

Bodybuilder developing more than muscle

By Mike Riplinger
Of the Emerald

She doesn't fit any of the stereotypes.

A softball-playing bodybuilder who coaches basketball, yet still manages to carry 24 credits, Krista Parent isn't just any ordinary person.

While a softball player is supposed to be fast and quick, a bodybuilder is usually big and bulky. A basketball coach is supposed to always be thinking strategy and a person who takes 24 credits worth of classes is just plain crazy.

In an understatement, Parent said her busy schedule "doesn't leave much time for a social life."

Understandably so. But would a woman bodybuilder have to worry about a social life? Aren't they always big and stocky and don't they look like they can rip a beer can in two with their bare hands?

Not this one. At least she doesn't look like it. But Parent probably would have little trouble making a Lite Beer commercial, a la Bubba Smith.

In street clothes, the strawberry blonde looks like anything but a bodybuilder. Still, she finished second in the first competition she ever entered, last year's Pacific Northwest Championships.

With her quick smile she looks more captivating than threatening. But being a bodybuilder does give a strange impression to some people, she said.

"It weards them out. A lot of people just can't understand me, or why I like to do it," Parent said.

"It's hard to explain, but I like to take care of myself. You would think others would respect someone who takes care of herself, rather than sit around and get fat. But some people are real put out because I like to tone my body," she said.

Parent doesn't just tone her body, she works it into the ground.

She starts the day with softball practice at 6:30 a.m. "because I don't have any other time to do it." After a full day of



Photo by Mark Pynes

Senior Krista Parent carries more than just her own weight during a workout in preparation for the Southern Oregon Bodybuilding Championships Saturday at Willamette High School.

classes, she goes to her practicum at Springfield High School, where she is the assistant women's basketball coach.

After that she heads to Courtsports I where she works out on weights for three hours, then works on poses for her bodybuilding routine. About 9 or 10 p.m. she is finally done. There is nothing left to do but to study.

"I get really burned out. The last thing I want to do is study when I get home, but I have no choice. I know that other students have it bad and have to work hard too, but it's still easy for me to baby myself and not study," Parent said.

How did someone who is fast enough to hold the school record for stolen bases ever get into a bulky sport like bodybuilding?

First off, for women it's not so much a bulky sport with huge bulging muscles, but "one of definition and tone, where the women are graceful, yet still show muscle," she said.

Parent had always lifted weights to keep in shape for softball. And when Tim Young, who won the Mr. Southern Oregon title last year, was looking for a partner for the couples competition at the Pacific Northwest Championship, someone suggested Parent.

"I really couldn't see myself ever doing it. For one thing, you get up there and you're not wearing much. The bikinis are pretty small, and I'm basically a shy person, so just going out in front of a crowd was hard to do," she said.

"But I thought I would give it a try and it really wasn't anything I expected," she said.

Couples competition stresses synchronization, Parent said, and is more dance than flexing.

During the competition, the bodybuilders are judged in the morning. In the evening they perform for the audience, when the actual winner has already been decided.

"It's fun. A lot of head games. The guys will hit a pose right in

front of someone and try to intimidate him. But the women aren't like that. They're much more friendly and easygoing," said Parent.

Finishing second in her first competition gave Parent added impetus to try again.

Saturday, she will compete in the Southern Oregon Championships at Willamette High School, beginning at 8 p.m.

With one contest under her belt she's looking forward to the competition. At least this time she'll know what to expect. She said she'll also know how to better deal with how others look at her. And also how her family deals with it.

"It was hard enough getting up there in front of all those people, but to have my family and my dad in particular out there, made it really hard. My dad couldn't believe that I was doing it in front of 3,000 people.

"He was real supportive though. My whole family was. Still, I think my dad would rather watch his daughter play softball

than perform as a bodybuilder," Parent said.

Playing softball doesn't mix too well with bodybuilding, according to Parent.

"I would work on my arms in lifting, and then come out and try to take batting practices. I would be death warmed over," she said.

Softball can get rough at times, and scrapes and bruises are not beneficial for bodybuilders. The competition last spring was over before the softball season started, but Parent said she still had to be careful in practice.

"Going into a competition I really didn't need a big strawberry on my leg or a big bruise, so it made for some pansy slides."

This year Parent plans on taking some time off from bodybuilding to prepare for softball.

"This is my last year and I feel like I owe it to them to work on nothing but softball," Parent said.

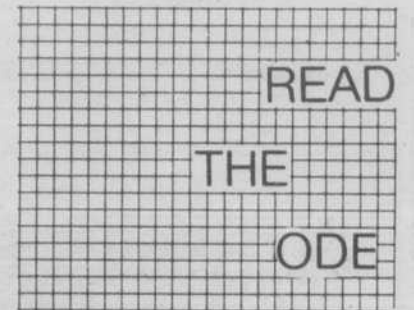
After graduation, Parent hopes to land a job as a high school basketball coach. A basketball star in high school, Parent decided to play softball in college because she was better at it, she said.

"I love basketball though, it's my favorite sport. Coaching is my outlet since I don't play anymore," Parent said.

But she doesn't plan to stop bodybuilding.

"I hope to do it for a long time. I think it will keep me in shape," she said.

"Some people think you're a totally different human just because you bodybuild. But I just enjoy taking care of my body. What's wrong with that?" Nothing at all.



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