

Sports

Runners build team from family-like community

■ JON HELMKAMP

co - Editor in Chief

For some, a sports team is nothing more than a group of people who see each other at



Elliot Prince, freshman, crosses the finish line in a multi-school meet on Sept. 19. Prince received second place at the meet.

Photo by Malia Chong

practices and games, meeting only to share their love of a single sport and then part ways after the season is over. But for others, a sports team is a family, a community. The Cross Country program provides this family-like atmosphere, along with a hard working, dedicated, team striving for the same goal—the Districts title.

"Cross country is the true team sport," Benjamin Morrow, senior captain, said.

According to Morrow, the cross country team doesn't get enough credit for being a team sport, even though "every team member must pull every one of his/her teammates through a race."

The cross country team practices year-round. "Our Varsity group of guys commits at least one-and-a-half hours a day to running," Morrow said.

This team is not only committed, but is successful because of the unity that they have achieved. In the past, they've strived to become a group that is close on and off the field. They've bonded at dinner parties, including one at Michael Bernert's, senior captain, house, and a tea party in some tree houses that they found in Tryon Creek State Park.

"We were on one of our runs in Tryon Creek State Park, going crazy and making bird sounds, and we found these really intense huts made out of sticks and stuff. We all got really excited and decided we should have a tea party, so the next Saturday, we came back with tea and snacks and hung out

and danced around," Rachel Seigneur, senior captain, said.

Other events for the teams have included a three day overnight camp in June at Silver Falls State Park and Extreme Camp in Long Beach, Wash. in August for the top runners. Both camps mixed running with bonding.

This year's expectations are "to compete with our hearts. Both boys and girls are working for first at Districts," Seigneur said.

The last two years, the girls' team has taken first in Districts. After losing the seniors from last year's

team, they have found help from this year's freshman.

"We have amazing freshman talent and energy this year," Seigneur said.

After all the hours that this team has put in and all the titles they've earned, including right now being ranked fifth in the state, the cross country team has yet to get new facilities.

"The football, baseball and basketball teams all have gotten new facilities in the past couple years. Football got a new turf field, baseball got a new field and basketball got new gyms. Yet, our track, which is in horrible condition, has not

been resurfaced for years," Morrow said.

On top of facility issues, the cross country team has had to fund raise for things like jerseys, timers and warm ups, things that other sports teams like baseball, basketball and football had funded by the school.

"We feel like no one even knows we're here. It's a problem," Seigneur said.

Running cross country has become an outlet for Seigneur, personally.

"It's so freeing to just run and explore and be crazy with all our teammates. It puts you in a different state of mind," she said.

Helmkamp's Hits

Pro athletes neglect responsibilities

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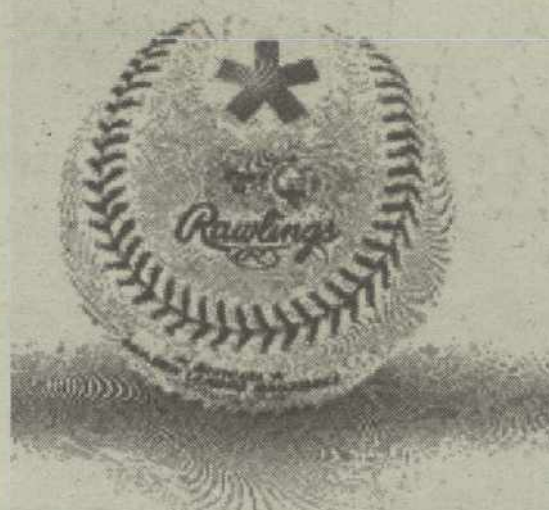
Walking through the halls of any school, particularly elementary and middle schools, you'll see kids of all ages wearing the jerseys of the sports icon that they so admire. Athletes from all sports are not only role models for the way to play the game with integrity, teamwork and competitive spirit, but they are the heroes for today's youth off the field as well.

Kids don't just wear any player's jersey, they choose someone they look up to. Not every professional athlete abuses the responsibilities that they have, but it's becoming more and more frequent that professional athletes are not being the heroes off the field that their admirers expect them to be.

