

Extracurriculars Only Make You Stronger

By: Jenna Stafford
Opinion Editor

It's the sweat. It's the blood. It's the tears. It's the broken bones, the torn muscles, the late night practices, and the early morning workouts.

It's the obstacles you face and the accomplishments you make.

It's the rivals and the competition; it's that feeling of you and your teammates against the world.

It's the drive, the love, the passion for what you do.

That is what makes us athletes. Because, as they always say, "If you think training's hard, try losing."

Sports are a huge part of many kids' lives. I, for one, am no exception. I am an all-star competitive cheerleader, which is a sport that not many are familiar with.

All-star cheerleading consists of a two minute and thirty second routine choreographed to a mix of music. This routine involves high-flying flips and soaring stunts. In fact, there's not even any actual cheering involved.

The team is created through a gym, where many girls from different areas collaborate to share their talents.

"Off-season" is a word that never entered my vocabulary. From May until November, I am placed on a team and practice six days a week until our routine is put together and perfected.

Then, from November until March, we compete, traveling around the state—and the country—performing in front of up to thousands of spectators and against tough

competitors. When our competition season is over, we have April to prepare ourselves for tryouts, which occur at the end of the month.

By May, we are placed on a brand-new team, where the cycle of perfection begins yet again.

I joined this sport when I was 10. In the past five-and-a-half years, I have learned more lessons than one can imagine.

For one, my sport has taught me the importance of dedication. When I first set foot into a cheerleading gym to try out, palms sweating and stomach turning, I was just a gawky ten-year-old with no skill or experience whatsoever. However, once I entered the gym, it was impossible to get me out. I threw everything I had into getting my tumbling skills and bettering myself as an athlete. A normal day for me, for my first season on a team, consisted of school, a tumbling class or private lesson, two to three hours of individual work, a three hour team practice, an hour drive home and then an hour of stretching and conditioning.

Only once I was finished, homework, dinner and sleep followed, just to wake up and relieve it all over again. I learned how to eat, sleep and breathe my sport. I would have never experienced this kind of dedication without it.

Another lesson cheerleading has taught me is the belief in the saying, "mind over matter". Flipping yourself upside down is not a simple feat. Performing in front of a crowd with over 5,000 fans does not come naturally.

Running sprints in a 100 degree gym on a blazing hot day is not easy.

Because of this, I have learned the importance of being mentally strong. I have experienced major disappointments and mind-blowing failures, immense frustrations and seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

However, I've also learned how to pick myself up and put myself back together, and come back stronger than ever.

Because of my sport, I have learned the significance of "never let them see you sweat".

It's not easy to look your biggest competitors in their eyes and smile confidently. It's not effortless to stand on stage beneath those blinding spotlights, and have to look calm, cool, and collected.

I've been able to apply that, particularly, in many aspects of my day-to-day life, such as public speaking and class presentations.

The final (and what I view as one of the most important) lessons I have learned is that passion drives success. Without the passion and love I have for cheerleading, I would have never had the many accomplishments I've acquired over the years.

I now realize that I must carry this on to my life after cheer. I understand that if I want to be successful, I need to find a job that I love and that I can truly devote myself to.

I intend to do just that.

One day, I won't be an athlete anymore. I won't have the practices and the competitions, the bruises, or the escape that I've become accustomed to. The teammates will become distant and the trophies will become dusty.

All-Year Schooling Isn't the Answer

Despite a lot of people wanting all-year schooling for students, learning still goes on for kids during the summer

By: Kaitlyn Milliken
Staff Writer

Summer vacation. It's something so grand that in the autumn we look at it as if it were a pizza on the roof. Now, what if we had school all year-round?

Many people are in favor of it. Their reasons consist of the idea that having school all year would help better our education, allowing us to memorize topics that we would otherwise forget in the course of a break.

It would also, they say, academically catch up with the rest of the world. Japan is one of the many countries in the world to have all year school. So it would make sense for us to strive for the children of the U.S to be just as strong academically.

The supporters support this notion to help us better our society in the future, helping us weave our minds into healthier, stronger ones. It is also to teach the children that their goal is not to do well

up until summer vacation arrives, but to teach them that their goal is to do well all throughout school.

Reasons people are against having all year school is because they believe that a young mind requires rest to help construct itself.

Putting too much work into a youth would cause stress and protest. Giving them the appropriate amount of rest away from a school environment is seen as necessary, as well as allowing them time off to spend with their families.

