

Geist Rides onto World Stage in China

By Paul Rakszawski
The Minstrel

Meet Kim Geist, senior at DeSales and world class cyclist, who just got back from competing in the Cycling World Cup in Beijing, China. There, she placed sixth overall in the 3000-meter individual pursuit, the highest spot taken by an American at the World Cup event.

This is a great feat by itself, but it is made even more impressive because Geist was involved in a very serious tractor trailer accident while training on her bicycle in August 2007. In the accident, Geist received numerous injuries, including fractured ribs, pelvis, vertebrae, and partially collapsed lungs.

Recovery and rehabilitation, according to Geist, took about a year to complete. “I had to be careful not to do things too quickly, injure myself more, and possibly risk not making any improvements over the long term,” She said of her recovery.

After her hospitalization, Geist remained very determined to reach the high level of performance that she was at before her injury. “The toughest thing was giving everything time to heal,” Geist said.

When she was healed, Geist worked hard to regain her racing form. “Once I was able to get back



Geist overcame adversity to place 6th in World Championship in China, which brings her one step closer to the Olympics in 2012. Photos courtesy of Lester Images.

on the bike, it was a matter of putting my head down and methodically plugging away at the training my coach and I put together,” Geist said. “I went from training up to five hours a day at a high intensity to starting out again at 15 minutes of easy riding, so it was a pretty long road back,” She said.

The training that Geist goes through is intensive. A sport and exercise major, Geist lifts weights in the gym during the off-season to increase her strength and power, and rides her bike up to five hours at a time when focusing on aerobic training. When the season draws near, Geist incorporates more interval training into her regimen, or shorter, intense efforts. Once in-season, Geist’s training specifically aims to develop certain aspects of cycling, depending on what her upcoming races and events are.



As one of her sport’s best, Geist has competed in over 600 events over the last 12 years, including the Junior World Championships held in Austria in 2005; the Junior World Championships in Los Angeles in 2004; the Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2007; and most recently, the National Track Cycling Championships in Los Angeles in 2008.

The training and hard work that Geist has put in will hopefully pay off for her with a trip to the 2012 Olympics in London. “I’m on the four year plan now,” Geist said, referring to her road to the Olympics. “Nationals, back in October was step one. The World Cup in Beijing was step two,” she said. A third step will be when Geist competes at another World Cup event in February, held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Geist is a member of the DeSales Cycling Club, which was established during the 2006-2007 academic year, sponsored by the Rev. Peter Leonard, OSFS, dean of graduate education at DeSales.

“Get in touch with the DeSales Cycling team,” Geist said, when asked to offer advice to any aspiring cyclists out there. “We’re always looking for more individuals to come ride with us and/or compete in the collegiate racing season and we can be a big help in getting you started,” She advised.

After her graduation, Geist plans to continue competing and even coach someday. But for now, she is focused on the next step of her journey to the Olympics: the World Cup event in Denmark, held in just a few short weeks.

Though Geist has been through some tough times, overcoming extraordinary injuries, she has remained strong and focused, and is able to put everything in

perspective. “Like with everything, keep the big picture in mind,” Geist said. “Never forget that big goal, and why you’re doing what you’re doing, when the going gets rough.”

