

RING BY SPRING

— ATHLETE EDITION —

BY ROBERT BOUFFARD

“Ring by spring,”

a term you’ve probably heard a lot around Messiah. It refers to a dating couple getting engaged by their last semester of their senior year. Each spring brings new couples who continue to live out the Messiah tradition.

Planning a wedding, along with regular schoolwork, a social life and other every-day responsibilities can be a lot. Both members of a couple being student athletes on top of all of this can add a whole new layer to a relationship.

Austin Mellinger, an infielder on the baseball team, and Emily Schillinger, a forward on the field hockey team, are one such couple. They got engaged this past fall semester after dating for one day short of a year.

Mellinger took her to Cork and Fork in Harrisburg, which happens to be the location of their first date. After a walk along the river, Mellinger played Schillinger a song on his guitar and proposed with the ring that was hidden in the guitar case.

“I was very oblivious to the whole thing,” Schillinger said.

The wedding will be in early August and will be filled with worship throughout the entire ceremony. The couple has always appreciated weddings that emphasize the spiritual aspect of marriage, and they want to bring that into their own special day.

“We’re both pretty big into worship, and we’ve both led worship in multiple groups and on our teams,” Schillinger said.

Because both are a part of a sports team, they have had to be very intentional in making their relationship grow and giving it the attention it needs.

“There is definitely that theme of sacrificing your time and the time that you want to be able to spend with each other because of the role that you have as a teammate,” said Mellinger.

They both are able to find incredible support from the people around them.

“What I’ve found with being on a team is that it’s more-so just like a family, so they all support you so much,” Schillinger said.

The same team support can be found for Senior couple, Colin Fry and Ally Reinhardt.



COLIN FRY & ALLY REINHARDT
PHOTO BY LIZZY COLE



MATT HESS & CARISSA GEHMAN
PHOTO BY ERICA ENGLE



AUSTIN MELLINGER & EMILY SCHILLINGER
PHOTO BY KELSI KRAMER HOOVER

Fry, third baseman for the baseball team, and Reinhardt, a midfielder for the Women’s soccer team, got engaged the day after Mellinger and Schillinger.

Fry’s plans for his proposal were, “elaborate in [his] eyes.” He brought Reinhardt to a coffee shop in Hershey and proposed in front of a beautiful scene of landscaping and fountains.

“I had no idea what was going on the whole time,” said Reinhardt. “Which is impressive because normally, he’s not good at keeping secrets from me!”

“It’s the only secret I’ve successfully pulled off in two and a half years,” said Fry.

They are looking forward to being around loved ones at their wedding in July. Their engagement is a time that they are eager to see the end of, but they are enjoying it at the same time.

“It’s a different sense of closeness,” said Reinhardt.

Because of their responsibilities as athletes, they’ve found that their relationship needs to be flexible.

“You cherish the moments you have together,” said Fry. “It could be five minutes or it could be two hours. And those five minutes might mean the same as those two hours because of the craziness of college athletics.”

Athletics has been important for Fry and Reinhardt because they are able to understand each other due to their similar roles as athletes. It also adds a level of friendly competition within their relationship.

“There’s a lot of trash talking that goes on,” said Reinhardt.

Whether it’s Spike Ball, a board game or their favorite hockey teams, there is always good competition between them.

Competition in a relationship is a theme among our next athlete couple, as well. Basketball guard Matt Hess and field hockey forward Carissa Gehman even include it on dates with things like mini golf and bowling.

They had been dating for almost two years when Hess created a walkway with candles at Gehman’s house, where he waited, ready to propose.

They are enjoying their engagement, but are also looking forward to being married.

“You’re always looking forward to the day when your wedding is finally [here],” said Gehman.

The wedding will be in June.

With Hess and Gehman both being athletes, they “understand that sometimes the sport needs to come first.”

At the same time, their sports are in different seasons, which allows them to go support each other. They are grateful for support from each other, but also from fellow teammates and family members.

“You get to know people and become good friends with [the other person’s teammates] too,” said Hess.

Any romantic relationship is a bond between two people, but athletes are able to share this unique and special bond based on something they both love: sports.