

Freshmen Hanneman, Varner gear up for national meet as regular season ends

By Kelly Laughlin
Of The Print

Pain. Athletes hate it. To them, it is a four-letter word. But for all its dismal synonyms—agony, torture, twinge, spasm—pain is ultimately, though ironically, linked with success.

Freshmen tracksters at the College, Sue Hanneman and Dani Varner, know the feeling: the mind and body are in dissension. The body says it has had enough, the mind doesn't listen. Even as pangs of tension pull and stretch the muscle with every stride, the mind knows when it should quit.

At times the mind gives up. Sometimes the mind is relentless, and the body collapses from exhaustion. The good athlete, though he doesn't know his or her limitations, in the most unexpected moment, comes face to face with them. Something gives. A tendon is pulled, or more seriously, a tibia bone is nearly broken: a "stress fracture," caused by years of constant pounding on a hard asphalt surface.

After the initial discouragement of being beaten out of state qualification in the javelin and discus events her senior year at Sam Barlow

High School, Varner cited a late season knee injury as the cause of her "not faring very well." She said, "I couldn't plant very well."

But "Speedy," as Varner's uncle nicknamed her when he noticed her rapidly crawling as an infant on the living room floor, has had a chance to lick her wounds and return. With the season winding down, Varner has qualified for nationals in the javelin with a throw of 135' 6."

While her coach, Marilyn Linsenmeyer, thinks Varner "could do a lot better," the blue-eyed field eventer is comfortable with what she does, and she does just about everything but trim the grass inside the track.

A long jumper, high jumper, javelin thrower and occasional sprinter, Dani says she's "not ready" to enter the pentathlon event this year.

Varner apparently knows her limitations, but she's having a good time in the process. "I enjoy trying new things out there. I like my individuality where it pertains to track, but I'm not too fond of running 10,000 meters."

Varner is surprised at her performance thus far. "I've been popping off PRs (personal records) like crazy!" she ex-

claimed. Specifically, Varner has slated a five-foot ascent in the high jump, and a 15' 11 3/4" leap in the long jump, including her personal record and national standing in the javelin.

Though the pain of injury is now post-facto for Dani Varner, it is real, though "minimal," for redhead sprinter Sue Hanneman.

Hanneman's doctor diagnosed last Monday the beginnings of a stress fracture in her leg.

Sue Hanneman won't quit. Despite her doctor's warning that if she keeps running she will risk cracking the tibia bone—the long, slender band of bone that runs from below the knee to the talus bone, just above the foot—"The season is more than half over, and I don't intend to quit now."

Consider the fact that Hanneman has already qualified for nationals as an anchor runner in the 1,600 meter relay and open 400 run, and her logic for pressing on is clear.

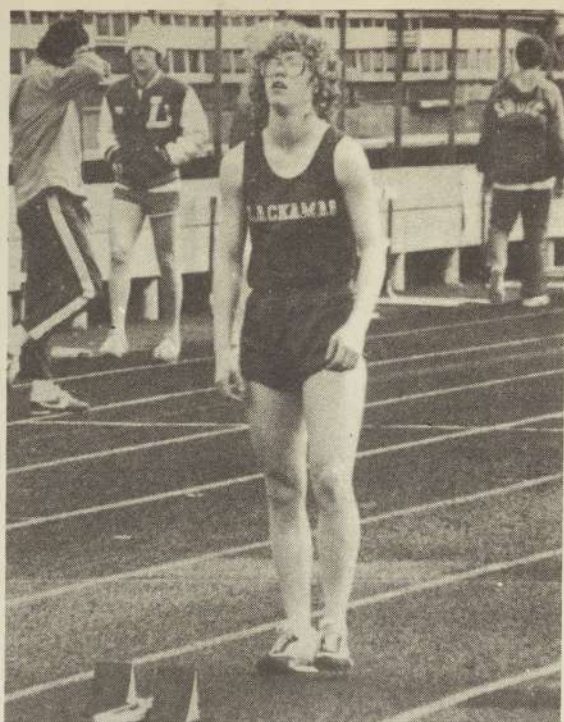
Linsenmeyer, though she had the same injury during competition in college, had little to do with Hanneman's decision to keep running. "I had my mind made up before I saw Marilyn. She just told me my alternatives," said Hanneman.

The alternatives: (1) to stop training altogether until the fall, or (2) continue competition on a minimal basis, didn't appeal to the aggressive Hanneman. Linsenmeyer's comment seems to parallel Hanneman's feelings about coping with the injury. "There's no doctor who's going to tell any hungry athlete that he 'can't' run. The athlete's main concern is, if he or she keeps running, will it cripple him for life? If it won't, the good athlete will keep running."

Hanneman, who took second in state as a 400-meter sprinter and slated the best time in that event at state last spring, has been competing for about six years. She knows what it means to work hard. But she is in a transition period in her track career.

"Sue is an athlete who hasn't yet realized her full potential," said Linsenmeyer. "In fact, she's a little bit frightened of it. She's sort of caught between a hard spot and a rock."

After six seasons, you'd expect Hanneman to be used to sprinting alone in her favorite event, the open 400-meter run. But, "I'm more relaxed running with a group of girls,



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Photo courtesy of Public Information

like in the relays; I tend to be a nervous runner. I usually run better when I'm relaxed. It's funny, after running this stupid thing for six years, I'm finally getting used to it," Hanneman said.

At presstime, Hanneman had a chance to do two things at the league meet against Mt. Hood and Lane Community Colleges last weekend. "I want to break the school record of 58:00 seconds in the 400," she said in a Friday interview, and qualify for nationals in still another event, the 200-meter run.

But three events? Hanneman would be looking at quite a task should she compete in two relays, and two open runs.

Nine races in one day—preliminaries, semi-finals, and finals in each event—added to the short, 15-minute lag time between the 400-relay race and 200 meter run, all on a leg that Hanneman is combating with aspirin, could add up to too much. "The pain is very

minimal," she said, "but I won't run the 200 even if I qualify." Linsenmeyer seemed to make it final when she said, "I won't let her run it."

"Sue is not ready for that extra event," said Linsenmeyer. "She's not mentally tough enough yet. Getting ready for a tough day like she'll have in Texas (this year's site of the NJCAA track nationals) is a slow learning process. She has to realize her potential for it to work."

Hanneman credits most of her success this season to the CCC coaching staff, who she said, "Makes you want to win."

But the girl the team has nicknamed Hanneman-amen-amen (for repetition, not religious denotation) has obtained a clear philosophy about track: "I don't think I really enjoy track that much. It's hard and it hurts. In fact, I wasn't even going to turn out this season. But after the first meet, I knew I had to compete. That's what I do it for. I enjoy the glory and recognition."



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Staff photo by Sally Pollack

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