Winners

By now, the Terrier icemen’s 2009 national championship victory is the stuff of legend. Down by two goals with less than a minute left in the April 11 NCAA finals in Washington, D.C., they not only put the puck into the net twice more to tie, but scored in sudden-death overtime to bring the championship trophy back to Comm. Ave. for the first time since 1995. (See story on page 9.) The come-from-behind triumph against Ohio’s Miami University set a new school record for wins in a season — thirty-five, the most by any team since Michigan in the 1996–1997 season — and helped to send Matt Gilroy (MET’09), John McCarthy (CAS’09), and Colin Wilson (CAS’11) to the National Hockey League.

But men’s hockey wasn’t the only Terrier team to score big this year. The women’s basketball team capped off its best season in BU history with an undefeated America East Conference season, the men’s and women’s soccer teams captured the America East regular season and tournament, and women’s lacrosse and softball both took home America East titles — the fifth in a row for BU’s lacrosse players.

Wait, there’s more: runners from the men’s and women’s track and field and cross-country teams and two members of the men’s swimming and diving team competed at the NCAA championships in their sport, and two Terrier women — basketball forward Jesyka Burks-Wiley (CAS’09) and lacrosse midfielder Sarah Dalton (CGS’07, CAS’09) were named the America East Player of the Year for their sports. All of which makes 2008–2009 a winning year in BU athletics.

Here, Bostonia highlights some of Boston University’s biggest champions.

WEB EXTRA See more photos of BU winners and slide shows about pregame rituals at www.bu.edu/bostonia.
BU’s best athletes reveal what pushes them, scares them, and keeps them at the top of their game
David Proctor (SAR’08)

**HOMETOWN:** Rochdale, England

**SPORT:** Men’s Track and Field and Men’s Cross-Country

**EVENT:** Middle Distances

**WHY HE’S A WINNER:** Set school record with 3:59.14-mile, becoming the first Terrier to break 4 minutes; tied a school record in the 1,000-meter with a time of 2:22.46; set school records as part of the distance-medley team that finished in 9:43.21 at the Alex Wilson Invitational in 2007 and as part of the 4x800-meter relay team that finished at 7:25.23 at the 2009 IC4A Championships.

**DEFINING MOMENT:** “I was ten years old during the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta — the year Michael Johnson’s 200-meter gold medal win broke world records — and I remember thinking, when planes go this fast, they take off. Why is this guy not flying?”

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE:** “During high school, I was running on natural talent, and I didn’t do much endurance training. When I came to BU, the coaches told me to increase my mileage, and that was hard.”

**GREATEST INSECURITY:** “When you’re a school record-holder, you’re expected to perform at a certain level. If I don’t perform as well as I think I should, I feel like I’ve let people down.”

**MOST IMPORTANT LESSON:** “Track is an individual sport, and it requires you to know yourself and your body well. I was anorexic during freshman and sophomore years because I thought I’d put on too much weight to be fast. I remember the day I made the connection in my head that what I was doing was actually hurting me. Restrictive eating caused my underperformance and injuries. I learned the small things that help my body: hydration, nutrition, and psychology.”

**FUTURE ENDEAVOR:** “Medical school, but first try out for the 2012 Olympics in London.”

“I remember thinking, when planes go this...."
Sarah Dalton
(CGS’07, CAS’09)

HOMETOWN: Cornwall, Vermont

SPORT: Women’s Lacrosse

POSITION: Midfield

WHY SHE’S A WINNER: Broke school scoring record with 284 points; tapped as the America East Player of the Year in 2008 and again in 2009.

DEFINING MOMENT: “My high school team won two state championships, and that success inspired me to play at the Division I level.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “Going from playing three sports a year in high school to playing one in college. College was harder, though, because the competition is higher and you’re going up against girls who are a lot stronger and faster. There’s a moment where you ask yourself, can I do this? And can I be happy doing it?”

MISTAKE SHE CAN LAUGH ABOUT NOW: “When we played UNH on April 1 this year, we were trailing 4-0. We rallied in the second half and won the game, and I told our coaches that the first half was an April Fools’ joke. They were not amused.”

