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Student-athletes call it quits senior year

By Alec Tepps
Sports Editor

What drives a person? What keeps them going? In sports, is it the feeling of wins or making best friends as a member of a team?

What happens when that is no longer enough for an athlete, so he or she stops playing the sport after so much effort and time has gone into it? Not to mention all the money for physicals, team t-shirts, and team dinners.

Why do some seniors decide to not play the sport that they have been for years?

Future ambitions sometimes play a role in a student-athlete's decision; this is true for senior Hans Hunecke.

"I knew that I would not be able to play football in college but I had a good chance to run track," Hunecke said, who ran cross country instead of going out for football last fall. "I do not regret switching because with all of the free time I gained in the summer I was able to [pole] vault almost every day and was able to attend a few camps and clinics."

Other seniors admit to dropping out of sports because of senioritis. That wasn't the case for Ashlee Cunningham, though. She is the sole senior on the girls' basketball team.

"Why kids decide to not play is always a mystery," head coach Pete Schneider said. "Many kids find other interests, cannot balance the demands of both school work and extracurricular activities, some lose the drive and desire it takes for them to be successful."

Cunningham says the team is doing just fine without other seniors.

"I wouldn't say we need more seniors," Cunningham said, who hopes to continue playing in college. "It's more like who wants to be here. We have a young team but all 10 of us want to be here to win."

Cunningham keeps on fighting with the rest of the girls' basketball team and recently was selected to be the Player of the Week in the *Daily Herald*.

"This is a great honor as there are many great players in the Lake County area," Schneider said. "We will honor her at our Vernon Hills game for senior night."

Excited dancers prepare for state—again

By Neil Hughes
Feature Editor

Besides qualifying for a second event in the state dance competition, the Lakes dance team was able to, for the first time in school history, defeat their Antioch rivals in the kick category. They are quickly proving that they are an impressive team to compete against.

"The whole team is very proud to be going to state," captain Ally Holbach said. "We were extremely excited that we were bringing two routines to state this year because we have not been able to [bring more than one routine] in three years."

Exceeding a state qualifying score of 83 with scores of 86.75 in hip hop and 84.70 in kick, the dancers proved themselves on Jan. 8 at the Grayslake North High School dance competition against three other teams, including Antioch. In fact, the dancers even improved their previous state qualifying score in hip hop of an 83.40 that they earned back in December 10, 2010 at Huntley High School. Additionally, the dancers have continued to demonstrate their ability by defeating Antioch on Jan. 15 with another first place win.

"I was extremely excited because this was the first time that we beat Antioch in a long time. No, we creamed them!" captain Jackie Lambert said. "We are normally known as a hip hop team so we are very enthused to be competing in kick."

The dance team appears to really work together in everything they do, despite having a large, combined team for the first year.

"Our team has been super close this year and this is what has helped us succeed. We bond really well together, which is awesome considering we have 25 girls ranging in age from freshmen to seniors. We are a family," captain Lexie Costa said. "It helps having a great new coach as well as an assistant coach. They do a great job keeping us under control."

The team is quickly turning their energy and excitement which they gained from qualifying for state, to actual use at the state competition on March 4 in Peoria. To maintain this energy, the girls work on stamina for their hip hop routine as they constantly



Photo by Erin Kelly

Juniors Bailey Derrick and Rebecca Pierce show off this year's dance theme "Rain" at the the boys' basketball game against Waconda.

attempt to fix any critiques made by judges in their past performances and incorporate their routine theme of "Rain."

"We have been focusing on our kick height and our performance qualities in order to succeed in kick," co-captain Michelle Verga said.

Basically, the dancers are practicing every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (sometimes), and Thursday to prepare for state. The team uses basketball games to help them practice performing at an actual competition.

With their costumes finally finished, the girls are beginning to get into character for their routines at state.

"The girls have the potential to do very well with both routines at

state. They are very strong dancers and we have two strong routines," Head Coach Tiffany Chilcote said.

This team seems ready for big victories at state this year, but the girls seem to be more focused on making themselves better dancers and putting on an entertaining performance than on winning medals.

"We are all proud to be Lakes dancers," Verga said.

To catch a glimpse of their final routines, people will be able to watch the dance team when they attempt to hold a dress rehearsal performance for friends and family who cannot come to the state competition on the week of state. The exact date depends on gym availability but will most likely be on Thursday, March 1.

Cheerleaders shoot for state qualification at next competition

At the first cheerleading competition of Jan. 7 at Rolling Meadows, the team took fifth place out of seven teams. The outcome proved disappointing to the cheer squad because an illegal move cost them a third place spot.

The first stunt where the girls do a front walk over was counted unacceptable to the judges because the flyers' necks were not supported in the stunt.

"Our team was gyped,"

senior Callie Robar said.

The next week, however, at the Vernon Hills competition, they collectively created a third place spot for themselves against four other teams.

They are looking forward to improving their skills even more by competing against more than 20 teams at Sectionals this Sunday where the team hopes to get at least sixth place in order to make it to state.

—by Alyssa Tillich

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