

ASU's Remy Martin values family roots, the chance to lead Sun Devil basketball team

By Michelle Gardner, azcentral.com (Feb. 1, 2019)

Remy Martin was destined to be an athlete, at least parents Mary Ann Macaspac and Sam Martin always thought so.

Martin was just a toddler and had barely learned to walk when Macaspac walked into a room just in time to see her little boy fling his bottle across the room.

That solved one mystery.

Baby bottles had been disappearing and they thought the nanny had been misplacing them. They soon started finding them in garbage cans and waste baskets. Some had rolled under the furniture.

"That's when we knew he had a great arm," Sam Martin laughed.

Their premonition materialized.

The youngest of their three children went on to excel in multiple sports. While better at football and baseball, basketball was Remy Martin's passion.

Martin, now a 20-year-old sophomore, is holding down the starting point guard position for the Arizona State men's basketball team, which is hoping to win its first Pac-12 title.

Martin had choice of colleges coming out of Sierra Canyon, a private school of about 1,000 students located in Chatsworth, about 35 miles from Los Angeles. UCLA seemed like a natural choice. Not only is it close to home but Martin's mother works as a nurse at the UCLA Medical Center.

But the chance to learn from an accomplished point guard in Hurley, a two-time national champion as a player at Duke and former starter for the NBA's Sacramento Kings, was among the factors that lured Martin to Tempe. "He has accomplished almost everything there is to accomplish in the game," Sam Martin said of his son's coach. "That's the kind of person you want your son to learn from."

Family is never far however. His parents and older sisters Samantha, 26, and Bree, 23, often travel to Arizona for home games and the Sun Devils have made a couple of trips to Southern California. When ASU, now 15-6 overall, and 6-3 in Pac 12 play, took on Nevada at Staples Center in December, Martin's rooting section numbered close to 100. [Last weekend the Sun Devil returned](#) for games against USC at the Galen Center and UCLA at the famed Pauley Pavilion.

Martin is part of a tight-knit Filipino family. Hurley noticed that quickly. When he went to visit the point guard during the recruiting process there was a large and enthusiastic welcoming committee.

"Usually you're there with the family and sometimes a few other people," said Hurley, in his fourth year heading the program. "But there must have been 50 or 60 people there. Sometimes that is a little uncomfortable and overwhelming but his dad was out in the back barbecuing and they made me feel like part of the family."

Martin, named after his maternal grandfather, may have been born in this country but values the roots he has in the Philippines. His mother was born there and emigrated to the United States when she was in high school.

Martin has never visited the country but hopes to do so one day when the political landscape is a bit more stable. His mother's six siblings are all in the U.S. but other relatives remain in the Philippines.

He wears a wristband with the flag of the country for every game. He enjoys Filipino foods as well but admits he can't eat much of it because it's not exactly nutritionally sound for an athlete.

Boxer Manny Pacquiao is the national sports hero in the Philippines but there are really no role models that have excelled in the NBA. Jordan Clarkson of the Cleveland Cavaliers is one of few to make it at that level.

Martin has dual citizenship and would like to play for the Filipino national team some day. Of course he also dreams of playing professional basketball and wants to be a role model for Filipino children.

He regularly sends clothing and shoes to relatives in the Philippines for distribution to those in need.

"They love basketball there but there aren't that many pro players that have come out of there. I want to show them you can do anything you set your mind to," he said.

While Martin's eventual goal is to play professional basketball, the easiest route to that is having a stellar college career first. Last year as a true freshman he averaged 9.6 points, 3.0 rebounds and 2.9 assists coming off the bench which earned him Sixth-Man of the Year honors in the Pac-12. Most notable was his 21-point effort in an upset of Kansas, one of the schools that was actively recruiting him.

As point guard, Martin knows he has a valuable role on the team because the offense runs through him. This season he is averaging 13.3 points, 4.9 assists and 3.1 rebounds with a [career-high of 31 points coming in Thursday's 95-88 overtime win](#) over rival Arizona at Wells Fargo Arena.

He hit eight of 14 shots from the field including five of seven tries from long distance. He had eight assists and just one turnover, an unheard of ratio for a point guard.

He can be a scorer or a distributor, depending on what the team needs. Lately he has done a lot of both.

Martin has had four games with eight assists, all games the Sun Devils won. One of those was perhaps the team's best overall performance of the season. In the home win over Colorado, Martin took just two shots from the field and did not score but tallied eight assists in a game in which the Sun Devils chalked up a team total of 24 assists on 32 field goals.

Martin's energy and intensity is contagious but oftentimes the team's success depends on him finding a balance between energetic and out of control. The energy and intensity often show up on the defensive end with Martin and freshman guard Luguentz Dort considered the team's best on-ball defenders.

"I feel like I can do either," Martin said. "If no one is hitting or open I feel like I can step up and score. If I don't have a good shot or other guys are hitting I can dish it off to them and I know they can knock them down. I want to do whatever helps us win."