



# Middleton's Mulloy takes aim at Olympic Gold

By **BILL KIPOURAS**  
News staff

It's a long and improbable journey from Middleton to Sydney, Australia via Fairbanks, Alaska. But that's the circuitous route Melissa Mulloy has taken to achieve the grand honor of being a United States Olympian.

Now the 22-year-old Masconomet Regional alumna is ready to give a worldwide field her best shot as a member of Uncle Sam's rifle shooting squad, specifically in the smallbore (.22 caliber) event.

It's the story of an athlete who may have been on target for Olympic glory as early as her freshman year at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, where the 5-foot-4 senior business major would become a five-time All-America in smallbore and air rifle, a backbone in two NCAA championships and a national titleholder in air rifle in USA Shooting.

"There was no doubt in my mind Melissa would be an Olympian. I told her parents (Jerry and Susan) last year that she'd do it. I've felt since she got here four years ago that all she needed was some fine-tuning in the technical aspects to be an Olympian some day," said Randy Pitney, the UAF coach.

"We had a strategic plan and she followed it impeccably. I told her in her freshman year I expected her to go to the 2000 Olympics, and it's what she wanted. It was an easy road to follow because of her willingness to make the commitment. She's a wonderful young lady, too. Any parent would be pleased if they had a daughter who turned out like Melissa."

Mulloy may have passed through Masconomet without anyone outside of her closest friends knowing about her rifle talents. That's her style: Ms. Humility.

She played freshman softball, but that was it in high school. She was too busy on the range, qualifying for Junior Olympics, sectional and national competitions that attracted a ton of recruiters.

Xavier, West Virginia, DePaul, Marquette, Kentucky, Norwich, Murray State, the University of Texas at El Paso and Alaska all wooed her. She accepted a full rifle scholarship from UAF "after an awesome visit". Even after she declared, some of the others were still calling her at home, hoping against hope that she might change her mind.

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Courtesy photo  
**Middleton's Melissa Mulloy is headed to Sydney, Australia this September as a member of the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team. She will be competing in the smallbore event.**