Hannah Anderson: A walk into a new direction.

Purdue University is a place where there are many high expectations of academics and athletics. There is an abundance of athletes who earn their positions to get a full ride and play at Purdue. One of the more elite programs at Purdue is the women’s basketball team. Most of the girls on the team have earned a full ride coming straight from high school. There is one girl who stands out among the rest by joining the team in a different way. She isn’t known as an All-American or anything of that sort, but she has left her mark here at Purdue. This one person I am speaking of is Hannah Claire Anderson.

Hannah is only the 11th invited walk-on at Purdue University. She started her career as a manager and then was given a position on the team. She joined the team for the 2000-2001 season. Not only was she walking on into a great program, but she was taking the task at hand to be a part of an incredible dynasty. She has already left her mark by becoming a walk on, which is rare in a program of Purdue’s caliber. Hannah is now a senior at Purdue University, and has been confronted with a great deal of experience from the previous years.

Before exploring the time Hannah has spent at Purdue, she had a significant amount of awards in her high school years. Hannah attended West Lafayette High School and was a three sport athlete in volleyball, basketball, and track. She not only was a stand out in her athletics, but she had her excellence in the class room as well. She was named to the all-conference team and was MVP for basketball while also being a part of the national honor society and her senior class vice president. Hannah has many accolades to be proud of while she took her step into the world of basketball to a higher level.

Growing up so close to Purdue in West Lafayette Hannah always loved basketball. “I always enjoyed coming to see the women’s basketball team play.” She started playing in 3rd grade and just developed a passion for the game. There wasn’t any pressure growing up with Hannah and her family to attend any particular college for basketball. While it was a tradition in the Anderson household to attend Purdue she decided to attend on her own.

Hannah is also known as, Nanner, a short combination of Hannah banana. “My team mates look for me to guide them for support and motivation.” She knew that, walking on to a team like Purdue, she had to look at her playing time realistically. She didn’t have any expectations as far as her future in college. All Nanner wanted was to be a part of a team that she admired so much growing up. She had no idea that she was only the 11th walk-on until an article came out in a media guide. When she found that information out she was flattered, once she was given a full ride, she couldn’t ask for anything more because her education is so important to her. She was getting the best of both worlds for basketball and school.
While Hannah may not be the all-star on the team, going down with a torn ACL still held her back from her own personal goals. “I want to be able to go out there and do what I can and to my best ability.” She didn’t like her torn ACL, as no one would, but she was determined to come back strong and ready to go. Hannah had the perseverance to become the player she was and wants to become. She has an extremely good work ethic and is willing to do anything to get to the top.

Whether or not Hannah sees it she is a role model for many kids. There are kids out there who want to be good and get to college but just can’t get over the edge to do it. Some of these kids want to get into a highly ranked basketball program but just can’t. If they continue to work hard and are dedicated, then they may have a chance. “It just shows that hard work pays off”, says Hannah Anderson who is willing to do what it takes to keep basketball in her life for at least some time.

There isn’t any aspiration for WNBA in Hannah’s mind, but she sure does want her academic background to play a role. With her major in communications, Hannah is hoping to go into sports marketing or sports management. While she isn’t going to play in the big time league, she may just be calling out some big names in the future.

Hannah still has one season ahead of her as a Boilermaker. She wants to make this a good year with some excellent goals. Since Purdue has such an outstanding record for excellence, a Big 10 title is always a goal. Not only is winning the conference in mind for her but she looks forward to going down to that National Championship title game. Sounds like a long shot for many student athletes, but it’s happened before, so there isn’t any reason why it can’t happen again.

By Erin Lawless, August 6, 2003