

Alexis Markowski and Isabelle Bourne are two amazing players for the Nebraska Huskers. On Feb. 22, I got to interview both of them about their careers and the current season. These two women were so spectacular, it'd be impossible to just choose one.

Alexis Markowski has been playing basketball her whole life, and she started playing competitively in the 4th grade. In high school, she played both basketball and volleyball. She started playing volleyball in the 3rd grade and played until her senior year of high school at Lincoln Pius X. In the end, she chose basketball because she loved basketball just a little bit more. Instead of picking both sports, she made the harder decision and narrowed it down to one because she wanted to sharpen her focus and become the best player she could be.

Article after article states how amazing her energy is, and how great it is to have her on the team. When she came to Nebraska this school year, she brought a new type of energy and effort to the Lady Huskers. Head coach, Amy Williams says, "Alexis is an extremely competitive person and she not only plays with fire and passion, but also brings that same energy to practice on a daily basis." Alexis works hard and energizes her teammates with her positive attitude. Alexis is a freshman this year and most of the time, it is hard for a freshman to come in and step up as leader, especially on a team like Nebraska where there are already great leaders like Isabelle Bourne, sophomore, and Sam Haiby, junior. However, that didn't stop Alexis; she is such a great teammate that cares for the other players on the team, while her leadership role within the team continues to grow.

Markowski has been chosen for six Big 10 Freshman of the Week Awards. She says, "It feels amazing to be recognized for my success in basketball. I would not have been one of the freshmen of the week without my teammates. My goal is to go out on the court and give it my all and try to win the game. To get to this point it has taken a lot of blood, sweat, and tears. I have

put so much work into my game and could not be here without the help of my parents, siblings, and teammates. I want to thank my mom for always cheering me on and for instilling belief into me. I also want to thank my dad for seeing my potential and helping me become the best player and person I can become.”

Speaking of her dad, Andy Markowski was a Cornhusker from 1995-99, and he played basketball. He finished in ‘99 as one of the top in-state players to go through the Husker program. Alexis’s dad going to Nebraska was a big reason why she went there. She wanted to continue his legacy and have friends and family be able to come and watch her play at the games. She has always been referred to as Andy's daughter, but as she grows in the sport she feels like people are now referring to him as Alexis's dad.

Alexis hasn’t declared her major yet because she is taking a variety of classes to figure out what she wants to do with her future. “I think I am going to get a business degree so I can either coach or work for my dad one day,” said Markowski.

To conclude our interview, we went over the challenges of the life of a student-athlete. She said, “Being a student-athlete is very rewarding, but it also comes with its struggles.” As a student-athlete, time management is a must. Being a student-athlete takes its toll on the body, and players must take their time when recovering and get enough rest. Sacrifice is also a large part of being a student-athlete. They must sacrifice free time to work on homework or even to get in the gym to get in some practice. Alexis says, “These sacrifices are something I am willing to make, and these struggles are worth it.”

Isabelle Bourne (also known as Issie, sounds like IZZY), started playing when she was around 6 years old. Even though she didn’t play until then, she was always around a basketball because her older sisters paved the way. She was presented with opportunities to become a more

serious player, and she fell in love with the game and the friendships and relationships that come with it.

Bourne studies communications because of “the wide variety of job opportunities it presents.” She was also selected for the Latimer scholarship. Bourne was “extremely grateful and honored to be the recipient of the award. It made me feel accomplished in how hard I have been pushing myself on the court, as a leader and in the academic area. I think the continued support of my coaches, teammates and academic advisors has allowed me to be the best I can be.”

Issie and I also ended our interview with talk of the life of a student-athlete. Basketball is a very time-consuming sport. Issie says that having time-management and organization is mandatory as a student athlete. Having time-management skills and organization can help one maintain good grades. Being a student athlete also immediately makes a player committed to her sport. There are mandatory practices, film sessions, workouts, games, meetings, and more. Student athletes often do not get a lot of spare time, which means missing out on hanging out with friends or not being able to see family for Christmas. With basketball being such a time-consuming sport, the players’ closest friends will most likely be their teammates, which is what makes a team stronger: chemistry. These two women may have ended up in the same place, but they have two different, amazing stories as to how they got there.