FUTURE ENDEAVORS: “Get involved in college-level lacrosse coaching for a few years and then teach math and coach at the high school level.”
Jesyka Burks-Wiley (CAS’09)

**HOMETOWN:** Kansas City, Missouri

**SPORT:** Women’s Basketball

**POSITION:** Forward

**WHY SHE’S A WINNER:** Named 2009 America East Player of the Year and Region I finalist for the 2009 State Farm Coaches’ All-America Basketball Team; member of first undefeated America East team in BU history.

**DEFINING MOMENT:** “I’ve been playing basketball since I was in second grade. It’s a family tradition. My grandfather, Lester Burks, was an original Globe Trotter, and my uncle, Steve Burks, is a hometown record-holder. Freshman year of high school I realized I could get my education paid for by doing something I’m really good at and really love.”

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE:** “Time management. I’ve learned I can’t procrastinate.”

**GREATEST INSECURITY:** “I don’t think I have any, and I credit that to my teammates.”

**MOST IMPORTANT LESSON:** “When you play with a group of girls for so long, you teach one another to have self-confidence. For example, as a freshman, I wasn’t a big three-point shooter. Now when there’s an opening, I trust myself to take the shot.”

**MISTAKE SHE CAN LAUGH ABOUT NOW:** “I have a tendency to trip over my own feet, and during a game against BC freshman year, even though I had a good half-court head start, I completely lost control of the dribble. The BC girls caught it and fouled me.”

**FUTURE Endeavors:** “Play in an overseas league for a few years and then apply for assistant coaching jobs at the college level.”

“I don’t think I have any insecurities, and I credit that
Corey Lowe (SHA’10)

HOMETOWN: Newton, Massachusetts

SPORT: Men’s Basketball

POSITION: Point Guard

WHY HE’S A WINNER: Set school record for three-pointers in a season (92) during the 2007–2008 season; named to America East Conference First Team; ranked second in the conference in overall scoring.

DEFINING MOMENT: “When I was seven, I was shooting hoops at the gym and a coach asked my mom if I could play in his travel league. Things took off from there. I always challenged myself by playing with older kids who were more skilled than I was.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “Staying motivated and keeping my eyes on the prize, especially when our successes are up and down. I felt like our team underachieved this season.”

GREATEST INSECURITY: “I worry that I’ve let down my teammates because I’ve missed almost thirty games to injuries. I ask myself, would we have had a better season if I had played?”

MOST IMPORTANT LESSON: “Wanting something isn’t enough — you have to work for it.”

MISTAKE HE CAN LAUGH ABOUT NOW: “I’ve dribbled the ball off my feet, walked the ball, and missed a couple of crucial passes.”

FUTURE ENDEAVORS: “Try out for the NBA. If I don’t make the pros, I’ll play overseas.”

“I don’t think I have any insecurities, and I credit that to my teammates. When there’s an opening, I trust myself to take the shot.”
Andrea Walkonen
(SAR’09, SED’10)

HOMETOWN: Jaffrey, New Hampshire

SPORT: Women’s Track and Field and Women’s Cross-Country

EVENT: Distance

WHY SHE’S A WINNER: Broke a school record at the 2009 NCAA Indoor Track Tournament by running the 5K race in 16:03; earned All-America status with a 21st-place finish at the 2008 NCAA Cross-Country Championship; ran the 10,000-meter race in 33:18 minutes, the fastest time for a U.S. runner under twenty years of age and the fifth best time recorded by an NCAA athlete in 2006; set a conference record in the 5,000-meter race with a time of 16:13.80 in 2006.

DEFINING MOMENT: “In high school, I only ran for fun, and I never considered running in college until BU recruited me. I remember thinking, why is a college recruiting me? That’s when I realized that I could actually go somewhere with my running.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “Injuries are really common among distance runners, and sometimes I get really discouraged because I’m so frequently injured. I missed my entire junior year because of a broken bone that got stuck in a nerve.”

GREATEST INSECURITY: “For two years I suffered from female athlete triad syndrome, which means that I wasn’t eating enough and I was exercising too much. I thought that thinner equaled faster. But I’m in a much better place now, and I’m confident in myself and in my abilities.”

MOST IMPORTANT LESSON: “Life isn’t all about running, and it wouldn’t be the same without the support of my family, friends, and teammates.”

