

Laura McDonald (with rugby ball) has only been playing for five years, but that hasn't stopped her from being named team captain and most valuable player for the Under-23 USA National Women's Rugby Eagle 15 team. She was also selected to the USA National Women's Eagles Sevens team for the New Zealand and Fiji Tour as well as the Hong Kong Sevens Tournament. She trains daily by running, lifting weights and practicing with her team. She said there are certainly areas in her life that have to give a little, but she feels the sacrifices will be worth it.

courtesy photo



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Kevin Eastler is the national champion in the men's 20-kilometer race walk. He's been accepted into the 2003 World Class Athlete Program where he'll train full-time for the U.S. race walk Olympic Trials. He said it's remarkable he placed as well as he did in the 2003 competitions considering he trains half as much as his fellow colleagues because of his duties as a missile combat crew commander in the 400th Missile Squadron at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo.

Race walker, rugby player earn top Air Force sporting titles

SAN ANTONIO — The Air Force announced its 2003 Athletes of the Year in December at the annual Athletic Business Conference in Orlando, Fla.

First Lt. **Laura McDonald** from Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, and Capt. **Kevin Eastler** from F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., received top honors.

Lieutenant McDonald is one of the nation's top female rugby players. She was one of 36 players selected from a pool of 12,000 for the USA Eagle Women's National Team, the 2006 world cup team.

She was also one of 12 players selected for the U.S. Women's National Sevens Rugby team. She competed in more than 15 international matches during 2003.

Captain Eastler, the United States' elite race walker, became the first American to qualify for the Olympic "A" standard time.

He was also formally recognized in December by USA Track and Field and presented the Capt. **Ron Zinn** Memorial award as the country's top race walker.