

SPORTS



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Contributed photos

Alexandria native Danielle Justice (now Strayer) skates the puck up the ice while playing for the New Zealand women's national team, the Ice Fernz, at the Division II, Group B world championships this April.

SEEKING ADVENTURE

Hockey remains a part of an active life for Alexandria native

By Eric Morken
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State champion teams in any sport get to that level because they have players who are talented and committed. Both those are also prerequisites for any athlete to play collegiately.

That's why it's not uncommon for many players who win state titles in high school to advance their careers at the next level. Eventually in a team sport like hockey, reality often sets in. College and careers end for many as a new life in a chosen work field begins.

Alexandria native Danielle Justice (now Strayer) was an Associated Press all-state goaltender for the girls hockey team when she helped lead the Cardinals to a Class A state title in 2008. She found a college home at Division III Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter and was part of three straight Frozen Four appearances with the Gusties.

"When all that ends, it can be a bit tricky to find yourself again," Strayer said. "Going from being known as a hockey player to being one of thousands applying for a new job is very daunting. While I had accepted that my competitive playing career was over, my love for the game never disappeared."

Hockey was always a main component of her life — from watching her brothers play, to denting up her parents' hallway walls playing knee hockey before turning into a standout herself for the Cardinals. Strayer's best friends were gained through hockey, and it was one of her teammates at Gustavus, Gina DeNucci, who she traveled with after graduation before settling on a job.

Strayer's parents, Alexandria's Sue and Ted Justice, bought her a one-way plane ticket as a graduation gift that Strayer used to first go to New Zealand in July of 2012.

"When we gave her the one-way ticket, it was only because we weren't sure when she was coming back," Sue said. "We just didn't know when that journey was going to be up."

Turns out, it still isn't over. Strayer is still in New Zealand, still playing competitive hockey for that

HOCKEY: Page B2



Danielle Justice (now Strayer) and her teammates from the New Zealand women's national team won silver at the Division II, Group B level while playing in the International Ice Hockey Federation women's world championships in Romania this April.

John Vogeler thrilled for his shot at Vikings' rookie camp

By Eric Morken
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Alexandria's John Vogeler set his sights on trying to play football at a professional level after his career at Bemidji State University came to an end this past fall. This week, he will take a step toward trying to obtain that goal.

Vogeler, a defensive back, got a call from the Minnesota Vikings on April 28, the day after the end of the NFL draft, officially inviting him to compete at their rookie minicamp this week.

"It was truly a blessing," Vogeler said. "Coming from (a Division II football program), it's definitely a greater challenge when you have to compete to get into these camps with all these other guys. I was super pumped and super excited for the opportunity to go out there, and especially with the Vikings. It should be fun."

These camps are an opportunity for NFL coaches to see their draft picks on the field together for the first time. For players like Vogeler

VOGELER: Page B3



Submitted photo

Alexandria native John Vogeler takes a knee during a practice with Bemidji State University. Vogeler just wrapped up his college career with the Beavers in the fall of 2018 and recently got an invite to the Minnesota Vikings rookie minicamp.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Thompson getting more college looks

Kuhn helps Johnnies to a fast start

By Eric Morken
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This is a look at how some current and former area athletes are doing in their respective sports. Similar pieces will run periodically through the fall, winter and spring seasons.

Email emorken@echopress.com with any more detailed information on the athletes listed or the names of other athletes who you would like to see included in future publications.

► Basketball players often see their recruitment pick up between their sophomore and junior seasons, and that's the situation for Alexandria's **Treyton Thompson**.



Thompson

Thompson, a sophomore who led the Cardinals in scoring (15.9 PPG) and rebounding (8.5 RPG) this past winter, is playing his AAU basketball for the Howard Pulley 16s based out of the Twin Cities. He recently performed well at the Nike EYBL event in Atlanta last weekend.

The 6-foot, 11-inch forward already received a scholarship offer from coaches at Texas Tech after

BRIEFS: Page B2



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