



Balancing act

Camarillo native will playfield hockey for Yale

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LEGENDARY—Iliana Cabral, a La Reina High senior honors student, plays soccer and field hockey. The Camarillo native will play field hockey at Yale University of the Ivy League.

It

takes a master juggler to balance school and two sports. Iliana Cabral has made it look almost effortless the past six years.

When the La Reina High senior wasn't busy maintaining her 4.5 grade-point average, she was patrolling the midfield with the Regents' soccer team and honing her skills as one of the nation's top field hockey players. She's played on USA Field Hockey's Region 11 team the past three seasons.

Cabral's schedule is hectic, but the Camarillo native has made it look easy while thriving in the classroom and on the fields.

The 18-year-old committed to play Division I field hockey at Yale University next year. She's even considering joining an intramural soccer team at the Ivy League school.

"I like being busy," Cabral said. "It's hard having everything go together, but at the end of the day I just can't sit still."

She said she gets her tireless work ethic from her father, Carlos Cabral, an attorney and judge pro tem for the Ventura County Superior Court. She said she also has his optimism.

"His optimistic mindset has helped shape me to believe that I can do whatever I want, no matter how impossible it is," Iliana Cabral said.

Cabral, who started playing soccer at age 5, picked up field hockey in seventh grade. She joined a one-day middle school tournament at

Get to know Iliana Cabral

Iliana Cabral, a La Reina High senior, is one of the top field hockey players in the nation. The Camarillo native, who also plays soccer for the Regents, will play Division I field hockey at Yale University next year.

FAVORITES

- **Food:** Spaghetti
- **Band:** OneRepublic
- **TV show:** "The Originals"
- **Movie:** "Cheaper by the Dozen"
- **App:** Google Maps
- **Vacation spot:** Fiji

Moorpark College because she thought it might help with soccer.

“Little did I know it’d be helping me for the rest of my life,” she said.

In eighth grade, she joined the Camarillo Cougars boys’ field hockey team during the fall, and hooked up with the girls’ team in the spring. In high school, she starred for the Moorpark Field Hockey Club and started training with Shawn Nakamura, a former U.S. men’s national team captain who competed from 1998 to 2012. Nakamura was a football kicker for teams at Camarillo High and Moorpark College.



La Reina soccer teammate Samantha Gajda, a junior defender, plays for the Moorpark field hockey squad.

It was during Cabral’s freshman and sophomore years that she started taking field hockey seriously. She did 100 laps a day across the field fine-tuning her stick work and deft touch on the ball.

“I knew sophomore year that I would be committed to play D-I field hockey no matter how impossible it seemed to others,” she said.

Nakamura, a 2012 Camarillo graduate who’s played in four Pan American games, said Cabral could thrive in field hockey with her background in soccer and her ability to quickly solve problems during matches.

“She’s always been a smart player,” Nakamura said. “She’s always analyzing the opponents and trying to figure out the best way to beat them.”

By her junior year, Cabral started gleaning interest from many institutions of higher learning, including Cal Berkeley, UC Davis, Columbia, Dartmouth and Brown. She was offered a spot on Yale’s roster during an unofficial visit during her junior year. She accepted a week later.

Cabral took her official visit to Yale in October.

“I fell in love with them all over again during my official (visit),” she said. “I’m looking forward to being on the team. I’m looking forward to gaining a better understanding of the game.”

Cabral said she thought Yale head coach Pam Stuper, a member of USA Field Hockey Hall of Fame, would ask the Regent to bypass her senior year of soccer to focus on field hockey, but the coach insisted Cabral stick to playing both sports.

La Reina soccer head coach Rick Figueiredo said Cabral was a big part of La Reina’s success on the pitch this season.

“She’s like the manager of the game in field hockey,” he said. “For me, the challenge was getting her to transfer that onto a soccer field. At the beginning of the (soccer) season she was having trouble doing it, but finally, in the middle of the year, she started taking over the game.

“She’s so intelligent that she can find and feed the options. Once she figured it out, I didn’t want to take her off of the field. She’s my MVP for the year.”

Cabral, the daughter of Kari Cabral, serves as the vice president of the Interact Club. She’s a member of Regent Ambassadors and the National Honor Society, and she’s the head of social media for Regent Performers.

Her older sister, Lara Cabral, a La Reina grad, is a student at UC Davis. Aidan Cabral, Iliana's younger brother, is a junior soccer player at Camarillo High.

Iliana Cabral said she's excited for the opportunities at the Ivy League school, but she's not looking forward to the weather.

Nakamura said he's proud to see his young star taking her talents to the next level.

"I know she's been working hard the past four years," he said of Cabral. "To see all that hard work pay off is exciting."

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