

Amazing GRACE

MINNESOTA HOCKEY JOURNAL GOES 1-ON-1 WITH FORMER HOPKINS SUPERSTAR GRACE BIZAL

By
MIKE DOYLE

→ **GRACE BIZAL WAS HEAVILY RECRUITED OUT OF HOPKINS HIGH SCHOOL**, where she racked up points and accolades from the blue line, and collected gold and silver medals for Team USA. Now she's in her freshman season at Boston College, where the Eagles were ranked No. 2 in preseason polls. Bizal talked about the decision to head East, dorm life without a kitchen and her famous NBA uncle.

MHJ // Boston is a long way from Minnesota. What made you interested in going to B.C.?

Grace Bizal // Honestly, everything about it. When I first came here over the summer, I fell in love with the school. The school, academically, is amazing. The coaches are awesome and the girls on the team are so nice and so welcoming. I just loved it and wanted to be away from home for my four years of college.

MHJ // Had you previously been on the East Coast a lot or visited Boston?

GB // I'd been out here once before with my family. We visited Boston on a family trip. I've stayed in the Midwest and hadn't gone out East too much, but every time I've been out here I absolutely loved it.

MHJ // In preseason polls, Minnesota and B.C. were No. 1 and No. 2, respectively. They aren't on your schedule, but what do you think about the possibility of meeting in the postseason?

GB // Playing against the WCHA is always good competition. We played Minnesota-Duluth during the opening weekend and they were a great team. Hopefully we'll see Minnesota down the road.

MHJ // You probably know a lot of the girls on the Gophers.

GB // Yeah, I do. I've played with and grew up with a lot of the girls on the team. They are awesome girls and good players. A lot of them are my close friends, so it's really cool to see them there. I'm so happy for them.

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Above: The Bizal family celebrates with the 2015 U18 Women's World Championship trophy. From left to right: Brady (dad), Olivia (sister), Grace and Mary (mom).

MHJ // How's the transition to college life been?

GB // It's been different, but it's been great. Everyone on the team is open to helping you and helping adjust to everything. There are a lot of things you need to adjust to since you're not at home anymore. You're living on your own and you have classes and have to balance those with hockey. So it's nice to finally get the season going and I think it's gone really well so far.

MHJ // How is that balancing act?

GB // That's been a big challenge to find time for it all, but you are a student-athlete so you have to get your studying in and your homework done.

MHJ: You also enjoy cooking. Where did that passion come from?

GB // Yeah, I do. My mom [Mary] has cooked a lot and made homemade meals all the time. I enjoyed helping her cook meals and also baking. So I like to cook and bake in my free time.

MHJ // Are you living in the dorms?

Probably not much of a chance to cook there.

GB // No, I don't have a kitchen in my dorm, so



Bizal tallied her first career collegiate point with an assist in B.C.'s 7-3 win over St. Lawrence on Oct. 12.

there's no cooking. But some of the girls on the team do, so it's really nice they invite us down and I go and eat some of their homemade meals.

MHJ // What's your favorite dish to cook?

GB // I'd have to say—to cook and then eat it afterwards [laugh]—my mom's spicy rigatoni pasta recipe.

MHJ // Is there a secret ingredient you're allowed to share or is it a family secret?

GB // [Laugh] I don't know if there's a secret ingredient or if it's all about tasting and then adding more seasonings if you need to.

MHJ // Do you enjoy the outdoors or other sports?

GB // I grew up playing soccer. I spend a lot of time outside at the cabin, so we love to go tubing and fishing.

My younger sister [Olivia] plays lacrosse, so sometimes we'd grab a stick and throw the ball around with her and helping her get better. I also enjoy playing catch with my entire family. I like to spend a lot of my time outside.

MHJ // Your father (Brady) and uncle (Terry) both played hockey at St. Cloud State, so you clearly come from an athletic family.

GB // Yeah, athletics was a huge part of my life. I grew up in a neighborhood with kids that played hockey. We lived by a pond so the winters in Minnesota we grew up playing hockey outside. In the spring and summer we would play roller hockey in the driveway. I grew up in a hockey family, my brother [Austin] played, so I followed in his and my dad's footsteps. My mom was also very athletic in high school.

MHJ // Your uncle, Kevin McHale, played in the NBA and was a legend with the Boston Celtics in the 1980s. Did that influence your decision to go to Boston?

GB // I think it's really cool that he played out here. It didn't influence my decision, but it is unique that I chose to play at Boston College and he played here for so many years. Hopefully I'll see him out here a few times.

MHJ // Do Boston sports fans know you're related? That could make you an instant fan favorite.

GB // I don't think a lot of people know because we have different last names. But when people do find out, they love it and they're very interested. They find it fascinating. I think it's cool that he played out here for so long and now I'm here. When people do find out they are very intrigued and excited that I'm a niece of his out here in Boston.

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**GRACE BIZAL'S
TOP 5 FAVORITE THINGS
TO COOK/BAKE**
1. Spicy chicken rigatoni
 2. Chocolate chip or peanut butter Hershey Kiss cookies
 3. Double chocolate cake
 4. Sloppy Joes
 5. Homemade pizza with pepperoni, sausage and banana peppers