Hope amidst uncertainty

Anna Watson

Walking onto William Peace’s field on Feb. 29, Cassidy Heflin fully expected to return to the lacrosse field following her gallbladder surgery and make it to the USA South Tournament. Heflin never expected to walk away from that game never to wear her Piedmont jersey again.

Fighting the pain of a polyp on her gallbladder, Heflin played the first four games of the 2020 season as a midfielder with no sub. She often had to send another teammate over the restraining line so she could take a breather. Sporting an injury every year of college so far, Heflin was disheartened from not being able to play every game this year and having to sit out for two weeks in order to recover from her surgery. Confident in the surgery and calmed by her passion for medicine, Heflin was not scared to go under. She was more anxious about missing the Meredith and Salem girls’ lacrosse games the following weekend. Little did she know she would be missing much more.

“I was optimistic coming out of my surgery because the recovery period was so short and I had spring break to recover,” Heflin said. “Hearing that I wouldn’t get to play again, although I strategically timed my surgery, was heartbreaking.”

Proving to be a vital teammate, [Helfin led the team with 24 assists, 91 draw controls and 26 caused turnovers. For her career, she has led the team in draw controls the past three seasons and has accumulated 215 draws, which is second-best in school history. Last season, she ranked second both her freshman and sophomore seasons in assists. Her 80 career assists are third in school history.](https://piedmontlions.com/news/2020/3/30/womens-lacrosse-wlax-seniors.aspx)

“We will miss her [Cassidy Heflin’s] ability to read and adjust the draw with Dom [Steele] and her overall leadership of our team,” Coach Kristen Smith said. "Her leadership over the past few years has greatly impacted our entire program.”

Heflin was named USA South Player of the Week on Mar. 2, for the first time in her career. [She received Rookie of the Week her freshman year, and Second Team All-Conference as an attacker her sophomore year and as a midfielder last year. She also won the USA South All-Tournament in 2019 and held a spot on the All-Academic Team for three straight years from 2017-2019.](https://piedmontlions.com/sports/womens-lacrosse/roster/cassidy-heflin/3769) It was no shock that when Heflin found out she won, both seniors and bestfriends, Domonique Steele and Rowan Bumpass were there to support her.

“Cassidy’s award was well deserved. She does things behind the scenes that are not always accounted for in the stat book and on the field,” teammate Rowan Bumpass said. “Cassidy is a game changer and it was awesome to see her finally get that recognition.”

Head coach Kristen Smith personally FaceTimed the seniors to alert them about the closure of their season before telling the rest of the team. However, watching the other college teams across the States lose their spring seasons, however disappointing, it was not a shock.

“In all honesty, it didn’t hit me until a few weeks later,” Heflin said. “I think I was in major disbelief since we hadn’t even had a senior day yet. Corona has placed uncertainty for my plans after graduation. I will have to play it by ear and hope for the best.”

Heflin did not only have to say good-bye to the team, but to the state of Georgia and her girlfriend as well. Born a Maryland native and living close to a National Guard site, Heflin quickly went home out of fear of being shut out of her home due to the national emergency and had to close this chapter for now. Yet, being home is also quite difficult for Heflin to adjust to.

“I guess the expectation that I had a few more months of college and lacrosse with my friends has been a difficult thing for me to wrap my mind around,” Heflin said. “I had a good four years but was not expecting it to end the way it did.”

Cassidy Heflin is ending her senior year of college in Maryland and hanging up jersey number 14 for a stethoscope.