



Former US Women's National Team member Megan Schnur has verbally committed to play with the Colorado Rush Women for the 2014 W-League season!

Schnur, a member of the USWNT and of both the Sky Blue FC and MagicJack of the former WPS league, has recently moved to Colorado where she is assisting with the U13 Colorado Rush girls.

Skyler Menke, a midfielder for the Colorado Rush U13 Azul girls recently had the chance to interview Megan on a multitude of topics.

#### Quick Facts

Name: Meghan Schnur

Current Professions: Physical Therapist, Colorado Rush Soccer Coach, SoccerProfessional

Age: 29

Height: 5'6

Weight: 135

Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA

College: University of Connecticut Center-Midfielder/Captain

College Degree: Master's of Science in Physical Therapy

Highest Level Played: U.S. Women's National Team

Professional Teams Played For: Sky Blue FC and MagicJack

Favorite Soccer Athlete: (of all time) Kristine Lilly; Steven Gerrard. (now) Christine Sinclair; Marco Reus

Favorite Professional Soccer Team: Manchester United

Favorite Non-Soccer Athlete: Sidney Crosby (Pittsburgh Penguins)

Favorite Animal: my dog, Rooney

Favorite Music: too many choices

Favorite Movie: Miracle or Dirty Dancing

### **What age did you start playing soccer?**

Picked up a ball around the age of 5

### **Did you play any other sports growing up?**

I was a member of a swim team early on, but then focused mostly on soccer and track for middle school and high school.

### **What age did you specialize and start playing soccer only?**

I was lucky to have a very supportive track coach during high school that allowed me to make sacrifices for soccer but remain competitive in both sports. It was ultimately my decision when I specialized at the end of my sophomore year. (15 years old)

### **When did you know that you really wanted to play for the Women's National Team?**

I always "wanted" to play for the BEST TEAM in the world, but for the longest time my role models were the boys of Manchester United. It was not until the gold medal success of the USWNT at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games that I realized who the best team in the world was and what it meant to represent your country. That was when it began.

### **Who are some of the greatest positive influences on your life both on and off the soccerfield?**

Hmmm. Its so many people. I have been blessed to meet some of the most amazing influences along this journey and each one of them has played their role in developing me as both a soccer player and person. From my youth it would be my family, and not just my immediate family- but the entire Schnur and Hamilton clan. No one has ever cheered more or supported me throughout my successes and hardships than them. Throughout college its was not only teammates but my extended family. From the "tough talks" with my assistant coach Sarah Barnes about anything and everything on and off the field to my head coach Len Tsantiras for putting up with my stubborn naivety and challenging me to excel as not only a top-level futbol

player but even more so, a leader.



**Who do you consider your best mentor**

**or mentors out of your teammates on the National Team?** Best mentor: hands down, Christie Rampone (at right with Megan and the U13 CO Rush Girls). I was lucky enough to build many friendship with my teammates through the years, but to me a true mentor is someone who teaches you without even knowingly doing so. Christie is an exemplary professional with boundless experience and the chance to practice day in and day out with her during my first Sky Blue FC season, proved a defining moment in the growth of me as a player. She was there to help me out learning a brand new position (left back). I had never played defense in my life and now I was facing Marta in one-v-one situations. The moments playing alongside her have been invaluable, and I am grateful for her friendship to this day.

**Do you have any siblings and if so what are they doing now?**

I have a younger brother, Andrew. And, he has definitely surpassed me on the “cool” spectrum. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 2012 and is preparing to receive his wings as a Navy Pilot this May.

**What do your parents do for a living?**

I come from a family of academics. My mother has been an elementary teacher over the years, both first and third grade. My dad is presently the head administrator at Butler High School. (Andrew, dad, and I were all graduates of Butler High)

**What is the best your U. Conn. college team ever finished?**

In 2003 (my freshman year) we finished second-best to UNC in the NCAA final game. Following that, my senior year (2007) we lost in overtime to FSU during the NCAA elite-8.

