

Sports

Training since age 7 to be great: Olivia Moultrie turns pro at 13

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff

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Thirteen-year-old professional soccer player Olivia Moultrie appeared in Nike's all-women "Dream Crazy" ad which debuted during the Academy Awards on February 24, 2019. Photo by: Nike

A new Nike ad came out February 24. It shows tennis star Serena Williams. Near the end, it shows a young soccer player.

Her name is Olivia Moultrie. She is just 13 years old. She's already become a professional soccer player.

Nike Contract Offers A Future

Olivia has signed a contract with Nike. In doing that, she will not go to college for soccer. She had a scholarship from the University of North Carolina. They offered it to her when she was only 11.

Her father, K.C. Moultrie, is confident that it is the right call.

Most girls who play soccer will not make millions of dollars, he told The New York Times. So most should go to college, he says.

However, Olivia's goal, he says, is to be the best player in the world. For her, he says, going pro early is the right move.

More Opportunities For Women's Soccer Success

Moultrie's agent is Spencer Wadsworth. He told the Times that her Nike deal was worth more than the value of a four-year scholarship. She is now the youngest to pass a scholarship to turn pro instead.

Wadsworth says it shows women's soccer is catching up with men's. There is more opportunity to **earn** money.

It is not clear where Moultrie will play for now. She is not allowed to play high school or club soccer. The Oregonian newspaper **reported** February 25 that she was set to move from California to Portland, Oregon. There she could have become a player for the Thorns team. It is in the National Women's Soccer League. However, league rules say that athletes must be at least 18.

She must be 18 to play for professional European teams, too, the Times says.

Training For Greatness

Olivia Moultrie has been **training** since age 7. She said her dad **encouraged** her **passion**.

Olivia has been home-schooled since the fifth grade. This gave her more time to train. She looks at every day as "an opportunity," she says. This view makes her want to become great.

In the past, young boys have turned pro. Freddy Adu was just 14 when he joined the D.C. United team in 2004.

Adu never quite delivered on his talent, though.

Waiting For Adulthood

North Carolina coach Anson Dorrance told the Times that her soccer skills were unquestionable. However, her body will change as she gets older, he says. It is risky for teams to commit to players this young.

Time will tell if Moultrie continues to star in soccer as an adult. Still, the 13-year-old has already made her mark. She has done something no other young player has.