

**Erin Borchard**  
**Pasadena, Calif.**  
**Women's Platform**

A lot of things have changed for Erin Borchard since her last U.S. Olympic Trials. But life altering changes like marriage, a new last name and a new house have taken a backseat to the fact that this time, she's a legitimate contender to place in the top two spots and represent the U.S. in the Olympic Games.

"I cannot wait for my chance to vie for that team spot. I have nothing to lose and absolutely everything to gain," she said. "There is no way that I would be sacrificing my time with my new husband, delaying the start of my career, or putting in the hours of tough training that I do day-in and day-out, if qualifying for the Olympics was not a legitimate dream."

Borchard, who competed under her maiden name, Erin Sones, in the 2000 Trials and placed tenth in the platform event, could be competing for the last time this June.

"If I do not make the team, Olympic Trials will be my last competition and, very likely, my last time up on a 10-meter platform," she said. "If that is the case, I want to put together an incredible list of dives, I want the U.S. diving world to remember me as an incredible diver, both athletic and beautiful to watch."

Borchard enjoyed a successful NCAA career while diving for Stanford University. She brought home the 2001 Division I platform title and helped propel her team to within 1.5 points of winning the team title.

"My win on platform was such an amazing way to contribute to that exciting team effort. I've never been more proud in that moment," she said.

But Stanford brought much more than diving success to Borchard.

"I found myself to be just a small fish in a great sea of many, many other phenomenal individuals. It was the most amazing academic and athletic environment for me to learn and train in. I was pushed each and every day by those around me to achieve far greater dreams than I had ever imagined possible for myself."

While at Stanford, Borchard also worked in a genetic lab for a colon oncologist at the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer center, and found her calling.

"As nerdy as it makes me, genetics is my other passion outside of diving," she said. She would like to combine her science knowledge with her 'people' skills and do PR or media relations for a place like the Norris Cancer Center.

It was also at Stanford that she met her husband, Joe, who played football and baseball for the Cardinals, going to both the Rose Bowl and the College World Series in 2000. Now, Joe plays for the Chicago White Sox's AAA affiliate team, the Charlotte Knights, and has been moved up to the MLB on a few occasions.

"Last year, all of my family and friends got to go see him play in LA against the Dodgers," Borchard said. "It was such a thrill!"

Since diving takes up most of her life, she hasn't been able to experience the life as a baseball wife, and since he was drafted in 2000 they have not seen much of each other from Feb. – Oct of each year.

"There are such perks to being married to a fellow athlete, though," she said. "I love that he fully understands my commitment to my sport. We totally feed off of each other, too. We're constantly motivating each other, comforting each other as only another athlete really can, and sharing mental and physical training tips all the time. In a way, he's my closest teammate."

Her diving teammate, Rachelle Kunkel, is also a close friend, and whom Borchard believes is the most powerful female diver the U.S. may have ever had.

"I'm not sure that I would still be in the sport without her daily support and companionship," Borchard said. "She puts on an incredible show every time she competes. And beyond that, Shell has a heart of gold, impeccable moral standards, and such a fun-loving personality."

Besides supporting each other in the pool, the two teammates undergo their coach's intensive dryland training together.

"My coach, Hongping Li is extremely demanding and inventive, and we all refer to our daily routine as 'Chinese Torture,'" Borchard said.

Whether being tortured or practicing her favorite dive - her front 3 ½ pike because it shows off her "athletic ability and grace" - Borchard will always bring her "Type A" personality.

"I am the epitome of a perfectionist," she said. "I crave being in control, I am incredibly organized, I am one heck of a 'nervous Nellie,' and I cannot stand failure."

When she was looking for an option besides gymnastics to keep her busy, diving chose her; she didn't choose it, she said. Gymnastics required her to become home schooled as the training increased, and diving seemed like an exciting alternative.

"Diving was the perfect compromise for me. I could reach that elite level that I craved to attain, yet I could do it with a more reasonable amount of training time," she said.

Now her training time has increased incredibly, in part because Joe's salary lets her train full time without a job. As a result, the Olympic Trials should be different this year as she works for one of the two spots on the Olympic Team.

"All of us women competing have a very slim chance of qualifying, however, we all have a shot," Borchard said. "All I feel right now is pure excitement. Most of all though, I have to say that I am honored to be a part of this competition. I am honored to be one of the best in the country at what I do, and I am honored at the possibility of proudly representing the United States."