

# Q & A With Sol Alumni - Julia Dahlke



The United States Merchant Marine Academy women's basketball team is 15-1 this season. They are beating their opponents by an average of almost 18 points per game. A big part of this success comes from their starting point guard Julia Dahlke (Sol class of 2018). Julia has started every game this season as a freshman averaging almost 8 points 4 rebounds, and 3 assists per game. She is also averaging almost 33 minutes per game out of the 40 minute collegiate game.. Over the holidays, we had the pleasure of being able to talk with Julia about her success and how Sol helped prepare her for the next level.

**Sol:** "How was your experience at Sol?"

**Julia:** "I absolutely loved Sol! I had Coach Turpin for two years there and she was great. The other coaches I had were phenomenal as well. You can really tell that all the coaches are knowledgeable and care for their players. I wouldn't be the player I am today without Sol."

**Sol:** "How was the transition from Sol/High School to College? Was it a very difficult one?"

**Julia:** "Not much at all. Coach Turpin kind of ran her practices like a college practice and it was very intense. We actually do a lot of the same drills here at the Merchant Academy that we did at Sol practices, camps, and skills clinics, so the transition was really smooth in that aspect. I think the speed of the game was the biggest difference."

**Sol:** "So how did you get to playing the point guard position in college after playing being an off guard in high school? Did you have to fight for that starting spot?"

**Julia:** "Once practice and workouts had started, my coach had told me she wanted me to play the point guard spot. I just wanted to do anything to help the team, so I didn't mind. There was another player who played point guard the previous season, so we really had to battle it out in the early part of the season for the starting spot."

I had never really heard of the United States Merchant Marine Academy, so I wanted to know a little about the school and why Julia made that choice.

**Sol:** "Do you want to go to the marines after college?"

**Julia:** I grew up in a military home, and I actually wasn't planning on going to a military school. The Assistant coach saw me play in Kentucky when we went to play at the Battle of the Boro

tournament. I actually had no idea it was a military school until later. This type of school does not require you to go into active duty, so I can do the reserves for 8 years.”

**Sol:** “Did you have other college options?”

**Julia:** “Yes, I had a few other options and interests from other schools. The recruiting process was a long one and not the easiest thing to go through. The college Placement Program at Sol really helped me take my time to make the best decision. After my senior season ended, I knew I wasn’t ready to stop playing. I got to play on the Sol Seniors team after graduation, but we had to report in June so I left much earlier than most traditional freshman.”

**Sol:** What advice would you give high school players who want to play in college?

**Julia:** I would tell them that playing college basketball is such a huge commitment but it is so rewarding. You have to be willing to work hard, endure, and just be willing to do whatever it takes. You also have to truly love the game because that alone should fuel your determination. You have to love it more than you hate all those other things (waking up for morning lifts, traveling when you have tests the next day etc) One of the best pieces of advice I had when picking a school was that if basketball was out of the picture would I still go there?

**Sol:** Oh that is great! Well I won’t take up much more of your time. I saw a great interview of you online and we want you to know how proud we are!

**Julia:** Thank you so much coach! It has been a great season and I am looking forward to the rest of it. I know I wouldn’t be where I am today without Sol and their college placement program!



*Post-Game Interview Video*

Sol Reporter - Matthew Armstrong - Head of the College Placement Program