

2012 BFS High School Female Athlete of the Year

Jessica Marie Staggs is one powerful young woman

What do cheerleading, track and field, basketball, powerlifting and academic excellence have in common? Answer: Jessica Marie Staggs, the recipient of our annual award for exceptional high school student athletes.

Staggs just graduated from Wyandotte High School in Wyandotte, Oklahoma, the school that we named the 2012 BFS High School of the Year and featured in our May/June 2012 issue. Just as Wyandotte has a program that produces success in many sports, Staggs' high school experience is characterized by all-around excellence in the classroom as well as in athletics.

Staggs completed her studies at Wyandotte with a 4.03 GPA and ranked fourth in her class. She's now enrolled at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in Miami, Oklahoma, in a two-year program of childhood education development with an immediate goal of obtaining a two-year certificate in that area. "I love kids, and hope to eventually be able to open a daycare center," says Staggs.

As for athletics, Staggs has always been involved in sports. She competed in nearly all the sprint events available to her; she excelled in the long jump, with a best jump of 15 feet 10.5 inches, making it to the state meet this year, and earned a position in

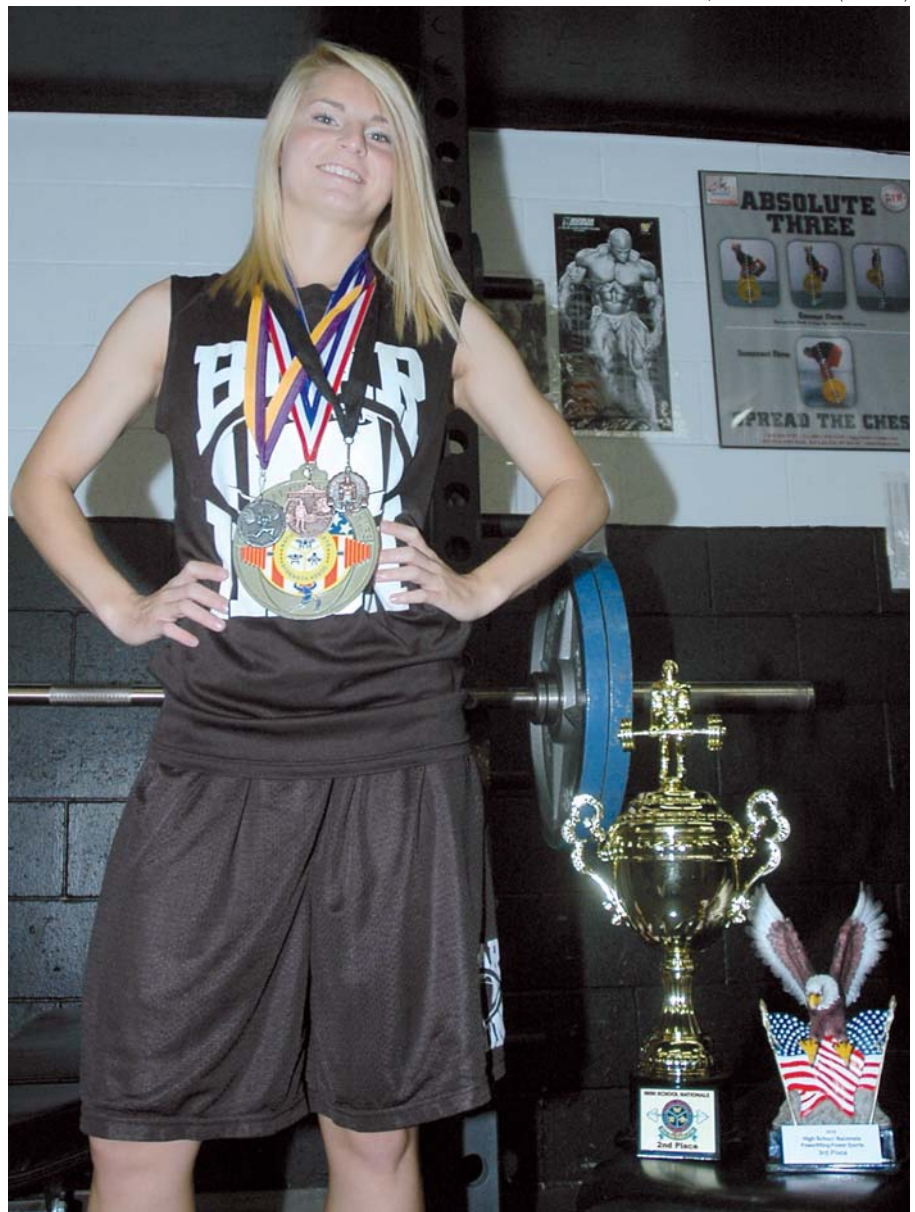


Photo: Jim Ellis, *Miami News-Record* (Oklahoma)

