

Alyssa Keller: A True Balancing Act

By: Lauren Duche
Co-opinions editor

Most teenagers today don't understand what it means to be dedicated. However, sophomore Alyssa Keller is an exception.

Keller is a level nine gymnast at Port Huron's American Flames and has been in gymnastics since she was young.

"I've been in gymnastics for about 11 years now and I fall in love with the sport more and more every day," she said.

Yes, she used the 's' word – sport. Its competitive nature as well as its physical demands make it hard to say it isn't a sport.

"Don't let the leotards and corny choreography fool you; gymnasts are about as athletic as they come," said Keller.

And athletic they are.

Keller trains five days a week for four to five hours a night – about as much as our wrestlers.

"It takes up a lot of time but, honestly, I wouldn't want to be anywhere else," she said.

Training up to 24 hours a week is not only physically draining, but mentally draining as well.

"After a full day of school and practice, I really just want to go to bed or watch TV but I have other priorities so getting everything done can be exhausting."

Even though it gets tough, nothing can compare to the thrill of competing.

This past weekend Keller attend-

ed a competition in Chicago, placing first on beam, second on floor, and third on vault.

"It was a lot of fun. I got to spend a weekend away and compete so placing well was just icing on the cake," Keller said.

For Keller, every competition is one step closer to the biggest competition of the season: Nationals.

"Nationals is huge. The best girls in each level, nationwide, go head-to-head and compete," she said.

2014 was Keller's first time attending Nationals, so even though she didn't place, it was still a major accomplishment.

"Even though I didn't do very well, just being there was a big deal to me, and I hope to qualify again this year and go back stronger than ever," she said.

To attend Nationals, you have to go through two levels of qualification: States and Regionals.

"To get to regionals, you have to qualify at states and to get to Nationals you have to qualify at regionals so it's almost like have elimination rounds," she said.

Competitions for Keller now are preparing her for the qualifying competitions to come.

"Even though going and competing and placing is good, it's not important, it's just practice. It basically shows you where you're at in comparison to girls from other gyms. It gives you an idea of how you'll rank at States and Regionals," she said.

Preparing for these competitions takes up a significant amount of time.

"Between practicing for several hours a night and school and homework, it's hard for me to find time to breathe sometimes," she said.

Although Keller finds herself constantly wishing for more time in the day, she manages to maintain a GPA of a 3.788.

"I take a lot of pride in my academics. I love gymnastics but school always comes first," she said.

Keller does plan to continue her career as a gymnast in college so keeping a high GPA is extremely important.

"To continue to compete in college, I know I have to keep my grades up. There are a lot of amazing gymnasts out there and I know that my GPA would set me apart from the others," Keller said.

Although she hasn't yet decided what college she wishes to attend, or what she wants her major to be, she knows one thing for sure: giving up the sport she loves is not an option.

"This sport has impacted me so much not only as an athlete, but as an individual. It's taught me dedication, mental toughness, and most importantly, it's taught me to believe in myself. I can't imagine giving this sport up completely, so I hope that one day I can coach so I'll never have to." She said.

Trapiss and Barrett Joust into Heidelberg

By: Brandon Furtaw
Assistant Sports Editor

Tradition never graduates. So we say here at RHS.

Richmond student-athletes have upheld this saying by excelling academically and athletically and furthering their excellence at the collegiate level.

Spencer Trapiss and Trevor Barrett did their part and spent Martin Luther King, Jr. Day at Heidelberg University on an official visit to the campus.

Heidelberg is interested in both to play football. Trapiss would be a linebacker/tight end and Barrett a quarterback/wide receiver for the "Student Prince's".

But do not give athletic scholarships due to NCAA Division III restrictions. However, academic scholarships are offered.

Although Heidelberg is only two-and-a-half hours away, there is still the downfall of out of state tuition due to it being located in Tiffin, Ohio.

This was Barrett's second and Trapiss' first visit to the college.

"I love the campus, it's really nice. The people are great and it's a small community that reminds me a lot of Richmond," said Barrett.

Regardless of being out of state, the university has a familiar atmosphere and that can help anyone combat the feeling of being homesick.

Both Trapiss and Barrett are interested in studying engineering while at college. Heidelberg does not offer an engineering program.

However, the university does offer an interesting incentive to its students.

"If you go there for four years and maintain a 3.5 GPA you can get a masters degree free of charge paid for by Heidelberg," said Trapiss.

Free education is a major incentive to choose Heidelberg, especially a free masters.

Regardless of the university not having engineering, this does provide them with a good selling point to draw in athletes and top-notch scholars.

Alternative fields of study include mathematics or accounting for Barrett along with Physical Therapy for Trapiss.

Other Colleges Trapiss is interested include Adrian and Concordia. Barrett is interested in Michigan State, Purdue, and Michigan Tech, but not for sports.

On a scale of 1-10 Trapiss' interest in Heidelberg is a 6 while Barrett's is "a solid 7.4."

(Far left) Spencer Trapiss catches a pass in warm ups for a football game against Cros-Lex.
(Left) Trevor Barrett Warms up his arm as quarterback

