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A Family Affair

Carter family putting their mark on GS Athletics

Kristina Horsley

Story Links

Making the transition from high school to college is challenging for many students. Luckily, for redshirt freshman softball player Haley Carter, the transition was made a little easier when her family decided to make the move to Georgia Southern along with her.

Not long after Haley committed to play softball for Georgia Southern, her father, Kelly Carter, was offered a position as the Eagles' head track & field coach. Natives of
Smyrna, Tennessee, the Carter family packed their bags and settled in Statesboro in August of last year. Now, Coach Carter’s office in the Dan J. Parrish, Sr. Building is two doors down from Haley’s softball coach, Annie Smith, allowing Haley to make softball and family trips all in one fell swoop.

Coach Carter and his wife, Angie, were both All-American track athletes at Auburn University and their son, Kyle, played basketball for Columbia (Tenn.) State before he, too, decided Georgia Southern was a good fit for him.

With athleticism in her blood, it’s no wonder Haley Carter excels on the field.

"It’s a lot to live up to when your parents are All-Americans," Carter said. "But my parents push me to be the best and it’s a whole different level of competitiveness when you grow up in a family full of athletes."

Carter’s dad has been a collegiate coach her whole life. However, Coach Carter prides himself on being a dad first and a coach second.

"I try to not to overstep my bounds when it comes to my kids being in school," Coach Carter said. "I let them have their freedom so they can enjoy their run through college, but I also try to be there in case they need me or want advice on certain things. I probably don’t coach her as much as everyone thinks. When she asks to train with me, I guess you could say that’s when I become Coach Carter."

Despite what many may think, Haley has had quite the normal college experience. In addition to being a student-athlete, she is an active member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council, an organization dedicated to serving the Statesboro community. Her current project: Soap for Hope, a community service initiative to collect toiletries from athletes to give to Safe Haven, a safe house for adult and child victims of domestic violence.

Thus far in her first year of competition, Haley has seen time on the diamond in left field, as the designated player, and as a pinch runner where she puts her speed to good use. She has played in 11 games, starting three, and is a perfect 4-for-4 on stolen bases.

Haley’s accomplishments on and off the field has certainly made her father proud. If Coach Carter has taught his kids one thing, he hopes it is to be "good people that just happen to be athletes, who treat the people around them with respect and appreciate the talents that God has given them."

This particular college experience may be unconventional for most young college students, but Haley would have it no other way.

"I love that my family is here with me," Haley said. "I get to go home to home-cooked meals and I can visit my dad at his office anytime I want. Statesboro is really becoming
my home because I have them beside me on this journey.”