

JENNIFER ABBONDANZA

Jen kicked off her passion for soccer at a young age in the Ewing Girls Soccer Association recreational program. Her travel days began with the Ewing Blazers, coached by Eileen McManimon and Ron Brennfleck. She went on to play club ball with Medford Strikers and spent quite a few years in the Olympic Development Program, where she climbed to the regional level and traveled internationally with the squad.

Jen enjoyed success at Ewing High School, where she also played basketball and softball. On the pitch, under coach Shelly Dearden, she helped lead the Blue Devils to a co-state championship in 1991. Jen particularly enjoyed being a part of the 'Crown Road Connection', coined due to the many goals created between her and her teammate/next door neighbor, Misty Cregar. Jen was named a High School All American and captained the squad her senior year. She was later inducted to the Ewing High School Hall of Fame as the female athlete of the 1990s. In college, at Princeton, Jen was twice named MVP, captained the team her senior year under Julie Cunningham Shackford and earned All-Ivy and Academic All-Ivy accolades. She also competed for the Under-23 national championship for Buckingham under Ron Veihweger. After college, Jen had a brief stint on the New Jersey Wildcats and was a founding member of the New York Athletic Club's women's soccer program.

Jen is now Vice President of Corporate Initiatives at NBCUniversal where she works with senior leaders across the company to advance and implement the company's diversity efforts. She attributes her success off the field to the teamwork principals and dedication learned as a soccer player and an athlete. Jen fondly remembers the countless road trips and tournaments over the years and is grateful for the support of her biggest fans that made it all possible, her family...parents, Mary Jo and John, sisters Kathleen and Melissa, and her late grandmother, Faye Moore. Jen is also deeply indebted to the game for the strong friendships developed as a result of the many teams on which she was lucky enough to play.

She currently resides in New York City with her partner, Jill Whalen, where she completed her latest accomplishment, surviving the NYC Marathon. These days Jen enjoys her role as a dedicated futbol fan, supporting US Soccer and taking annual pilgrimages to London for Premier League games (go Tottenham!). She can often be found buying Churros on the walk back to the Path after Red Bull matches.