows relieve much of the physical strain.

"Once you get the physical down, which is 10 percent of the sport, the rest of it is all in your head," Kari Granville said.

"The bow knows how to do the work. It's operator error that does everything else."

Members of the ASU Archery Club will compete in the U.S. Indoor Championships on Feb. 23-25.

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