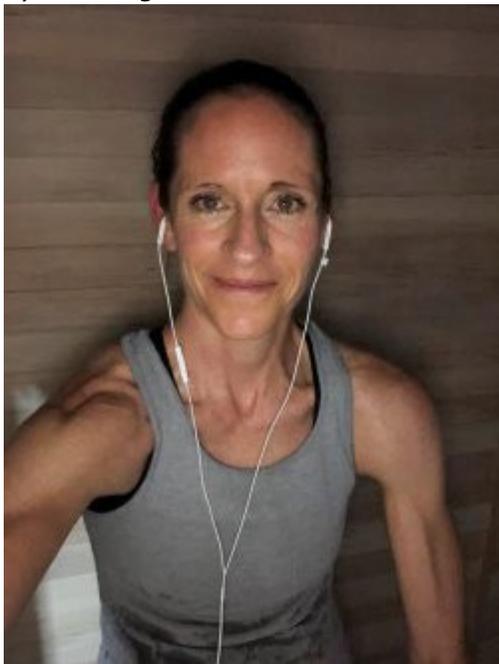


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Carey Schueler - in a league of her own

By Jon Kingdon



Carey Schueler Photos provided

Having a father who is a professional athlete does not necessarily imbue one with athletic ability, but in the case of Carey Schueler, it didn't hurt. Carey's father, Ron, was a pitcher in the major leagues from 1972 to 1979. After retiring as a player, Ron Schueler worked and coached in the league, eventually becoming the general manager of the White Sox from 1991 to 2000. Carey and her older sister Kacey's early lives were somewhat akin to that of army brats, moving from city to city.

"There was a decent amount of jumping around," Schuler said, "but from the age of 7 (1982) until college, we lived for the most part in Lafayette and Moraga. It was a bizarre and messy time when my father was fired by Chicago and my mother got ill. That was when my dad announced that we were going to California. It was a whole new experience for me and though I came to adore California, it was a difficult transition with everything going on."

It was at that young age when Schueler discovered a love for baseball: "I was at the ballpark a lot and I always played baseball. There were some other girls that played in Lafayette Little League, but I was the only one that moved on to Pony League and travel baseball. I had to fight to be able to try out and play for the boy's baseball team at Campolindo because it had never been

done before. I just loved baseball and competing with the boys."

Even with the passage of Title IX, there was still some resentment towards Schueler's playing on the same teams with the boys: "It wasn't terrible in little league in terms of the other boys because I always had the support of really good friends and teammates, but sadly, it was more from the parents that I would get some grief. I would hear it from the stands when I was playing. It did change when I began playing in pony league and in high school, but you would not believe some of the stuff that I heard."

Coached initially by her father, the left handed (actually ambidextrous) Schueler developed a number of pitches as a starter and reliever for the Cougars, even playing some first base: "I threw a fastball, curve, change-up and slider with decent velocity." Hanging around the Oakland A's didn't hurt either as she also got tips from A's pitchers Bob Welch and Dave Stewart.

Schueler did not play baseball as a senior, focusing on basketball in anticipation of getting a scholarship to college. She started as a freshman on the state championship team and played the next three years under Scott Brown, who Schueler loved playing for: "Scott was my favorite and best coach. His knowledge was incredible, and he had the ability to relate to his players and you knew that he cared and was someone you wanted to play hard for."

Brown remembers Schueler as a special player: "Carey's attitude was that if we're going to do something, let's do it well. I loved her work ethic at practice and in the games. She was a great role model and leader. She wasn't afraid to have the ball in her hands at the end of the game, whether it was to make the clutch shot, drive to the basket or dish the ball for the winner. She was always confident that good things would happen, and they usually did."

Despite not playing baseball as a senior, the Chicago White Sox drafted Schueler in the 43rd round (1208th pick overall) in the 1993 MLB draft. Her father initially opposed it, Carey said: "The scouting department went to my father and said how they had seen me grow up and what I could do as a player and that I had earned a chance to play if I wanted to. My dad told them how I was going to play college basketball and he did not want to talk about nepotism. However, the scouts listed all the reasons why they wanted to draft me, so he finally agreed to it."

