

Non-traditional sports receive little recognition

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Staff Reporter

Football, boys' basketball and baseball may not be the most successful sports teams that West Linn has to offer, but they are undeniably the most highly recognized, followed and attended. These are the most traditional sports in America and have been for quite some time, but times are changing and students have developed a wider range of interests. Athletes in all sports work and devote time and effort to training and competition, but not many people know about them, or seem to care.

The Girls' Rugby Team is one of the most successful in the nation, but very few people know about it. They have won the state title every year since 2004 and have been undefeated since 2005. In 2007, the team was ranked ninth in the USA. In 2008 they were ranked second in the region.

And what about Girls' Golf, Boys' Ski Team, and the Snowboarding Team? Last year, the Girls' Golf Team took fourth in state, including a fourth place individual finish for Suna Shin, sophomore. The Boys' Ski Team won third in state, which included David Hinton's, senior, second place finish.

Last year the Snowboarding Team's Tanner Kewley, senior, won second in state in the Men's Individual Halfpipe and Mackenzie Bruns, 2008 graduate, earned fourth in the state in Women's Individual Halfpipe. All of these athletes work and train just as hard, if not harder than our football, boys' basketball and baseball players, and people need to recognize this.

Some of these sports, such as rugby, ski and snowboarding, aren't listed as school sports. They are classified as club sports. This means that these sports are affiliated with WLHS and are allowed to use the facilities free of charge during the season, but receive no funding from the district, while school sports receive pay for coaches, transportation and supplies.

According to Rob Holstrom, athletic director, the difference between school sports and club sports is

whether or not the OSAA recognizes them as a sport.

The school sports, except lacrosse which was added to satisfy Title IX, are OSAA sports. Before the OSAA will recognize something as a sport, over 50 percent of the teams at the 6A level would have to have a team that

in sport. So, for rugby to become a school sport, over 50 percent of all the 6A schools in the sport would have to have a team, and then the OSAA would have to create special districts for the teams.

Girls' sports teams, as a whole, are supremely under recognized in comparison to boys' sports teams. After Title IX passed, which requires equal funding, opportunities and recognition for female sports, it would

have been expected that girls' and boys' sports would even out and become

equally popular.

This is nowhere near true—at least in our area.

The last three years, the Girls' Varsity Basketball Team has consistently made it to either the first or second round of playoffs, whereas the Boys' Varsity Basketball Team only made it to the first round one of those years. Theoretically, you would think that spectators would want to come and watch the more successful team play, but the girls'

never have even a quarter of the spectators that the boys games draw. Usually on game nights, the student stands at the girls' games have about 12 people and the student stands at the boys' games have an average of about 85. I understand that most of the people going to watch games

are men who have more interest in men's sports than women's, but this doesn't explain why the boys' games draw more student spectators.

West Linn is not a one sport school. Yes, our Varsity Volleyball Team has been

extraordinarily successful in the past, but that doesn't mean that when people

immediately hear the name, "West Linn," that they should think only of it. The majority of our sports teams usually make it to playoffs—at least the first round. Volleyball averages about 40 student spectators at the majority of their home games. People need to attend lesser known sports as well. On the day of the volleyball playoffs, about a quarter of the student body left school for the afternoon to go watch, which was great; those students were supporting our school and our awesome Volleyball Team, but if they are going to go watch volleyball playoffs, they need to watch golf and ski playoffs as well.

This fall, our Football Team, Girls' and Boys' Cross Country teams and Boys' Soccer Team all worked hard enough to make it to playoffs. Recognize all sports; attend their games, recognize them at assemblies, and support them in playoffs.

Recognize the

achievements of all sports, West Linn.

As the fall sports season comes to a close and winter sports begin, think about all the games and events you could watch on Friday evening, not just boys' basketball. The face of sports is changing, and maybe your viewing habits should too.

