

## Kaitlyn Eger | Youngstown State Track & Field

Hi my name is Caitlin Ager I go to Youngstown State University and I am a pole vaulter for the YSU track and field team I haven't really been given a lot of advice from my mentors The main ones are just always like keep pushing or follow your dreams My gymnastics coaches always gave me the advice to just keep going and staying disciplined with my sports So that's kind of where I'm at now Um that got me to where I am today And then my high school coach is kind of the same thing He took his time Out of his day to come and coach me So that's just my motivation to keep showing up regardless Whenever I'm practicing the big thing that I just try to focus on is staying technically sound I feel like while other people are still above me and I'm only a sophomore here I know if I stay technically sound it'll at least get me up to their level and at some point it'll get me with their level of competition as well So basically our days switch a lot So My Mondays is kind of just like I wake up and we go to lifting early in the morning and then that's whenever I can just go to classes right after that So I have classes about in the afternoon in the middle of the day and then after that I go I go home and eat and then I always go back to the track and I'm there for a couple hours I usually get there around 2:30 3:30ish and I'm there until probably 6:30 or 7 And that's when I just start warming up and then we do some drills and get on the runway and then we'll just do some practicing And then we always just close it off with either drills after and then going and seeing our trainer As for recovery nutrition Um I'm starting now to focus on my nutrition more So I try to just focus on having a balanced diet just everything I don't want to have too much of one thing not enough of another So from a nutrition standpoint that's where I'm at From a recovery standpoint it's more just whatever I do whenever I have time I try to have a schedule but it doesn't really it doesn't really work out as much whenever I'm in the heat of the season or The semester so I just try and roll out stretch take some ice baths every now and then whenever I get some time especially after meets I try and at least just take some downtime So my biggest challenge and I haven't really overcome this one yet it's still a work in progress staying mentally tough That's been a big one for me Just whenever I get to meets everything likes to change on me but So again I haven't really overcome them but my teammates are definitely just aiding in that recovery and slowly working at it each day trying to remember why why I'm here and how much I love the sport instead of the results on a daily I've been trying to just take like stay consistent with

some things trying to do some more like yoga meditation or just doing some like journaling writing down my thoughts so I cannot so I can more get out of my head and focus on what I'm here for I guess my recruitment process was kind of weird but not really I never really even thought I was going to get recruited anywhere I was off of an injury so I was just kind of running down the runway and jumping just to see what it would look like And the YSU coach came up and asked me and he was talking to me for a bit and I immediately told him I was going south and I'm not staying in this Ohio weather And so then he kept reaching out to me and I told him the same thing I'm not coming here I'm going south And then That's when I kind of realized I need to start just focusing on staying true to myself and um kind of going from there So then he reached out one more time and he's like just come see the college So I did it just to get him off my back And then right once I stepped on the campus I text him I was like OK I'll commit here So um I did end up picking YSU I think my main thing was just trying to find a coach that blended with me and I didn't know it at the time but now he's probably one of the better coaches that I could have asked for If another pole vaulter was to come up and ask me why YSU and if they were trying to get recruited here I would tell them that strictly like my coaching or from my coach's standpoint Um a lot of coaches tend to get frustrated with athletes or get really upset when things don't go what they had hoped but our coach was um thankfully he's amazing and he doesn't get he does get mad There's some meets where he does get frustrated but he doesn't take it out on us He's the best thing for us mentally and that's that'll take you further than any achievements can Youngstown is a campus I feel like the main thing I love is just how everyone seems to just connect with everyone And you don't really see a lot of like specific clicks or like everyone kind of just gets along everyone's super nice here and they all try to take part in the opportunities that Youngstown does have to offer which is a lot Some of the things that probably just I picked up on from them was finding just the love of the sport again Um it can get tricky with everything especially because we get so busy So my teammates definitely aided in that process just making sure we all have fun regardless of that I haven't really found anything specifically with vaulting to aid in that process and competing at this level but overall just them The goals that I have probably here at YSU is to finish out my degree of course and then because that's the main one Um athletics wise just seeing how far it can take me I don't have a specific height Um it'd be great to just keep getting better and better each day but seeing my teammates succeed too

would be a great thing So I don't really have many specific goals just staying technically sound like I said earlier those are my things if I can clean that up that'll get me a lot happier with that Even though further on down the road my main goal is to just become a physical therapist and then um potentially hopefully to go to the Olympics So we'll see where that goes I balance academics and athletics mainly by staying organized Um it's hard because athletics is how I stay balanced with school so that I really that as an outlet but staying organized helps with my busy schedule that I have day to day and at least reminds me where I need to go when From a young like a university-wide I see that everyone is trying to at least take advantage of the opportunities that are given to us Um we've had several meetings about different NIL companies and um platforms that we could do and seeing them take advantage of it is amazing Um I got the opportunity to go to the NIL summit in Georgia this past summer So seeing that and then getting to speak at our like SA um group and seeing how they actually kind of took in the information and we was trying to apply it was nice So my experience at the NIL summit was Really crazy So um it was really awkward at first because I got paired with a random swimmer from Youngstown that I never knew to go fly out with for 3 days So that was really awkward But um it actually was a great time We both helped each other with everything um navigate the space It was really cool being held at the whole college um Football Sports Hall of Fame So That was really cool And then I just got to see all kinds of different forums and platforms of everything and showing us we had different guest speakers coming in telling us how to um navigate social media and then how to talk to brands and probably almost every aspect of the NIL space that you could Have questions for they were answered And then there was a couple of brands out there that you got to reach out talk to kind of use those skills that you learned And so um that was probably an unforgettable experience there My biggest thing to tell younger athletes um obviously just keep following your dreams and try and get that 1% better every day because regardless of where your sport takes you your academics and who you meet and your experiences will take you further than Um your sports because we won't have sports for our whole life We won't be 90 years old playing our sport hopefully So trying to stay consistent and get that 1% better every day Hi my name is Caitlin Ager I am a student at YSU I am a pole vaulter for the YSU track and field team and you can check me out at Next Level Prep