



## Heart of an Athlete

October 2008

### Samantha Brand

University of San Francisco Soccer, Forward

**Selected Struggle:** Perseverance

**Dictionary definition:** “Steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose or a state, especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles or discouragement.”

**My definition:** “Continuing on the road that I know God has marked out for me even when I feel like the obstacles ahead of me are going to be unbearable.”

**Who encourages me to persevere:** “My family always seems to point me back to the only One who is capable of helping me deal with any struggle: Jesus Christ.”

**Favorite Scripture that deals with perseverance:** Psalm 139 (NIV) – *“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all of my ways. ... All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be”* (v. 1-3, 16).

**Why I chose this passage:** “I recently came across a letter I had written to myself four years ago.

In it, I wrote to go to this passage in the Psalms. It addressed exactly what I had been struggling with. It tells me that God is in complete control of everything from beginning to end. This passage doesn't just tell me that the Lord is there for me; it tells me that I may not always understand what is going on around me and encourages me that the Lord has me in His hands and won't let me give up.”

**How I keep from giving up in life:** “This past summer when I was home on summer vacation, I began to worry about going back to school. Even though it was hard, I knew I had to pray and give up those worries in order to persevere.

“Prayer is what gets me through the day. When I'm scared, I pray. When I'm angry, I pray. I pray and pray because, during the season, I can't always get to a church to talk to a pastor or don't have time to call my family. The only constant thing in my life that helps me persevere is my ability to talk to God wherever I am and whenever I want.”

***“The Lord has me in His hands and won't let me give up.”***

**How I keep from giving up in sports:** “As a student-athlete, I face obstacles that I have to overcome every day. I'm human, and many times I want to break down and quit. That's the honest truth. I do, however, have an awesome God who places His comforting touch on me and allows me to persevere.

“It is hard when I am tempted to join my team in doing things I don't agree with or when I'm tempted to retaliate on the field because of an opponent's poor sportsmanship. But the Holy Spirit (sometimes conveyed by the voice of my mother) reminds me to fight through it because I may be the only picture of Jesus that some of my teammates or opponents will see.”

## About the Athlete

**Hometown:** Denair, Calif.

**Class:** Junior

**Position:** Forward

**Major:** Kinesiology

### Career Highlights:

- Started all 20 games for the Dons as both a freshman and a sophomore.
- Earned a career-high three points during a 2007 game against Gonzaga.
- As a senior at Turlock Christian High School, Brand was named both team and league MVP.

### Personal:

Active in FCA since high school, Brand is part of the USF Huddle, which she refers to as her Christian family away from home.

"FCA keeps me grounded during the most hectic part of my year," she said. "I don't feel alone in my struggles as a Christian student athlete."

Brand's involvement in FCA also has left a mark on those who attend. "She has an exuberant light and joy that radiates from within her heart and spirit" says Bay Area FCA Representative Rigo Lopez. "She brings a contagious enthusiasm wherever she goes and inspires those around her to become better." **STV**

Photos courtesy of University of San Francisco.