**At what point in your career did you have the most pure fun playing soccer?**

The entire time. Of course there were good times and tough times throughout my career, but all the

while it was the “fun” and “joy” for the game which kept me stepping back on the field. I had the opportunity to play in massive stadiums, in foreign countries, with some of the most talented players the world has to offer, and all the while it was because of a game I learned to love when I was 5— how else would you define fun?



**What do you believe is the biggest key to keeping soccer FUN playing at a very high level?**

The key is to remember why you began playing in the first place. You can have self and team expectations, it is nearly impossible to reach the highest level without holding yourself to a higher standard than others might even hold for you. But it's important to keep perspective and remember what “FUN” stood for on that first day. One of the greatest all time said it best, “Somewhere between the athlete you've become and the hours of practice and the coaches who have pushed you, is a little girl who fell in love with the game and never looked back— play for her.” -Mia Hamm

**What have been some of your biggest frustrations during your soccer-playing career?**

Falling short. Whether it was the state cup game final I lost as a teenager, the high school state final game we lost to Downington 2-0, the missing out on an NCAA championship, or the feeling that if not for an injury maybe I could have battled for the opportunity to represent my country in that childhood dream of an Olympics; Sometimes I mull over the “almosts” instead of being content with just having gotten the chance, but to me contentment leads to mediocrity- and I never wanted to be mediocre.

**Would you have done anything different during your career or life in general if you “knew then what you know now?”**

I would have become a forward! They have the life... run now and again, pretend to defend, and score goals for a living. Yep, sounds good to me.

**Rumor has it that you are the only member of the National Team to earn your Master's Degree while playing. How in the world did you balance the academic rigors of physical therapy school with the demands of playing soccer at the highest level?**

Oddly enough, I did not know any other way. Being in a house of academics, the balance of sport and school was not just a suggestion it was a demand. I always knew that one day soccer would no longer be my identity and that it was important to prepare myself for that next step. Safe to say

during the process many a soccer trip (be it Portugal, Sweden, or every month to California) was filled with all day training followed by a late night research paper. I became a regular at the nearby coffee shops on road trips and when back at UCONN it helped that my teammate and best friend was a preMed major. We might as well have had a reserved table in the student-athlete center.

### **What made you want to become a physical therapist?**

In high school I suffered a knee injury that introduced me to my first physical therapist, Ron Klingensmith. He not only dealt with getting me back on the field but continued to follow my career, show up at games, check in on me when I went away to university, and became a mentor as I contemplated pursuing physical therapy.

### **What do you believe is the best thing a serious young soccer player can do to improve their skills on their own time?**

This may sound too simplistic, but find a soccer ball and get creative. Young players do not need extravagantly outlined drills, they simply need a ball and the freedom to play. For me, its about promoting comfort with the ball at your feet (both feet!), using every surface, trying the new move you saw on TV, and play, play, play. As a kid, I used to make games up using trees as defenders or walls as teammates (they make perfect passers, just double check before using mom and dad's garage doors. take my advice).

### **We know that soccer players and especially female players are highly susceptible to knee ACL injuries. What can they do to help mitigate the risk of a catastrophic knee injury?**

Injuries will happen, that is a fact of sport, but if we can do a better job as coaches and healthcare professionals to identify players who may have an increased risk of injury due to weakness, incoordination, or imbalances then just maybe we can reduce the likelihood of seeing them in our therapy clinics.

### **What are your current hobbies to help fill the void of no longer playing the game of soccer at the highest level?**

I am not sure the void will ever be filled completely, but the ability to remain engaged in the game via coaching has helped immensely. I have gotten the chance to help out with an incredibly talented and driven group of young ladies this Spring. The love and excitement they exude for the game and hearing their own aspirations merely reminds me all over again of why "the beautiful game" has been such a pillar in my life. Beyond coaching, I enjoy snowboarding, camping, hiking, and virtually any outdoor adventure. Next hobby to learn- ice hockey.

### **What are you most grateful about what "The World's Greatest Game" has given to you?**

So much of who I have become and the route I have taken to reach this waypoint has been because of my experiences through soccer. It is hard to encapsulate that gratitude into one message. Soccer has provided me with challenges, leadership, triumph, failure, joy, sadness, direction and love - it has been a journey shaped by little moments routed in constant personal growth, for which I am forever indebted.