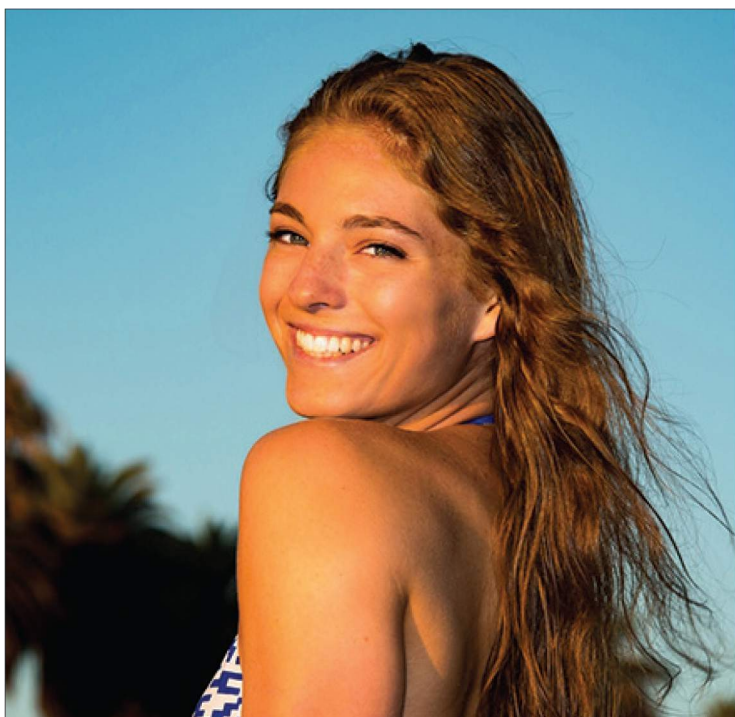


SPONSORED FEATURE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Michelle Mason. Photo courtesy of Thomas Paul Ranney

MICHELLE MASON

Spiking on the Sand

BY JONATHAN KANE

Michelle Mason, a Wood River High School senior carrying a 3.5 grade point average, credits her family's support with making her who she is today.

Mason loves participating in sports, especially surfing, track and volleyball. Next year she will play both beach and indoor volleyball on a scholarship at MiraCosta College in San Diego.

"Athletics have taken me so much further in life than I thought I could ever accomplish," Mason said. "Sports has always been my drive—getting me through everything. When I get up in the morning, it drives me hard."

Although volleyball is her passion, track is Mason's cross-training sport. She started at age 10, and today she competes in the 100-meter sprint, the 200-meter sprint and the 4-by-100 relay.

"Sprinting is always a now-or-never proposition," she said. "You're out there to prove to yourself that you can do it and in 12 seconds you don't have a lot of time. I started out doing well and winning and that made my dad proud. He taught me how to do well and that made me want to work hard at it and it pushed me to keep doing it."

Since starting at Wood River High School, Mason has won district twice in a row and has qualified for state every year. Her best place was fourth in the 100 meters, "but I plan to win state this year," she said.

She started volleyball in the sixth grade in Hawaii while her mother, a navy captain, was stationed at Pearl Harbor. Before moving to the Wood River Valley, by her own account, Mason has moved every two years of her life until her parents retired here in Idaho.

"I played [volleyball] with my dad and his friends and I got really good. I was always excited for training and practice, and once you are really excited for those things, you know you love the game."

"Because I'm 5 feet 6 inches, I'm not the average height for the sport, which is more like 5 feet 9 inches to 6 feet. But I'm very athletic and I felt that I was proving something that it's not about height but how hard you are willing to push yourself to get there."

Mason loves the sport's fast-paced action.

"You're on your toes all the time, diving for balls and then hitting it hard," she said. "I'm definitely a defensive specialist because of my speed due to track."

"My goal is to play Division I as a libero, a defensive specialist who always plays in the back row and whose job is keeping the ball in play."

Mason prefers beach volleyball to indoor. She plays every summer on a club team near San Diego.

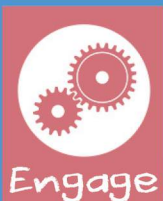
"They are worlds apart and not just because there are two on a team, as opposed to six. You have to be a much better athlete in beach volleyball. Plus, you have to play with the wind and hit the ball at a certain place at a certain time. Not everyone on indoors can play it and it's more fun."

tws

This **Student Spotlight** brought
to you by the
Blaine County School District



Inspire



Engage



Educate



Empower

Our mission is to **inspire, engage, educate, and empower** every student.

BLAINESCHOOLS.ORG