

ALONG MIDDLE PATH

ANATOMY OF AN ATHLETE

Bugs and Backpacks

Max Olson '12 is the type of player every team needs to be successful. He is versatile and does whatever his coaches ask of him without reservation or complaint. In two years with the Lords lacrosse program, Olson has contributed both offensively and defensively by amassing eleven goals, five assists, and twenty-six groundballs. He also carries that do-everything mentality with him off the field—even if it means eating bugs.

While studying abroad in Vietnam last fall, Olson and some others were invited to a village, where a meal included a dish of larvae. Squeamish? Not Olson, who dug right in. "Actually, it wasn't that bad," he recalled. "If you didn't look at it, it kind of tasted like chicken."

Here are some other, more palatable facts about Olson and his open-minded nature.

Around the U.S. in 365 Days

When his family moved from New Jersey to suburban Seattle prior to Olson's entering sixth grade, they certainly took their time traversing the United States. Olson's parents pulled him and his two younger sisters out of school to spend the better part of a year backpacking at notable locations throughout the country. "At the time, I really didn't think much of it, but now it's a really significant thing from my childhood." His favorite destinations from the experience remain Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Canyon.

Shredding the Halfpipe

Growing up, Olson was a self-proclaimed "skate rat." Skateboarding has since given way to backpacking, fly fishing, and skiing as his favorite outdoor activities, but that doesn't mean he hung up his wheels for good. When the mood strikes, he still hits a skate park that is not far from his home on Bainbridge Island, Washington.

Art in the Family

Influenced by his mother, Michiko, a specialist in kirie—the Japanese art of paper cutting—Olson has always considered art among his hobbies. Even with a studio art minor, though, he doesn't see himself becoming a painter or a sculptor. Rather, any artistic endeavors he pursues professionally would likely be as a graphic designer or an architect.

The Gift of Game

Lacrosse had an unconventional introduction in the Olson family. Max's father, Steven, grew up in California with no exposure to the East Coast sport until middle school. One day while he and some friends were playing flag football, a man from Maryland pulled up, unloaded a pile of lacrosse equipment, and gave them a crash course on the rules. The pick-up game whetted Steven's interest in the sport, but he had limited opportunities to play until joining a club team at the University of California at Berkeley. Eventually, Steven passed the game on to Max by more traditional means when he bought him his first stick as a gift so they could play pass in the backyard.

Light on His Toes

Olson admits that his pre-game routine used to be littered with superstitions, but he eliminated those by focusing on one simple goal during warm-ups: keep his feet moving. "I feel like if I focus on moving my feet a lot, go hard, and work up a sweat, it will carry over to the game. And, it takes my mind off any little superstitious rituals." He also had the chance to show off his footwork when a friend talked him and two teammates into taking her choreography class last spring, which culminated with his performance debut in her recital.