FUTURE Endeavors: “Running in the 2012 Olympics. I’ll run until I can no longer do it. I’ll be that little old lady in the Boston Marathon jogging with my walker.”
Matt Gilroy (MET’09)

HOMETOWN: North Bellmore, New York

SPORT: Men’s Ice Hockey

POSITION: Defenseman

WHY HE’S A WINNER: As senior cocaptain, led the men’s ice hockey team to the 2009 NCAA championship; 2009 recipient of the Hobey Baker Memorial Award, college hockey’s highest honor; ranks third among all defensemen in the nation; was the first defenseman in league history to be three times named a First Team Hockey East All-Star.

DEFINING MOMENT: “When I was young I had the chance to skate with Pat LaFontaine at a hockey clinic. He was close enough that I could reach out and touch him, and I remember thinking, wow, this is what I want to do some day.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “When I came to BU, Coach Jack Parker told me I had to switch from forward to defenseman. But it was actually one of the best things that could have happened to me, because it developed me into a two-way player.”

GREATEST INSECURITY: “Physically, it took me a really long time to grow. I was eighteen years old and I didn’t even weigh 150 pounds. I knew guys my age who were getting drafted, and meanwhile, I was still playing in the junior leagues.”

MOST IMPORTANT LESSON: “Two of my brothers died when I was a child, and my favorite uncle died when I was a teenager. They taught me how to live by inspiring me to play as hard as I can. Before each play, I tap my chest three times: once for each of them.”

FUTURE ENDEAVORS: “I’ve signed a contract with the New York Rangers.”

“Boston Marathon jogging with my walker.”
Andre Watson  
(CAS’09)  

HOMETOWN: Hempstead, New York  

SPORT: Men’s Diving  

WHY HE’S A WINNER: Broke all but two school diving records and competed at the 2009 NCAA championship, placing 31st overall.  

DEFINING MOMENT: “I was ten when I heard Missy Elliott’s ‘Sock It 2 Me.’ She sings about doing the backstroke, so I nagged my mom to sign me up for swimming lessons. But I got bored with swimming pretty quickly, until one day I saw a kid dive off the high-dive board. I knew immediately that was what I wanted to do.”  

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “I’ve always struggled with self-confidence. I had a terrible time mastering the reverse two-and-a-half pike dive — it’s a scary dive because you’re flipping toward the board — and it really made me doubt myself. Diving is a sport that if you mess up, you can get really hurt, so it’s very mentally and emotionally draining.”  

MOST IMPORTANT LESSON: “Diving has taught me to be humble. This is a sport where you can be at the top one day and on the bottom the next. Losing and winning put things in perspective.”  

MISTAKE HE CAN LAUGH ABOUT NOW: “Last year when we swam against Holy Cross, my teammates suggested I swim the fifty-meter race just for fun. I swam well, but I had to dive right afterward, and I was so exhausted that I couldn’t feel my legs. I didn’t dive well that day. From that point on I stuck to diving.”  

FUTURE ENDEAVORS: “Law school, and after graduation I hope to coach a children’s diving team.”  

“This is a sport where you can be at the top one day and on the
Christy Leath  
(SAR’09,’11)

**HOME TOWN:** St. Louis, Missouri  
**SPORT:** Women’s Softball  
**POSITION:** Catcher

**WHY SHE’S A WINNER:** Broke the single-season school record for walks (73) in 2008; awarded 2007 America East Player of the Year; named to the All-Conference First Team and the NFCA Northeast Region Second Team in 2007; named the 2009 BU Woman of the Year.

**DEFINING MOMENT:** “I’ve played softball since I was ten years old. Both of my parents and older brothers played. A lot of girls from my area played in college, and that’s how I learned that I could get into a good school and get a good education through sports.”

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE:** “Speed, or lack thereof. I’m not a fast runner, and sometimes that affects my game.”

**GREATEST INSECURITY:** “I expect a lot of myself, so if I’m not performing as well as I think I should be, I hate to feel like I’m letting down my team.”

**MOST IMPORTANT LESSON:** “Never stop playing until the last out is made, and if you lose, lose graciously.”

**MISTAKE SHE CAN LAUGH ABOUT NOW:** “Sophomore year I threw the ball into left field when there was a runner on third base. She scored and we lost the game.”

**FUTURE ENDEAVORS:** “I’m staying at BU to study occupational therapy.”