The most important time to build memories is when you're young. As you get older you lose those opportunities. If all year school came to pass, all of those opportunities would be lost.

It is important for children and teens to have the chances to explore what they can do outside of school, such as getting a summer job. Having that knowledge and experience would be helpful to them while finding employment in the future. Also, children should be able to see and explore the outside world. While we

grow older we tend to find ourselves in a more restricting confinement, with no desire to see what lies beyond, because our perspectives of the outside has changed.

Children's innocent minds should see what it can see while it is still able to.

That means life beyond school.

The most important time to build memories is when you're young. As you get older you lose those opportunities.

Another reason to not have school all year would be for the renovations.

Construction in the school could be seen as a nuisance if school lasted all year. Having the children working in classrooms while work is being done would be an obstacle.

Everything goes smoother once the classrooms are empty. If construction of the classrooms were to take place after school it would be a bit easier. But, the long renovations would be completed in a timelier manner over summer vacation.

In the end, we have to realize that learning does go on outside of the school's walls during the summer. It's called real life.



Richmond's Finest: Tom Brown

Cross Country Coach Wins Coach of the Year

By Joe Bergen
Advertising Editor

Coaches: the people that inspire us and help us be successful in sporting events. Without them, athletics would not be around today.

At RHS, there are many inspiring coaches. But one specifically was recognized this year. He goes by the name Tom Brown.

He has inspired athletes, helping them achieve more improved athletic abilities.

Otherwise known as Coach Brown, he coaches the RHS track team along with the Cross Country Team. Coach Brown has coached Cross Country at RHS for six years. He said he has enjoyed every second of coaching.

His favorite part of coaching is getting to know student-athletes and watching them improve their skills and become more successful.

He said motivation is very important when coaching. "I motivate my athletes by showing them how their hard work improves their performance on the track. And, the athletes help me reach my own goals while they are reaching theirs," Coach Brown said.

He said some day in the future he wants to take both the Track Team and the Cross Country Team to States. As a coach, he has very high standards for his athletes and only wants them to do their very best.

"I have improved as a coach since I began coaching through experience, talking to other coaches and trying new things," Coach Brown said. This also helps the entire team

improve as well.

Being BWAC Coach of the Year shows he has been a very good coach recently. Every coach has goals that help them become even better. He said, "A goal I have completed was getting many students on the record boards where they should be."

He said there was never a dull moment being a coach at RHS. He said the most memorable moments are when he sees athletes' faces after they achieve a goal they didn't think they could. He has a great time at practice with the athletes. He said they were "a funny group of kids."

Coach Brown said that the Coach of the Year award means a lot to him, but he said it is more of an award to the athletes. He said if it wasn't for the team, he wouldn't be where he is now.

His definition of team is, "Everyone achieves more than they would than if they were by themselves. He believes a team will get farther finding success than just trying to achieve success as an individual.

He said success can go far beyond high school. Coach Brown would like to leave his students with inspiration after they graduate.

When they are going on with their post-high school lives, he wants them to remember the tough practices and meets. They got past them even when they were really tough. He wants them to know that when they get to a difficult point in life, they will get through it.

Coach Brown said, "Pain is temporary; glory is forever."

Some of his athletes also thought that he was a very good choice for the Coach of the Year Award.

Madison Zarkowski, a senior, described her coach in three words. She said he was determined, caring and funny. She said these were very good qualities for a good coach to have.

She explained that her favorite memory of participating in cross country was when they took second place in the BWAC meet. She said everyone was very hyped and overwhelmed at what they had achieved. Junior Sarah McNichol also had something to say about her coach. She described him in three words. She said he is energetic, dedicated and motivational. She also explained how if a coach lacked these qualities, they might have not accomplished as much as Coach Brown's team did.

She agreed with Coach Browns, saying there were no dull moments during the cross country season. She said, "I really enjoyed the Holly meet. The whole team was excited and pumped and everyone was dancing."

Not only did Coach Brown feel accomplished by receiving the Coach of the Year Award, but the athletes said he was very deserving as well.

Coach Brown concluded by saying, "In the future I plan on having one of the top teams in the league and battling for Regionals."

He still plans on working hard improving the team, as well as himself, so they can accomplish even greater goals.

