

#17 #16



Renee Junna is a sophomore defender from Canberra, Australia.



Kyleigh D'Spain is a freshman midfielder from Tyler.



Renee Junna and Kyleigh D'Spain put their feathers up by Hartley field.

# Beyond the field

Women's Apache soccer members explain the ups and downs of being a student athlete

Story and Photos  
By Grace Stone  
Multimedia Journalist

From the field to the classroom the TJC women's Apache soccer team strives to succeed. Two TJC team members, Kyleigh D'Spain, midfielder, from Tyler, and Renee Junna, defender, from Canberra, Australia, explain how student athletes overcome the trials and tribulations of being a collegiate athlete.

Student athletes deal with struggles on and off the field. Having a good balance between school and sports is important.

"It's tough," Junna said, "especially during our season, because we're traveling and have a lot more commitments to the sport and the team."

The women's team has traveled to Lufkin, Athens, and Paris, Texas, and will soon travel to Corsicana, and Mt. Pleasant.

Although finding time to study and complete assignments can be tough for student athletes due to the responsibilities they have, finding productive techniques to help stay on task is essential.

D'Spain shares her best tips for staying efficient.

"Make a list and prioritize assignments that are the most important and take the longest and then get those done first," D'Spain said.

Many of the student athletes at TJC are international. Junna is from Australia and has had a unique experience transitioning into the life of a student athlete.

"The student athlete part back home is very separated," Junna said. "We have our schooling system, and then you've got the club teams or professional league, where people can come play their sport while getting a degree."

Teammates in collegiate sports spend extensive amounts of time together. Between practice, games and sharing dorms, the athletes are able to form connections with their coaches and team.

"You just always assume that you're gonna be close to your teammates, but I feel like we've really gotten to the next level of closeness," D'Spain said. "We really feel like a family."

Being an international collegiate athlete can be an overwhelming and difficult process.

"Don't close off because honestly you don't have a family to rely on," Junna said. "I want to say you got to keep your head up and you're doing it for a reason that's why you're here."

Sports and athletic culture varies from country to country. Certain countries are more competitive in certain sports than others.

"I would say the teams that I've played for here have definitely been a little bit more competitive than what I'm used to back home," Junna said. "The professional leagues are pretty even."

The women's Apache soccer team is currently undefeated and ranked No. 2. The next game for the women's team is 1 p.m. Oct. 20 in Mt. Pleasant.

Concordia	W
Texas Southmost College	W
Jacksonville College	W
Blinn College	W
Eastern Florida State College	W
Angelina College	W
Trinity Valley CC	W
Paris Junior College	W
Navarro College	TIE
Northeast Texas CC	Oct. 6
Trinity Valley CC	Oct. 13
Paris Junior College	Oct. 17
Navarro College	Oct. 20
Northeast Texas CC	Oct. 24

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