Triple threat: West just wants to win
Senior’s competitive edge extends to taekwondo, cross country, barrel racing and lacrosse

When Cora West played on a boys’ lacrosse team in seventh and eighth grade, her competitors were initially unaware that she was a girl. Back then, West’s hair swung out beneath her helmet, earning her the nickname “Viking Boy.”

West quickly established herself as the most aggressive player on the field. Once, after an opponent hit her younger brother A.J., West “ran across the field and trucked him” where I didn’t even touch the field was hard for me,” West said. “Lacrosse was my identity, and football isn’t even sports overall with her attitude and demeanor,” cross-country coach Rachel Fabre said. “She’s just super authentic in everything she does.”

“Being on the sidelines for so many games where I didn’t even touch the field was hard for me,” West said. “Lacrosse was my identity, and I couldn’t do it.” After working to win her spot on the starting lineup, West was devastated that a non-injury had put her on the bench. She was so scared of making mistakes that she started to play timidly. This lack of aggression ultimately quelled the very thing that drove her success in the first place. Fueled by her desire to regain her starting position, West increased the intensity of her training the following summer. Her workouts included exercises such as 100 wall ball throws, and if she made a single mistake, she would restart the drill.

West has fire and tenacity — she just instantly pushes everyone to be better,” girls’ lacrosse coach Amanda Bencomo said.

“West has been on the starting lineup ever since and is now one of the team captains.”

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With so many athletic opportunities, West ultimately decided to play lacrosse in college. At first, West toured DII universities, excited by the promise of high-level competition, yet she discovered that the athletes at these schools focused their entire lives on sports. She wanted time to pursue her other interests and focus her studies on pre-physical therapy.

Numerous St. John’s athletes find a path to playing in college through DIII schools, but West found that these programs lacked the competitive spirit she craved. “The girls didn’t have that fire that I was looking for,” West said. “I’m a competitive person. I want to win.”

So, on Nov. 8, she signed a National Letter of Intent with the University of Findlay, a DII college in rural Ohio. For West, Findlay presented the perfect combination of sport-life balance. “I loved the coaches and the girls,” West said. “The rest is history.”