Schueler was not shy, but never sought out the attention when she played sports: "My attitude was that you do your job well on the court or field and that's what you're supposed to do. After being drafted, I said no to more interviews than I said yes to. I understood the interest, but it just did not intrigue me. Growing up with my father who was a Kansas farm boy, it was you just do your job and don't seek out the glory. I'm sure I got a lot of that from him."

After playing basketball for two years at DePaul, leading the team in assists one season, Schueler transferred to Saint Mary's, planning to continue her basketball career but constant ankle sprains and issues with her back became too much for her to continue her athletic career. She graduated with a degree in sports management and a business minor.

After graduation, Schueler worked for a gym in Chicago and privately with clients, starting a youth and teen personal and sports specific training program designed to help these student-athletes get to the college level and beyond.

After being diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease (a thyroid autoimmune disorder), Schueler was prompted to take a more holistic approach to confronting her condition: "I had terrible fatigue, fibromyalgia, my body was in constant pain and I had brain fog. It just became my mission to get my health back."

Schueler was told she would have to take medication for the rest of her life and live with it but the competitive side of her attacked the disease from many different directions: "I changed the way I ate, as nutrition is massive. I changed the way I exercised and worked extremely hard on reducing stress and learned ways to improve my sleep. I learned how to reduce the toxins in my body daily. I added supplements to my diet that were specific to my needs. I did specific functional medicine labs that revealed the state of my gut health [and] internal inflammation, and I worked with an amazing coach who taught me the immense value and importance of mindset."

It was this thinking that sent Schueler to a functional doctor rather than a general practitioner: "My functional doctor helped me discover the root cause of my illness. I found out I had a leaky gut and that there was an overgrowth of bacteria. I was able to balance my adrenals so that my body stopped believing I was in a constant state of stress and panic, helping me to improve my sleep, and so on."

This led Schueler to get certified as an Integrative Healthy Practitioner and to start her own business, 4 My Health. "I look for underlying root causes, finding imbalances or deficiencies in someone's health to restore the equilibrium in a homeostasis or balance in their health. It's all designed to figure out what is causing their health disturbances and get them back into balance. I work closely with a functional medicine doctor here in Chicago and we have a business relationship where we will refer and often talk with each other"

Scott Brown has been a client of Schueler's and speaks highly of the results: "4 My Health is fabulous. I have reached out to Carey about what I needed to do to have a healthy lifestyle and what to look for. I really appreciate what she has done for me. She answered all my questions and responds to any of my comments on Facebook. Our roles have changed as she is now my coach."

Most of her work with clients these days has been virtual, either on the phone, Zoom, Facetime and emailing text messages: "With these tools it has worked out incredibly well even with the quarantine." Still, Schueler offers this proviso: "The information I provide is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from your physician or other health care professionals or any information contained on or in any product label or packaging. You should not stop taking any medication without first consulting your physician."

Schueler and her wife, Kate Varde, were married in 2015 and each carried one of their children to term, 5-year-old Schueler Varde and 6-month-old Grace Varde. If genetics means anything, baseball and softball will be a big part of their lives. Varde played softball at Cornell and was inducted into the Cornell Sports Hall of Fame. "My son loves baseball," Schueler said. "It's such a beautiful game. We will share our love of sports with Grace as well."

It's been a few years since Schueler has been back to Lamorinda, but she still carries great memories of the community: "It's such a beautiful area and all three high schools are incredible schools and have great athletic programs. Academically you could not go wrong with any of them and it was an idyllic place to grow up. I don't think I really knew how good I had it when I was young. It's been a number of years since I've been out there, but it would certainly be interesting to come back and visit."



Ron Schueler with Carey, center, and her sister Kasey.

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