

Player Profile of the Best: Casey Powell

Syracuse University; All-American 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998

(from a recent interview by [Great Atlantic Lacrosse](#))

Though [Syracuse University](#) has produced some of the greatest lacrosse players the game has ever known, the biggest may prove to be Casey Powell. The school's all-time scoring leader, Powell has put his name up there with Gary and Paul Gait, Tim Nelson, and John Zulberti. An almost unstoppable offensive player, Powell scores an incredible number of goals yet remains unselfish, leading his team in both goals and assists in 1997.

A product of Carthage High School in upstate New York, Powell came to Syracuse as a highly regarded attackman. Despite playing attack his freshman year with great success and being named a second team All-American, Powell was switched to midfield for his sophomore season. The change didn't effect his game though, as he earned first team All-American honors at the new position and was named Midfielder of the Year. As his unselfish play on the field would suggest, Powell is willing to do what's necessary to help the team win and for his junior year he moved back to attack. Named Player of the Year the year that season and again a first team All-American, Powell repeated both of those honors in 1998 with his continued dominate play. In addition to his collegiate achievements, Powell has earned a spot on the US National Team and will represent his country at this summer's World Games.

As an added bonus to his Syracuse career, Powell has spent the past two seasons sharing the playing field with his younger brother. Ryan Powell, a midfielder who just finished his sophomore season at the school, seems to be following in his brother's footsteps by earning Honorable Mention All-American honors as a freshman and Third Team All-American this season.

How did you get started in the game?

When I was in fifth grade I had never heard of lacrosse but my gym teacher brought in a lacrosse stick and my brother and I were kind of interested. A couple of weeks later my dad took us down to the mall and we picked up two sticks So we were the first two in our town to have lacrosse sticks and we just started playing against the wall. Kids in the neighborhood saw us playing and they started getting interested. The same gym teacher got us all playing during recess then two years later he started a lacrosse program.

What has been your biggest moment in the game to date?

On the field it was certainly '95 when we won the national title, that was one of my goals going into college and I knew going to Syracuse I'd have a good chance to do that. The best feeling I've ever had, which I've had three times now, was pulling in our team bus into College Park for the Final Four and hearing the roar of the crowd in the stands and seeing the people tailgating, there is no better feeling than to go out onto the field ready to rock and roll.

How would you describe your style of play?

It's pretty spontaneous I think. Playing three different sports in high school helped me develop different aspects of the game; like my terrible basketball shot making me more unselfish. I try to work on things I'm not good at. If I'm not good at ground balls, then I work on ground balls. All the little things are important and I try to put it all together every day in practice.

Growing up, what players did you look up to or try to emulate?

Certainly the Gait brothers, they were my idols. I still think they are the best to ever play the game. They've done so much for it. They were an hour and a half down the road from where I lived and my high school coach and my brother, my teammates and I would go down and watch them as much as we could. We'd go back and try to do what they did and copy their type of aura.

Describe what it is like to play at Syracuse for Roy Simmons?

Coach Simmons has taught me about challenges and winning and competition; all the sentimental things and all of the things you need inside. He taught us what your heart believes and your thoughts conceive you will achieve. Going to Syracuse and playing in the Carrier Dome is what I'd always dreamed of and it's where my idols went. The Dome is a pretty special place itself, we average about 6000 fans per game. It's just a great place to play, my brother's here and my family all comes to watch; it's a really special time for me.

Describe the atmosphere at the World Team tryouts?

Growing up way up north, I was familiar all of the Syracuse players and their type of game, but a lot of the other big names the Millons, the DeTommaso and all of the other great players like Dave Morrow were there. I didn't know what it would be like and what to expect being around them since I had looked up to them and I respect people who have been so successful in the sport I love so much. There were a lot of great players and it was the best lacrosse that I've ever been a part of. It was an unbelievable time and I think I learned a lot from the tryouts. I try to see what other players are doing right and put that into my game

Is there any one player you look forward to playing with this summer?

I think Mark Millon. He was the MVP of the last World Games. I think he is a great player and unselfish. He gets the job done. I really enjoy playing with him. It's also exciting to watch the defense and goalie Sal Locascio. It's just special to see them play and dominate the game and it just makes your job so much easier.

What advice would you give to younger players today?

There were a couple of important things that helped me out. One was fundamentals. Once you get comfortable with the fundamentals then you can concentrate on other aspects of the game. The second thing is to not ever think that you are good enough. Believe in yourself but always believe that there is room for improvement. Once you get casual and settle into thinking how good you are, that's when people are going to sneak up on you.

What do you see yourself doing ten years down the road?

I'd certainly like to be involved with the game. It's been a very important part of my life and it's opened up a lot of opportunities for me. I just want to stay involved and be around the kids and the future of the game as there is going to be an explosion in lacrosse all across North America.