



JESSIE PFEFFER

Year 12—2013

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It was Jessie Pfeffer's love of sport and biology that cultivated her fascination with the way the human body moved and functioned that shaped her career direction.

Graduating from Wee Waa High School in 2013, Jessie is grateful for the many happy memories and the quality of education she received. One particular memory that Jessie said, "always stands out is during the winter months when I was in Year 12 and studying chemistry first period every Friday. I was the only student in the class and Mr Catt would bring me a coffee to help me warm up as the science lab was so cold. You wouldn't get that in a city school.



I played a lot of sport. Many of my best memories come from playing sport. It was so good. I played soccer, did a stint of Union and quite a bit of mid-distance running. I was also on the SRC for Years 11 and 12. I guess I was a pretty dedicated student and really put in the hours with my study, and I had a lot of help from a number of my teachers.

It was a real advantage going to a small rural school. Seriously! I was the only student in my Chemistry class as I mentioned. I had one on one tutoring. The teachers were always very willing to go above and beyond for you. We were so lucky as teachers weren't trying to spread their attention across hundreds of students as would be the case in metropolitan schools. Even though my ATAR was scaled back, I believe it was still higher than it would have been if I had of been at a metro high school with less support.

In my early years of high school, I had no idea what I wanted to do, I was just at school because I had to be. I was little rebellious and in Year 8 I got into a little bit of trouble, nothing major but I thought to myself then 'ok that's where the boundary is.

'My teachers kept saying I wasn't working to my full potential in my early years at high school and I guess I just came to the realisation that if I didn't start to take my education seriously, I'd really regret it in the future.

By Years 11 and 12 I was really focused and narrowed my career interest and focus to sports science and human movement. It was a perfect fit for me. I was interested not only from a science point of view, but also because of how our ability to move changes people's lives.

While I was doing my degree, there were a lot of extra subjects thrown in and I was saying to myself 'this isn't relevant'. Funnily enough though, since graduating and starting work in this space it's clicked, those subjects I thought weren't relevant absolutely were.

In 2018, during my last year of university, I landed a job with the Newcastle Knights Junior Development Women's team as a strength and conditioning coach. That same year I started an internship at Newcastle Sports High working with Adam Trypas. Adam was head of high performance and I was a strength and conditioning coach with their talented sports program. I got to work with some really incredible coaches and sporting talents in both of these roles.





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I am making my university years sound like it was all smooth sailing, but it was anything but. During my first semester at the University of Wollongong, my now father in-law died, then my grandfather, then my great grandmother. At the same time, I was trying to get my grade point average up so I could transfer to the University of Newcastle.

The grief and loss of three significant people in my life really hit me. My now husband was a massive support. Grief is a challenging thing; it makes you ask a lot of 'whys'. The days when it was a real struggle, you just had to remember the effort you'd put in so far and that you couldn't give up now. The people I lost always believed in me and I wanted to push forward and keep going to honour their belief in me.

I've had so many people believe in me, from teachers, to family and friends to people in my community. The days where you don't believe in yourself you have to draw down on the belief that others have in you to help you move forward and keep going.

I worked my way through university with the Coffee Club and I still hold a manager's position with them to help fill in the gaps while I am continuing to build my career and due further study. I am also preparing to start my Masters in Clinical Exercise Physiology.

Keeping an ultimate goal in mind is important to me, but I try not to get too far ahead of myself. I've got my sights set on working with a team helping people with their clinical recovery. However, in saying that, I remain flexible about other opportunities that may arise in the human movement sports science area.

'Talk about road blocks, I had a massive plan for 2020. I was meant to be honeymooning in Japan, but COVID19 had other ideas. I had also lined up a terrific job doing strength and condition coaching with several football clubs, but COVID 19 took care of that too. So, 2020 has become about up-skilling. A virus isn't about to stop me growing and developing. My eye is well and truly on the future.'

Article written in 2020



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