It could be said that we expect too much of them; that they are only professional athletes, not heroes. Everyone knows that they are only human (humans with an incredible gift, but humans all the same), and everyone knows that they are going to make mistakes. But when a professional athlete does something so heinous, like run a dog fighting team or use steroids to enhance their game instead of simply putting in the hard work that it takes to achieve their goals, it ruins the sport and sets a poor example for today's youth that is unacceptable.

The bigger issue is professional athletes not

being responsible for their actions. There should be consequences for athletes who make poor choices. The way the National Football League responded to the recent charges against Atlanta Falcons' all-star quarterback, Michael Vick, was appropriate. Even though he is a huge name in the NFL and one of the more



talented and popular players in today's game, they still took legal action. The NFL was consistent. They didn't let it slide simply because of his name.

In Major League Baseball, something happened this year that truly troubles me. Barry Bonds, left fielder for the San Francisco Giants, broke the all-time home run record set by one of the hardest working players of all time in the MLB - Hank Aaron. Hammerin' Hank set the mark with 755 all time home runs, but the stat that mattered more to him was the total number of bases he reached in his career. He was a true example of the way the game of baseball should be played.

Although it hasn't been proved that Barry Bonds used performance-enhancing drugs, it has been thought by many that he has. Last

season, a banner at a Giants' game read "Babe (Ruth) did it on hot dog and beer." Last season, a fan threw a syringe onto the field. And this summer, when Bonds broke Hank Aaron's record by hitting his 756 career home run in San Diego, there was a wide range of reactions. Some fans were wearing hats that read "Ban Bonds," others were holding up large asterisk signs.

Through all of this, he has still not been charged with any crime, even though his personal trainer was indicted in a steroid-distribution ring. Whether or not he has used performance-enhancing drugs, that's not for me to decide. I don't know everything that went on. Nonetheless, many people think that he has used these drugs to enhance his game.

Situations such as the ones with Bonds and Vick are not the only problems in sports today. There have been numerous other situations similar to these. I feel that professional athletes need to understand that everything they do is being watched by their fans. Ever heard the phrase "monkey see, monkey do?" Kids are going to see what these players do and believe that it's alright for them to do the same.

Whether they like it or not, part of being a professional athlete is being a role model. They don't have a choice, it comes with the territory. Kids need heroes who will be heroes for the way they live their life, not just the way they play the game.

Web site features links including WLHS history

New Web site

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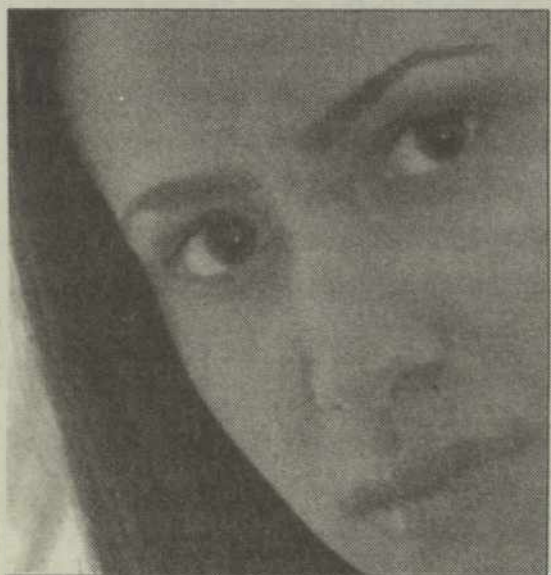
The new web site also features links under "History of WLHS," where you can view photos of sports teams and clubs from years past. There is also a link "Alumni Registration" located on the

left hand side on the Alumni page where students can view information sent in by alumni, such as where they went after high school, where they are now, their professions, and other interesting information.

"There is so much history, pride and tradition that can be viewed by students," Hammond said. There is also a link and page for all of the clubs where you can read over information about each club and the responsibilities of the members.

"I am really trying to personalize the web pages. If students would send in pictures via e-mail, I would be able to put them up on the web pages for the different clubs, the home page, etc," Hammond said.

Hammond updates the web site frequently. If there are any comments or questions, Hammond is available in the library tech center or by e-mail at HammondA@wlwv.k12.or.us.



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