

New Mexico Activities Association

Student-Athlete Spotlight

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Mondragon Finds Success in Different Avenues at Taos HS

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

One may never guess that the soft-spoken Taos High School senior, Mariah Mondragon, radiates so much passion for her school, classmates, teammates and community but that passion shines in everything she does on the volleyball court, as a manager of the softball team and as one of the Tigers' student athletic trainers.

Mondragon's roots run deep in the Taos community, living in the Arroyo Hondo area her whole life. In fact, all of her family members have graduated from Taos High School. As the oldest of three, Mondragon wants to keep that tradition going and set a good example for her younger siblings.

"It is really important to me to set a good example for my two younger siblings. I know they are watching me so I do my best to show them the right way to do things, from hard work to school. I want them to grow up and be successful."

Mondragon has found success in the classroom and on the court over the past three years. Currently, she plays volleyball for the Tigers as a middle blocker. Mondragon says being a part of the volleyball team is something she cherishes.

"I didn't start playing volleyball until I was a sophomore. I started out on the C-Team and by the end of the season I was playing on the junior varsity. As a junior, I split time between JV and varsity and this year (her senior season), I'm a varsity member. I really enjoy the sport and my teammates. We all support each other and work well together. So far, this year has been amazing."

Mondragon also has goals not just for herself but for her team and teammates this season, as she explains, "I want to improve on my passing skills, hitting and blocking. I want our opponents to know that they are playing the Tigers and that I'm a player they have to worry about. As a team, we want to make it to state and really set the tradition for years to come with this program. To have a successful year would mean a lot to us. To prove we are a good program not just in our district but at the state level as well."

In addition to volleyball, Mondragon is also involved with the softball team, but not as a player. After the Tigers hired a new coach a year ago, Mondragon saw an opportunity to be part of the team.

"Last year I found out that we had a new coach so I convinced my friend to go out and be the manager for the team. The players really welcomed me as part of the team and I have built some great relationships. I like to help Coach and the players in any way I can to make the team a successful program."

Taking advantage of opportunities throughout her high school career is one way Mondragon has really soaked in the whole experience. When she heard that Taos was offering an Athletic Training class, she knew it was just another opportunity to be



involved and help her school. She never imagined, though, where it would take her.

“When I heard that an Athletic Training class was going to be offered here at school it sparked my interest. As I got more involved, I found that I had a passion for it. We learned the basic first aid skills and CPR. Taking the class also got me involved in HOSA. Last year, I took third at State and competed in Nationals in Tennessee.”

She continued by saying, “No one from New Mexico placed at Nationals but it was a great experience and I was honored to present New Mexico and Taos High School. I’m looking forward to going back this year and hopefully placing this time. This year, we will start to help the school Athletic Trainer on the field with some of the other teams and I think that experience will help be prepare for the state and national HOSA competition. It is nice to be able to help others. When I have a team on the volleyball team twist an ankle or get injured I’m able to assist them and it’s a good feeling”

Carrying a 3.1 GPA, Mondragon feels she is being called to Athletic Training and plans to study sports medicine in college.

“I want to go to college and study athletic training. I want to stay in-state so I’m really looking at the University of New Mexico. I’m looking forward to going out and making something of myself. My education is the most important thing in my life. Without a good education, your options are really limited and I want to have the best opportunities possible.”

In addition to playing volleyball, managing the softball team and her athletic training duties, Mondragon also has a job outside of school.

“I currently work Subway but I have held a job in some sort of facet since I was in middle school. It is nice to have my own money to spend on what I want or need. I don’t like asking my parents for money so having a job allows me the freedom to buy what I want when I need it.”