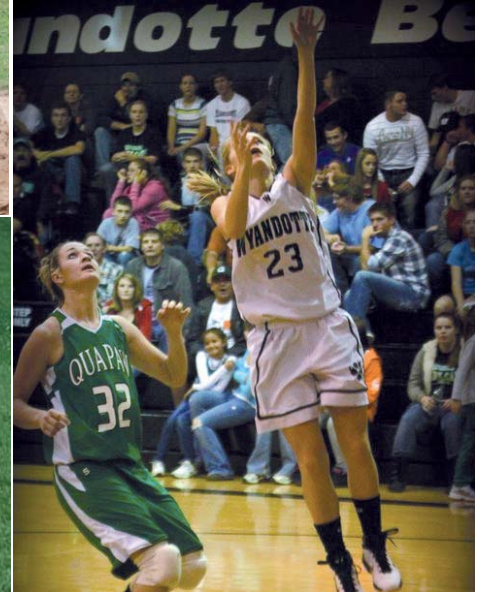
the 4x100m relay. She also played on the basketball team and supported all the teams as a cheerleader. And then

there's powerlifting.

Staggs had participated in the BFS program to condition her for other



Staggs is a multi-sport athlete who has competed in track, basketball and cheerleading at Wyandotte High School.



sports, although Wyandotte coach Scott Martin recalls that she appeared “frail” to him when she first came into the weightroom about a year ago. As soon as Staggs started lifting weights, Coach Martin observed that she rapidly became extremely strong. Although Staggs admits that at first she was concerned about getting bulky, this was not the case – in fact, after a year of training her bodyweight only fluctuated within five pounds – and she found she liked the lifts. Asked about the contrast between cheerleading and powerlifting, Staggs replies, “In cheerleading you have to be peppy and upbeat, and in powerlifting you need to get angry – it’s a very different mindset.”

When Staggs thought she was good enough to compete, she found

that the only way to do that was to compete with the boys team. So that’s what she did, and she became the first female competitor in the Oklahoma Football Coaches Association powerlifting meet in March 2012, taking fifth in the 123-pound class with a 525 total. Eventually she joined the Natural Athlete Strength Association (NASA), a drug-free organization that holds powerlifting and other strength competitions.

With NASA she has competed in the 114-pound bodyweight class (her natural weight, as the boys meet she competed in started at 123 pounds), and at the national high school championships she set national records in the squat (209 pounds) and bench press (104 pounds), then deadlifted 225 pounds for second place overall.

All these lifts are performed with the assistive gear used in many powerlifting meets. She also power cleaned 115 pounds and power pressed 104 pounds as part of a NASA competition called “power sports,” in which she is a national champion. In training, Staggs’ best lifts now include a 230 squat and a 225 deadlift for 7 reps. Staggs plans to continue in the sport and says that part of her attraction to it is that all the competitors are very supportive of each other.

In describing her experience living in Wyandotte, she says that it is a typical laid-back small town where many of the kids grow up together from elementary through high school. “Everybody knows everyone and knows each other’s business,” says Staggs.



Photo: Jim Ellis, Miami News-Record (Oklahoma)

Staggs has established national records in powerlifting, and has squatted and deadlifted more than 100 pounds over her body-weight.

Asked if school was easy, she said that her success is due not so much to a grueling homework schedule as it is to her practice of paying full attention in class. Outside the classroom she spends much of her free time on outdoor activities such as camping,

canoeing and rafting; she also has been involved with Wyandotte’s Student Council, the Future Farmers of America and the National Honors Society. Television is not a big influence in her life, and she likes to cook and listen to country music. She has

two brothers (Rocky, age 26; and AJ, age 13) and one sister (Abigale, age 20); all are athletic. She likes spending time with her family, which is a good thing, as she has 19 cousins and they frequently get together for family activities.

Martin describes Staggs as an overachiever who makes the best use of her talents. “Every success that Jessica has achieved, she’s had to work hard for – nothing has come easy.” Her motivation and discipline have paid off at extremely high levels, both in athletics and in the classroom, and BFS is proud to name Jessica Marie Staggs as the 2012 BFS High School Female Athlete of the Year. **BFS**

Staggs is a well-rounded student athlete who carried a 4.03 GPA and is working on a certificate in childhood education.



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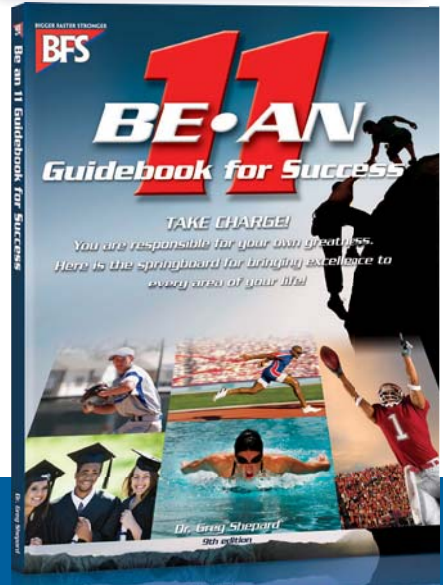
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