



NJSIAA TRAILBLAZER

When it comes to New Jersey athletes who've taken advantage of the opportunities created by the passage of Title IX, Heather O'Reilly has earned a spot near the top of the list.

A native of East Brunswick, she is the youngest of four children and was introduced to sports by her three older brothers and supportive parents. She graduated from her hometown high school in 2003, and went on to become one of the most decorated soccer players in United States history. But she wasn't just a soccer player - she was also a basketball standout through high school.

At East Brunswick, she scored 143 goals and sparked the Bears to the Group 4 state championship as a junior in 2001. Aside from playing basketball, she was also a member of the National Honor Society. As a senior, she won national Player of the Year awards from Parade magazine, Gatorade and the National Soccer Coaches Association.



She was on the roster of the United States Under-19 team as an East Brunswick junior in 2002 when she was called up to the women's national team for the first time to compete at the Algarve Cup in Portugal. Later that year, she helped the U-19 team win the world championship.

The summer before her freshman year at North Carolina, she broke her leg playing for the national team. She recovered to score 16 goals that fall while being named National Freshman of the Year for a Tar Heels team that won the NCAA championship.

She was selected for the Olympic team in 2004, and at age 19 was the youngest player on the side that competed in Athens. She scored the overtime game-winner to beat Germany in the semifinals, and the USA then defeated Brazil for the gold medal.

O'Reilly's career at North Carolina continued, and she led the Tar Heels to another NCAA title as a senior in 2006.



TITLE IX⁵⁰
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Her career totals were 59 goals and 49 assists. She was awarded several National Player of the Year awards as a senior, and the school retired her No. 20 jersey.

She then began to play professionally, and helped the New Jersey Wildcats win the W-League championship in 2005. In the first year of the Women's Professional Soccer league in 2009, she scored the goal when New Jersey's Sky Blue FC beat Los Angeles, 1-0, in the championship match.

All the while, she was still starring for the national team, which also won gold medals at the Olympics in Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012. The USWNT also won the FIFA World Cup in 2015 with O'Reilly on the roster.

She retired from the USWNT in 2016 after appearing in her 231st game, which is among the most in international history. She scored 47 goals during her time with the team.



Her final pro championships came as member of the North Carolina Courage in 2018, when the team won the National Women's Soccer League championship, as well as the Women's International Champions Cup.

She was inducted into the NJSIAA Hall of Fame in 2012, and was an charter inductee into the East Brunswick High School Alumni Hall of Fame in 2019.

She's now an analyst for Fox Sports, and is the mother of two boys, William (born in 2020) and Jack (born in 2021).

