

# Determination to Excel

Rowing's Shay Seager Pushes Herself to the Top

By Tim Miguel



Shay Seager

**T**here was a time in middle school when Shauna "Shay" Seager would finish last when running a mile, but now, the senior on the California women's rowing team regularly outruns her teammates.

There was a time when Seager's high school biology teacher told her she would never get into college, but now, she's at the top of her class in chemistry and biology.

Not known as much of an athlete before col-

lege, Seager's athletic career took off once she arrived in Berkeley. While participating on a triathlon team, she was spotted by Cal women's crew coach Dave O'Neill, who asked her to try out for rowing. Seager loved every minute of her first season with the Golden Bears in 2009. In addition to competing on the second varsity eight, she also rowed for the USA Pre Elite team last summer, winning two silver medals.

Besides athletics, Seager, a conservation and resource studies major from Lake Tahoe, Calif., was also determined to excel in the classroom, where biology and chemistry most captured her attention.

"Since my first year, I have been on the honor roll," Seager said. "I have made the intentional effort to make the most of every day. I want to learn. I love to learn, and it is even more exciting to apply what I studied in the classroom to the real world and see its effect."

Last year, she won the CRCA National Scholar-Athlete Division I Coaches

Award. In 2008, she published her first research paper in the *Berkeley Scientific* on invasive species for rangeland biology.

"What fulfills me about research is that I get to ask a question about our infinitely complex world and rationalize a finite answer," Seager said. "I love to know how things work. Biology and research give me the space to be creative with my inquisitiveness such that I am able to solve global problems, and hopefully one day, contribute to a better world."

Following graduation, Seager will be moving to Princeton, N.J.,

to row for the U.S. National team in the hopes of one day competing in the Olympics. The recipient of a Pac-10 Postgraduate Scholarship, Seager also plans on applying to the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

It is her ultimate goal to work in the sports medicine field, combining her two passions of athletics and science. Seager hopes to find a way to help athletes heal faster from injuries, as she herself has had to battle through shin splints and rib dysfunction.

"This world is complex, and for each of us, there are a million choices we can make every day," Seager said. "The smart choices are simple. They are the ones that place another stepping stone in front of us so that we can continue along our path to realize our dreams. I am lucky that here at Cal, and on the crew team, everyday is a dream come true."

Seager knows there is a still a long way to go to accomplish her dreams, but obstacles and drawbacks have not slowed her down yet. 🙌



Shay Seager has her sights set on joining the U.S. National team and attending medical school.