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Perfect chemistry

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Furmanathletics

Perfect chemistry

Furman the right fit athletically, academically for Potts

Four years ago, when it was time for Rebekah Potts to make a decision about college, she narrowed her choices to Furman and Auburn University.

Furman offered her the primary things she was looking for in a school, including strong academics and an opportunity to run on the cross country team. But Auburn had always been her family's school of choice.

"Aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, parents — just about everybody had gone to Auburn," says Potts, who was the valedictorian at Briarwood Christian High School in Birmingham, Ala. "But I really liked Furman and I knew Auburn was too big, especially if I wanted to run competitively."

So Potts decided to break with family tradition and attend school in South Carolina. And while Auburn may not be aware of what it lost when she chose to go elsewhere, Furman is certainly aware of what it gained.

Potts not only got her chance to run with the Furman cross country and track teams, but she succeeded admirably. She was a member of the 2000 Southern Conference Cross Country Championship team and captained the cross country, indoor track and outdoor track teams her junior and senior years.

She also proved to have few peers



Rebekah Potts has been a four-year standout in cross country and track.

in the classroom. She majored in chemistry and, at graduation in June, was one of two students to receive the university's Scholarship Cup for maintaining a perfect 4.00 grade point average. In addition, she



received the Donaldson-Watkins Medal for General Excellence, given by the Furman faculty to the outstanding woman in the graduating class.

Those honors, however, were just two among many. Potts also received the NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship, was awarded both the Southern Conference's Dorothy Hicks Scholarship and Furman's Elizabeth Blackwell Academic Achievement Award, and was a finalist for the NCAA's prestigious Walter Byers Scholarship. She was also named to the 2004 CoSIDA Women's Cross Country/Track and Field Academic All-America third team.

Potts admits that it was not easy to participate in a sport that is in session throughout the school year — cross country in the fall, indoor track in the winter and outdoor track in the spring — and maintain a 4.00 average in one of the most demanding majors at Furman. She was at practice about three hours a day, attended meets on weekends, and studied pretty much the rest of the time.

"You just have to be careful with your time," she says. "I didn't watch much television."

Even though she is now a Furman alumna, Potts spent the summer doing research in the chemistry department, working with professor John Wheeler as a Beckman Scholar. She will head to the University of North Carolina School of Medicine this fall, where she will begin work on dual M.D. and Ph.D. degrees. If all goes as planned, she will finish in about eight years.

"I really like the research side of medicine," she says, explaining why she chose to pursue two degrees. "I like the idea of being able to see both the medical side and the research side of a specific medical problem. You can bring those two sides together and be able to address the problem more efficiently as a result."

— Vince Moore

Women earn 12th straight Germann Cup

The Southern Conference might want to consider renaming the Germann Cup the Furman Cup.

In 2003-04, for the 12th year in a row, Furman earned the Germann Cup for fielding the best all-around women's athletic program in the league.

Points for the Germann Cup are awarded on a 12-11-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis. The Furman women's teams combined for 84 points to edge Tennessee-Chattanooga by one point. College of

Charleston and Appalachian State tied for third.

Furman earned conference titles in soccer, tennis and golf and second place finishes in cross country and basketball. Chattanooga posted league titles in basketball and softball while finishing second in indoor track and third in volleyball and outdoor track.

The Germann Cup, first awarded in 1987, is named after former league commissioner Ken Germann.