

The Youngman Field Restoration Project:

Ensuring Access and Opportunity and Updating the Facility

I absolutely cannot imagine what my Middlebury experience would have been like without being a member of the lacrosse team,” says Skyler Hopkins ’09, a midfielder and environmental studies major from Easton, Maryland. “I would be completely unfulfilled without the competition, the friendships, and the sense of community the lacrosse program has given me.”

Skyler first suited up in lacrosse pads at six years of age. He says the game keeps his attention for its speed and the delicate combination of physicality and finesse it requires. For Skyler, lacrosse also affords him the opportunity to be

part of a team, yet maintain creativity as an individual player.

Growing up the son of a portrait artist and a photographer who stressed the importance of a well-rounded education, Skyler sought a college that would provide him with the balance of challenging academics and competitive athletics. After Skyler met with Erin

Quinn ’86, former head coach of the men’s lacrosse team and current director of athletics, Middlebury immediately stood out from other schools.

“I had coaches selling the program, telling me about how great the team was, along with the nightlife and the girls,” Skyler recalls. “Coach Quinn, on the other hand, genuinely cared about me striking a healthy balance in all aspects of my life, a philosophy that Coach [Dave] Campbell ’00 has carried through since he took over as head coach.”

Financial Aid

Without the generosity of the Daniel J. Mahoney Scholarship, which Skyler has received his last three years on campus, he would not have been able to attend Middlebury. “I have been a scholarship student virtually all my life,” Skyler

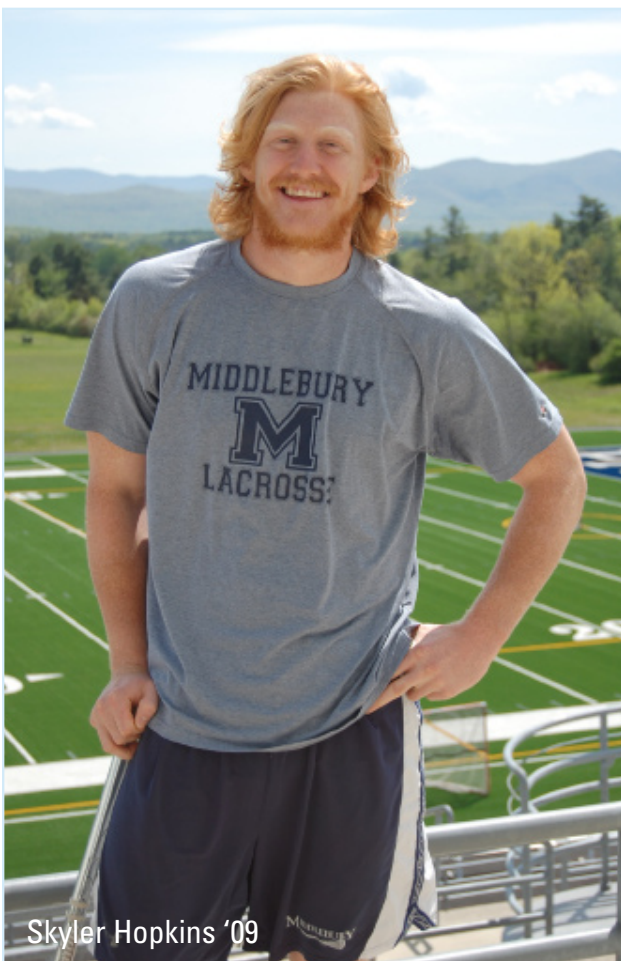
explained. “I have developed a deep appreciation for the generosity of others. My life has been forever changed by my donor’s passion for education. The remarkable education I have received here has definitely enriched my life.”

Coach

Campbell, who was named NESCAC coach of the year this season, says his team would have been missing a great deal

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without Skyler. “This year especially, Skyler stepped into a leadership role. He brings a lot of character to the team and keeps guys loose with his great attitude,” Coach Campbell notes. “Skyler grew a lot this season. He had a phenomenal year on the field and acquired a certain mental toughness that helped him mature on the field and in the classroom.”



Skyler Hopkins ’09

Skyler at a Glance

Hometown: Easton, Maryland

Major: Environmental Studies with an Economics focus

Position: Midfield

Favorite Class: Kit Wilson’s “American Landscapes: 1825-1865”

Favorite Opponent: Wesleyan

Stick of Choice: Warrior Evo Pro with Kryptolyte shaft

Skyler also emerged as a leading scorer on the team, finishing the season with 34 goals and 22 assists. He was named first-team All-NESCAC and All-New England and earned an All-American honorable mention. Teammate Matt Ferrer '09 says, "Skyler's role on our team is vital to our success. Skill and on-field production aside, he has that unique combination of intensity and comedy rarely found in a locker room. He is hard working, focused, and demands the most out of himself and his teammates."

The Field

The newly restored Youngman Field gave Skyler and his teammates the means to excel on the state-of-the-art fully synthetic surface that improved their play and kept the team largely injury-free. "The surface is incredible with its reliability and ease on our joints; it's a major improvement from years past when we were slipping and sliding on sloppy fields and rolling our ankles," he explains. "And, of course, we couldn't ask for a better view."

The field also provided a consistent playing surface for both practices and games, according to Coach Campbell. "It's easily one of the best surfaces in Division III athletics. Whether it was raining or beautiful outside, we could come out onto the field and accomplish what we needed to get done every single day." He added, "Every opposing



Skyler shoots against Wesleyan defenders

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coach commented on what a gorgeous place it is to play."

The Friendships

To Skyler, the best part of the Middlebury lacrosse program is the tight-knit group of friends that defines the team. "Every game, I walk off the field with my best friends, with whom I share this innate bond and intense camaraderie," Skyler reflects. "In 30 years, we will still be best friends, giving it our all at the annual Vail Lacrosse Shootout, even when our knees, backs, and ankles start to fail us."

Teammate Brad Forkner '10 says, "Skyler's unbelievable abilities on the field certainly speak for themselves; however, the intangible qualities of friendship he holds are what truly stick out to me. Skyler is like a brother to me and to many others on our team."

Skyler's immediate future plans remain uncertain "unless I get picked up by a professional team," he jokes. "Whether in the classroom or on the field, there is something to be said for working towards a common goal, which is the most valuable lesson I will take with me after Middlebury."

