



Point guard Jen Schumacher is fearless, determined and one of the best 3-point shooters in the history of women's basketball at UAlbany.

By Katy Moeller  
Photography by Bob Ewell

**B**e careful before you agree to a round of H-O-R-S-E with Jen Schumacher. You may lose your shirt.

Schumacher is one of the best 3-point shooters in the history of the University at Albany women's basketball program, having set both school and conference records this year. The 5-foot, 8-inch junior guard sank 77 3-pointers this season, topping the previous America East Conference record of 76. Nine of those buckets came in one game, a single-game high for the conference.

The 20-year-old computer science major from central New York said that she never aimed to set records. "Three happens to be something I love to shoot. You find what you love and what you're good at — and you hope it's the same thing," she said last March while en route to West Hartford, Conn., for the America East Conference Tournament. "I never thought I would break any records."

Schumacher developed her eye for the hoop in a small town near Binghamton, where she spent countless hours practicing on the hardwood and on the green. The green? Yes, her best sport as a youngster was golf. She and her sister, Tammy, went to the driving range with their dad, dividing their time between playing with dolls and hitting golf balls with their child-sized clubs.

# Whoosh!

## Schumacher Takes Her Game Downtown

Jen opted to go to golf camp in the summer before eighth grade. One of the coaches at the Penn State camp pulled her dad aside when he came to pick her up.

"He said, 'You know, you've got quite a girl here. We haven't seen too many girls like her,'" Leo Schumacher recalled during a phone interview from his home in Lisle. "He said, 'I know it's early but we might be interested in having her come play for us.' They were putting her on their watch list for the next four years."

On the way home, Schumacher told her dad that she wanted to play basketball in college — not golf. But she did play golf all four years at Whitney Point High School, serving as captain her senior year.

"I played golf on the boy's team," noted Schumacher, who was valedictorian of her high school. She is currently taking master's-level computer science classes and carries a 3.65 Grade Point Average.

Trina Patterson, coach of the UAlbany women's basketball team, believes Schumacher's talent for shooting from 3-point range has something to do with the aim and spatial perception skills she developed on the golf course.

"She's tying an individual sport to a team sport. I really believe that that's her edge, if there is any such thing as an edge," said Patterson, whose team finished at 14-14, its highest single-season Division I win total.

Patterson described Schumacher as a fearless, determined and confident

player with a strong work ethic.

In January, Schumacher made a dazzling nine of 10 3-point attempts in a game against Vermont, scoring a school record-tying 36 points in the game.

Earlier in the season, she scored 31 points (going eight for 10 from 3-point range) against Air Force in a tournament in Arizona.

Schumacher's sister, Tammy, who is 19, completed her first season as a point guard at Walsh University in North Canton, Ohio. The sisters recalled how much of their free time they spent practicing together at their home hoop and their school gym.

"My dad would take us to the gym on Saturdays and Sundays," said Tammy Schumacher.

Instead of doing mundane house chores, the girls were given the option of shooting a certain number of baskets before their dad got home from work.

"We had to shoot 200 shots each," Jen Schumacher said. "The way we used to get our allowance is he'd pay us a penny for every shot that we took."

Leo Schumacher said he and his wife, Nancy, who was captain of her college ice hockey team, believed that their girls could learn important values from sports, including commitment

and how to tackle challenges.

The Great Danes' season ended March 10 in a devastating 68-48 loss to the University of New Hampshire in the quarterfinals of the America East Conference Tournament. Schumacher, who led the team with 15 points, including three 3-point buckets, says she'll be back.

"I do have another year," she said. "I'm excited for that." ■

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