

# sports

# 8

Mason's men's golf team placed eight overall at the McLaughlin this past weekend. It was held at the par 70, 6,730-yard Red Course at Bethpage in Farmingdale, N.Y.

## Rookie Sensation: Noelle Fanella

*Freshman Volleyball Player Receives Top CAA Honors*

**BRIAN CHAN**  
Interim Asst. Sports Editor

Seven years ago, Noelle Fanella failed to make the middle school volleyball team. Now, not only does she represent George Mason University at the collegiate level, but the freshman has also taken great strides to land herself the CAA Rookie of the Week honor for last week's top-notch performances.

With the conference matches coming up, Fanella's all-around ability has been integral to her early success. The outside hitter currently has 56 kills, 69 digs and 11 blocks.

Fanella first encountered volleyball in middle school as a sixth grader where she tried out for the seventh grade team. After not making the team that year, the Illinois native tried out again, this time with different results.

From there, she continued with volleyball at Lake Park High School. Fanella's resume consists of two MVP honors as well as the All-Upstate Eight Conference and All-Area honorable mention during her four years as a varsity player.

Fanella said that her most memorable match was the last of her high school career when her journey took her eastward to Fairfax. Fanella leads in games played among Mason freshmen with 32.

"College is more of a mental game than high school," Fanella said. "There is also the obvious that the competition level in college is much higher, so it has and still is taking adjustments to the

style of play."

In only her second collegiate match, Fanella recorded a team-high with 10 kills against George Washington University in a losing effort. Against Liberty University at the Mason Invitational earlier this month, Fanella posted 11 kills and an even more impressive .348 hitting percentage. She fell one dig short of completing her first double-double.

Last week, Fanella was named CAA Rookie of the Week after scoring 40 digs, 28 kills, 11 assists and five blocks. In her four starts last week, the team, which currently stands at 4-6, won the first three before falling to Charlotte in a highly competitive five-set match.

In that loss, Fanella recorded her first career double-double with 11 kills and 10 digs. Her goal as a Mason volleyball player is to keep a positive attitude and to provide her team with every ounce of her efforts to help win matches.

With volleyball as her primary sport, Fanella also played softball for her high school team. In addition to playing softball, she also enjoys watching softball and baseball, especially when there is a bitter rivalry between Cubs and White Sox fans in Illinois. Fanella also enjoys watching basketball

despite claiming that she is "absolutely terrible at the sport."

It is evident Fanella has provided Mason volleyball with an immediate spark. With a bright future ahead, Fanella looks to continue doing what got her here in the first place. The early bird gets the worm.

For Fanella, she is the bird.



Freshman Noelle Fanella was the CAA Rookie of the Week this week.



Colleen Killiany contributed to Mason's win over Howard University 9-1 last Tuesday.



Defender/Midfielder Fro Adu dribbles the ball through various Richmond players in their victory this past Saturday, Sept. 20.

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