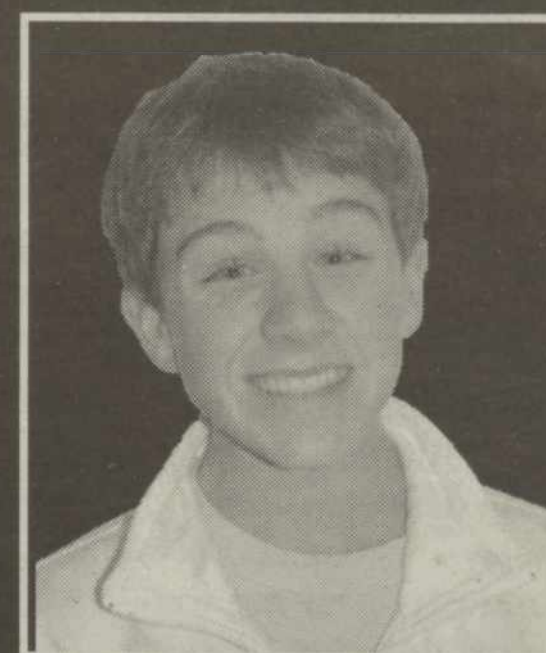


"Girl's Lacrosse doesn't get recognized that much and it should."

—Jazzmin Nielsen, freshman

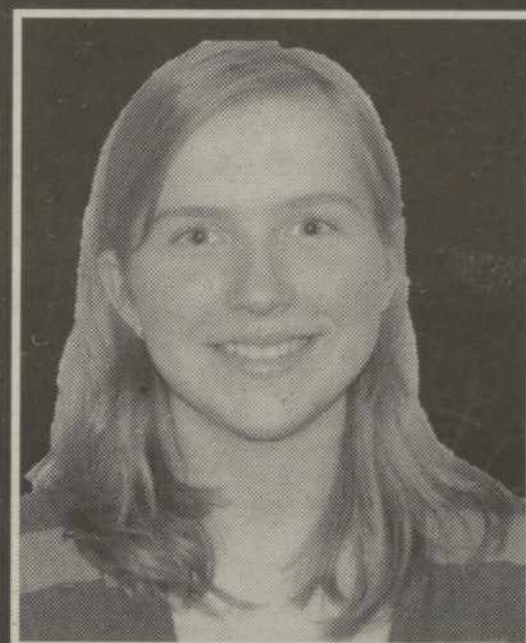
"Volleyball team because they won state [last year] and they're good."

—Thomas Ward, sophomore



STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

What do you think is the most under appreciated sport or activity that deserves more attention and funds? Why?

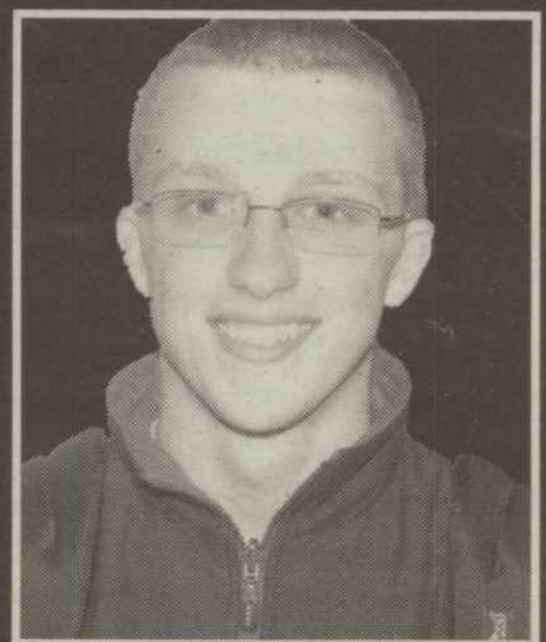


"Either band and orchestra or the girl's softball team."

—Jenny Cooper, junior

"Cross country because they perform very well and it's not represented as much as sports that don't do as well."

—Charles Corbett, senior



All photos by Avery Breyne-Cartwright