

Pacificans and Olympians

During this summer's Olympic games, Pacific was well represented. Two Tiger water polo players hit the water in competition this past summer and a volleyball alumna was on task reporting on volleyball competition and the Paralympics.

From both sides of the pool

Pacific water polo standouts **Alex Obert '15** and **Balázs Erdélyi '13** splashed down in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, this summer, playing for opposing teams. Obert played for Team USA, while Erdélyi, a native of Eger, Hungary, was part of the Hungarian national team.

The duo were teammates at Pacific, helping the Tigers reach the NCAA National Championship game in 2013.

Pacific's most decorated men's water polo player, Erdélyi won every major honor at least once in his career, including Mountain Pacific Sports Federation (MPSF) Player of the Year, NCAA Championship Most Valuable Player, All-American and American Collegiate Water Polo Association NCAA Player of the Year.

He wrapped up his Pacific career in 2013–14 with a second-straight Peter J. Cutino Award, the top national award in collegiate

water polo. His selection to the powerhouse Hungarian Olympic team came in July.

"It was amazing to be there playing for my country. It was a dream come true," Erdélyi said.

Though Hungary ended up falling short of the medal stand with a fifth-place finish, it was in no way a reflection of the gold-medal caliber play from Erdélyi. He saw action in eight games during the tournament in Rio, posting a total of 10 goals, five assists, three steals, and one block.

Obert, a three-time All-American and the third Tiger in Pacific history to be named a finalist for the Peter J. Cutino Award, is no stranger to playing in international waters.

He has played for Team USA since 2013 and last year scored four goals at the 2015 Pan American games, helping USA to the gold medal and automatic qualification for



Alex Obert '15



Rio 20



Balázs Erdélyi '13

the 2016 Olympics. Earlier this summer, he posted four goals to help the team to a silver medal in the 2016 FINA World League Super Final in Huizhou, China. His selection to the USA Olympic team was announced in early August.

“There’s nothing like representing your country, wearing the USA colors and hearing the national anthem before each game,” Obert said. “It was different than any other tournament I’ve ever been to. Competing on that level is something I’ll never forget.”

“I can’t really express the amount of pride I felt watching them compete,” said Pacific water polo coach James Graham, who was up at all hours to watch each time either was playing. “It was one of the highlights of my career. ”

Both Obert and Erdelyi plan to continue playing professionally. Erdelyi is continuing on the Hungarian National Team and Obert will look to play in Europe in the spring after completing his degree in engineering management in December. They both are hoping to compete at the 2017 FINA world championships on Erdelyi’s home turf in Budapest, Hungary, next summer.

2016



COURTESY OF: NBC SPORTS GROUP

Heather Cox '92 reporting from Rio

Taking in the Olympics from another point of view, former Pacific women’s volleyball team captain Heather (Schoeny) Cox '92, was part of NBC Olympics’ coverage of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games and reported on volleyball for the 2016 Rio Olympics.

This was Cox’s fourth time as an Olympic reporter. She also contributed to NBC’s coverage of the men’s and women’s beach volleyball events at the 2004, 2008, and 2012 Olympics.

Cox recently joined NBC Sports Group full-time after 22 years at ESPN. She will report from the sidelines for NBC’s new Thursday Night Football series and on Golf Channel for select golf events.

While she was captain of the women’s volleyball team at Pacific, the Tigers ranked in the top five from 1988–91, and advanced to the 1990 national championship game. She was also a member of the U.S. National Volleyball Team at the 1990 Olympic Festival and served two years as captain for the Sacramento Stars of the National Volleyball Association professional league.

“Dean and I couldn’t be happier to make this gift, said Lagorio Janssen. “Our Tigers deserve the highest quality facilities, and we are proud to be able to support them.”



Thanks a million

\$1 million gift will build state-of-the-art weight-training facility

Excitement was high at the 17th annual Orange & Black Ball with the announcement of a \$1 million gift from Board of Regents Chair Kathleen Lagorio Janssen '68 and her husband Dean Janssen. Their gift, one of the most significant gifts to Athletics in the university's history, will expand the popular Janssen-Lagorio Gymnasium on the Stockton Campus.

“We are deeply grateful to Dean and Kathy for their great generosity in helping our students achieve their dreams,” said President Pam Eibeck. “Their support, and that of our other board members, faculty, staff, coaches, donors and alumni, is vital to ensuring that Pacific students receive a superior education that prepares them for success in their careers and lives.”

The Janssen Lagorio Gymnasium, built in 2009 with a leadership gift from the Janssens, serves as the practice facility for Pacific's basketball and volleyball teams, as well as for campus recreational sports. It is also a popular venue for community and special events.

The existing weight room has become too small to accommodate the upwards of 350 student athletes who share the small room. The Janssen-Lagorio Performance Center will provide more access to strength-and-conditioning training, which is known to reduce injuries and improve performance.

Slated to open in spring 2017, the expansion will include installation of dynamic flooring, space-efficient power racks and a “fuel station” offering quick and nutritious snacks for student-athletes. A state-of-the-art video analysis system will help coaches and athletes conduct in-depth analyses of technique, movement, performance and execution during conditioning sessions.

Lagorio Janssen is an alumna of the Gladys L. Benerd School of Education. She and her husband are both former Stockton educators. Today, they own and operate the Stockton-based Lagorio Family of Companies, which grows, packs and ships high-quality fruits and vegetables worldwide.

In addition to \$190,000 raised at the Orange & Black Ball to support Pacific athletic programs and scholarships, attendees contributed nearly \$15,000 at the event toward an ongoing “crowdfunding” campaign to raise the \$450,000 needed to complete, equip and maintain the new

center. So far, more than \$316,000 has been raised for the project through the crowdfunding campaign and additional donations.

To participate, visit go.Pacific.edu/JLPerformanceCenter.

