

Injury ends high school athletic career

By Earlene Ward - Special to the Sierra Star

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Lauren Cano's high school athletic career came to a grinding halt in her senior year at Yosemite High School during a soccer scrimmage against Liberty High.

Cano, co-captain of the girls' soccer team, was looking forward to the winter sports season and the spring season when she would again play softball. She had been on the water polo team in the fall.

In the scrimmage, Cano was taking a shot on goal and the goalie slid and took out Cano's leg that she had firmly planted.

She says no one thought anything was wrong and she went in to play again, and she was hurt again. She recalls that at first she couldn't move her leg, but then she was able to walk off the field.

The first thought was that she would miss two weeks of play and she was frustrated by that; "Now it's been six months," she says and she is still in physical therapy and has just been able to start swimming. In mid-June she expects to be able to start jogging.

"I will play again," she says, hoping to play intramural soccer in college.

The diagnosis of her knee injury was that the main knee ligament was severed and there was damage to the cartilage. She had surgery in January.

When she returned to YHS she said it was hard to get around the campus on crutches but she was sometimes able to get a ride from class to class and one of her friends would carry her sometimes.

Cano said she had always felt sorry for football players who were out of the game because of injuries.

When her mother told her the extent of her injuries, Cano said she cried for four hours.

"It was so frustrating to see the team play and I had to be on the bench," she says. "I sat there trying not to cry."

She said her coach, Scott Males, made sure there was always someone on her left side on the bench so she wouldn't be hit with a ball. "The players were really supportive of me, too," she recalls.

Soccer has been a part of Cano's life since she was four or five years old. "It is my favorite sport," she says. "It's been pretty hard to have to quit."

She also played golf at YHS in her freshman and sophomore years; she played water polo as a



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junior and senior and she played soccer and softball every year until she was sidelined with the injury.

Cano says she has spent more time with her friends and doing work in the clubs she belongs to since she can no longer play sports. She is active in Interact, Key Club and the California Scholarship Federation. She is a class valedictorian. She will attend the University of California at Berkeley.

Her older brother, Alex, a 2004 YHS graduate, played sports throughout his high school years, and her younger brother, Taylor, who is a freshman this year, plays basketball and baseball.

She is the daughter of Rick and Rebecca Cano of Coarsegold.

As she thinks back over the time since her injury, she is philosophical: "It could have been worse"; she says, "it could have been such that I would never play again."



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49165 Crane Valley Rd [426] | PO Box 305 | Oakhurst, CA 93644-8621

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