



## Dylan Geick talks wrestling, writing, Hawaiian pizza, and 'Jylan'

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Dylan Geick has been going nonstop since last fall when he started freshman-year classes at Columbia University in New York City. Let's see ...

- He is training daily and wrestling for the prestigious Ivy League school.
- He's building his high-profile relationship with boyfriend Jackson Krecioch, whom he lives with not far from campus.
- He's an advocate for the LGBT community and an inspiration for many questioning student-athletes worried about coming-out.
- He's a [YouTube sensation](#), though Krecioch first held that title and has drawn more lifetime Likes.
- He's the author of a poetry book, now writing his first novel and already thinking about his second.

"A big part of my platform is being super up-front and open with my audience," Geick said. "I want to show kids that there (are) real people like (me) out there, so I try to be authentic. I try to avoid trends and stay true to what I'm interested in. Motorcycles and video games might not be the best way to reach a young LGBT audience, but it's who I am, so it's what I do.

"That said, it's (also) hard to talk about or incorporate academics into live streaming, YouTube videos, and Instagram posts. It does sometimes feel like my commitment to literature, philosophy, essentially my nerdy side, goes unseen, though it's not uncommon for me to launch into history lessons during a live broadcast."

Geick, 19, is from suburban Chicago, a graduate of Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, where he was a wrestling standout. Geick, who has been wrestling since fifth-grade, won a state title in eighth-grade and continued to shine at Stevenson. He was a two-time state placer in Illinois' largest division and has earned USA Wrestling All American honors. Geick is a three-time Illinois Freestyle Wrestling National Team member plus an Illinois Scholastic Dual Team member.

Geick and his two closest friends from Stevenson each committed to Division I schools on the first day of the season as seniors.

He now wrestles at 157 pounds for the blue and white Lions.

But his freshman season was, admittedly, "pretty rough."

Geick was injured at the beginning of the season and was out of action for about two months with a torn MCL. He ultimately returned late in the season and won a few matches.

"I just wish I'd had a little more time to compete, but I still have lots of time left, so I'm not too worried about it. I'm healthy now and making improvements," he said.

Geick said one of his highlights this season was watching my teammate Markus Scheidel win the conference championship. "He's a senior who I look up to a lot, and the starter in my weight class," Geick said. "It felt good to see him succeed and know that I can fill those shoes in the future."

Geick said collegiate wrestling is "an entirely different atmosphere" from the high school scene. "You take a bunch of guys (who) only lost a handful of matches throughout (their) entire high school careers and throw them all together," to make a college team, he said. "Most freshmen go from being one of the best guys in their practice room to average overnight. That's a big mental adjustment to make because you have to be OK with climbing back to the top of a mountain of a sport which it felt like you were already on the top of."

Geick said being gay was not an issue on his team, to his team, or the school overall. "Columbia is an extremely diverse and inclusive environment. I'm far from (the) token gay kid on campus," he said. "Plus, we're all grounded by New York City, which of course is a hotbed of diversity in itself."

The faculty fellow for Columbia's wrestling team, a writing professor, is openly gay, Geick noted, and is "very much a loved and appreciated member of the wrestling family long before I arrived."

The team, Geick said, "(is) a great group of guys and I'm proud to call them teammates. I'm treated like another one of the boys, as I should be."

Geick said he didn't have to come-out to his team; they already knew his sexual-orientation, thanks to social media. Ah yes, Geick and Krecioch ...or Jylan, as the two have been dubbed.

"Jackson is supportive of everything I do and helps pick up the slack around the house when I'm often exhausted from a long day of class and training," Geick said. "It's also just great to be with someone equally as ambitious and motivated to be an advocate for LGBT youth and everything else that he does."

"The whole relationship has been so fast-paced. We moved in literally the day we met each other because I was on vacation, and then he came home with me when I left. We've had to deal with everything from media scrutiny to long-distance and everything in between. With such a public relationship, I think the highlights come in the quiet moments we get to spend together, rather than all the crazy adventures and traveling we've done together."

Krecioch has not attended one of Geick's wrestling matches ...yet.

"(Jylan) fans are amazingly dedicated and supportive and we appreciate everything they do for us," Geick said. "I'm happy to have joined this family-like group of people who have been affected by us in some way. Lots of them share stories with us about how we helped them come out, accept themselves, meet friends, etc. It's really amazing and humbling to think we have that kind of impact."

"I hardly would call myself (a YouTube star), but I'm definitely going to get there. It's a really fast-paced and (an) exciting life. I never really know what we'll be doing next, so I'm grateful to have school and wrestling to keep me grounded."

But oh that schedule, his always-filled schedule, full-speed 24,7.

"I don't think I've ever been so busy in my life, and I've been training at a high level for quite a long time," Geick said. "It's hard enough to balance wrestling at the Division I level and maintaining my grades at an Ivy League school ...then throw in an almost full-time career with social media, and my schedule becomes extremely packed. I sometimes feel like an old man scheduling lunches with friends days in advance."

Geick released a poetry book last year after admittedly falling in love with poetry as a high school senior. The book is, he said,

"a personal thing, mostly, but when I gained a platform I wanted to challenge myself to share that and add my voice to endless others.

"Poetry is notoriously hard to publish with any big name that was likely to sell any more copies than I could myself, so I self-published through a third-party that I liked, rather than a large company like Amazon. It's done rather well for what it is, which essentially is a small chapbook by an unknown writer. I'm proud of it, despite early concerns about its complexity and other things. I think it's a fine work."

Geick said he plans to take this summer to further his writing career, including work on a novel ...maybe two. "I don't want to set any expectations now because everything is so early and my mind is just (focused) on finishing this semester with a decent GPA, to be honest. That said, there's definitely going to be more (writing) coming from me," he said.

### **More From ...Dylan Geick**

**Favorite YouTube Celebrity:** Do It With Dan

**One Celebrity You'd Like To Meet:** Troye Sivan

**Dream Vacation Destination:** "I love my couch; I don't get to be on it enough."

**Favorite Pizza Ingredients:** "Hawaiian (style) ...hate me for it."

**Superstitions:** "None whatsoever."

**Tattoos:** "I have nine small tattoos, several done at home by friends when I was young. Those are my favorites."

**Summer Pride Plans:** "I'll probably be at every major Pride event (possible). It's the most wonderful time of the year."

**Summer Plans:** "Lots of training while in New York while also resuming my grind on YouTube. I'm certain I'll also be travelling and writing a lot. (The summer) probably is going to fly by."

**In 10 Years:** "It's impossible to say where I might be in 10 years. A year ago I might (have said), a lawyer and a writer. Today, I can see so many avenues ahead and I'm kind of trying to progress down each of them while I'm young and have these incredible opportunities."

**Hearing From Others In The LGBTQ Community:** "I've heard stories from kids and adults that have warmed and also broken my heart. I consider myself blessed to be where I am now, and their stories remind me that a lot of people aren't there yet."

**Being A Role-Model:** "I've received more messages than I can count from kids who were in the same place I was only a few years ago, and each one kind of reassures me I'm on the right path. I'm much more conscious of my thoughts and actions now that I have such an audience. I don't think it's a fear of scrutiny so much as a desire to set a good example that drives that self-awareness."