

Athletes Make Cross-Country Trek

BY GEOFF HENSON

1,953 and 1,387.

To most people, there is nothing significant about these two numbers. However, to seniors Ryan Key and Andrew Lansang, they represent the



Andrew Lansang

distance in miles from Olivet to their hometowns. Key came 1,953 miles to Olivet from Phoenix, Ariz., and was a member of the swimming and diving team for three years. Lansang came 1,387 miles to Olivet from Rock Springs, Wyo., and was a four-year letterwinner on the soccer team. In addition to being a part of a varsity sport, both have also excelled in the classroom.

Key graduated from Brophy College Preparatory, where he swam during the summer for a club team with Levi Yockey '07. Yockey, who was then a member of the Comets' swimming team, invited Key to come to Olivet for a recruiting visit. Key took the invitation and made the visit on a snowy day in January 2005. While at Olivet, he met then Head Coach Dave Stubbs and four swimmers (Ananta Fetters '07 and current seniors Dustin Meisner, Mitch Powers and Koji Takahashi). After being snowed-in on campus for a couple extra days, Key went back to Arizona knowing Olivet was where he wanted to continue his education.

"The welcome that I got from everyone, especially Coach Stubbs, was great," recalls Key. "Ananta, Dustin, Mitch and Koji all made me feel at home. I also had a chance to sit in on a class and liked the small-school setting."

As a member of the men's swimming team, Key helped the Comets win the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) championship each of his first two years at Olivet. Key's best season was 2007 when he earned All-MIAA honors and recorded most of his lifetime best times. He currently has the second-best times in school history in the 100- and 200-yard breaststroke at :58.78 and 2:08.68, respectively, and 200-yard individual medley at 1:58.47.

"I could not have asked for a better career at Olivet," Key said. "We never lost a dual meet in high school and we did not lose a single one my first two years at Olivet. We lost a couple dual meets this year, but I still had a great time. I am going to miss being around such great teammates."

Entering Olivet as a freshman, Key brought 11 credits from high school

with him. He took a full class load each semester and took summer classes in order to earn his bachelor's degree in just three years.

Key also had some motivation and determination to finish early with his degree. In the summer before enrolling at Olivet, he proposed to his girlfriend of five years, Hillary Estes. Their wedding will take place June 14, 2008. After the wedding, Key will work this summer as an assistant pool manager for the city of Phoenix with aspirations of continuing his education at a med school in Arizona and eventually becoming a pediatric physician or surgeon.

Unlike Key, Lansang never set foot on Olivet's campus for a visit. His first time at Olivet was freshman orientation in August 2004. "I remember thinking that Olivet wasn't the typical college campus that you might see in a movie," says Lansang. "But the state of Wyoming has plenty of towns similar in size to Olivet, so I weirdly felt comfortable in a new home-away-from-home."

On the soccer field, he saw action in 68 games, tallying two goals and five assists for nine career points. Ironically, Lansang scored his first collegiate goal in the first game of his collegiate career and it also happened to be the first goal of the 2004 season for Olivet.

The MIAA presented Lansang with the 2008 Dr. Marv Zuidema Scholar-Athlete Award. The award is presented annually to the senior men's soccer player for his contributions to team play, leadership qualities, demonstration of ethical virtues and excellence in athletics and academics.

"I am pleased that over the four years I spent on the men's soccer team that our team became more competitive in the MIAA," Lansang said. "Other teams expected an automatic win when they saw Olivet on their schedule, but now things



Ryan Key

have turned for the better. Over the years, I have seen players come and go. But our class came to Olivet as five, and we will be graduating as five."

Off the soccer field, Lansang has been a member of Gamma Iota Sigma (GIS), Olivet's insurance and risk management society. He has served as the vice president for portfolio for the last two years and was chair of the annual GIS golf outing in the fall of 2006. He has also earned the Associate in Insurance Services designation from the Insurance Institute of America.

Upon graduation, Lansang is looking for employment in the insurance and risk management industry in Denver, Colo., or Salt Lake City, Utah. "The job search is in motion and the wheels are turning," said Lansang.

Key and Lansang represent the true meaning of a student-athlete. Each found opportunities to excel in and out of athletic competition. With their successes, they have also helped lay a strong foundation for the future of their respective teams. ▲