For the Boys

Richmond Comes up Short of Craved State Title

By: Jacquelyn Loria
Staff Writer

Lansing-Sexton

On Saturday, Nov. 15th the Blue Devils played against Lansing Sexton for the Regional Championship. Coming into the Regional with only one loss under their belt, the Blue Devils were ready to play.

They started off strong for the first three quarters with letting Sexton get only two touchdowns. Senior Devin Skatzka had one touchdown that game. "It felt good to get the touchdown. It kind of put us back in our game," Skatzka said.

Playing their best, the boys didn't give up once. Adam Boyd senior, said, "Defense ran different coversages and a little bit of different defense."

The boys were down 13-7 coming into the fourth quarter. Being down by only one touchdown, the boys didn't lose hope. Junior quarterback Trevor Barrett said, "No we didn't give up. After our first touchdown, we had momentum. It wasn't until the fourth quarter that we started to slowly lose hope."

"For the Sexton game, we sent line back for double coverage, but other than that, we didn't change much," senior, Brady LaFore, said.

In the fourth quarter, Sexton scored again and the score was 21-7. Skatzka said, "We kind of just fell apart and we weren't getting a lot done offensively. We were struggling."

That didn't stop the team though. They continued to play their hearts out. "I think we ran our plays well, their defense just outplayed us," Barrett said. Barrett and Skatzka both agree that there is nothing they can do now, but if they could go back and change things, they each would have something different they would change for themselves and the team.

Bret Zihlavyky senior, also agreed that working harder could have made a difference.

Slowly, they started to lose hope when Sexton scored twice and the score was 35-7. With Sexton getting most of their final touchdowns in the last quarter, that led to the loss for the Devils.

Ending the season with the Regional game on Saturday, seniors agreed that the game ended very disappointing and most aren't going to play ever again. They wish things would've ended differently and they were still in season.

Marysville Game: The District Final

Starting the game off strong, the Blue Devils beat Marysville 48-6. Skatzka had five touchdowns that

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New Athletic Director Pushes Department to New Height

By: Maximilian Leesch
Staff Writer

From instructing tiny ones to ones that are quite grown, Mr. James Benoit has moved from the Lee School to RHS. After attending and graduating from Mt. Clemens High School, Mr. Benoit then went to Macomb Community College for a period of time before moving to Central Michigan University. He received his Bachelor of Science degree at CMU and then his Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Saginaw Valley State University.

While in high school, Mr. Benoit didn't participate in many sports. There was, however, one particular sport that he enjoyed and that he still continues to play: hockey. In fact, he plays often in a local league. "I discovered I couldn't hit a baseball," he said.

He mostly plays left wing when he's on the ice, but when he was younger, he usually played center. During these times, his father would hose down his lawn to make an ice rink for him and his friends to play on. "We broke a lot of windows in that time," Mr. Benoit said.

As far as pursuing education goes, inspiration struck him from a familiar person. "I was introduced to it through my sister," said Mr. Benoit.

His sister inspired him to follow the path of education because she herself was involved with it. "We were always pretty close," said Mr. Benoit.

She attended CMU before he did and he wanted to follow in her footsteps. "There's a big influence there," he said. This decision has taken him to a few different schools, from Cardinal Mooney High School in Marine City to the Richmond School District. His sister had even taught in Richmond for a short period of time in the early 1970s.

Just this year, Mr. Benoit made the transition from Will L. Lee Elementary School to the high school, but it wasn't an unfamiliar occurrence for him. The first 20 years of his career were spent in a high school, so he said this transition was pretty seamless.

Now that he's at the high school, his work life is a bit different now. Although different, he does appreciate the environment the school offers as well as the people within it. "I enjoy seeing the amazing gifts and talents students have at such a young age," said Mr. Benoit.

When he made the conversion to the high school from Will L. Lee, his daily routine changed even after normal school hours. He now attends more sporting events, plays and band and choir concerts. With all these functions he attends, leaving at five everyday like he often did at the Elementary school is now a thing of the past. "The hours are different than what I had at the elementary," he said.

Since Dr. Myylaert's leaving of the high school, Mr. Benoit has stepped in to watch over the athletic program. He

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Restore The Roar

By: Nick Thomas
News Editor

The Detroit Lions have experienced a great amount of success this year in the first half of the 2014-2015 season. They ended the first half of the season with a 6-2 record and first place in the NFC North division.

This first half season success has many Detroit Lions fans excited for what the season could hold. A division title? Playoff appearance? Super Bowl appearance?

These are all questions many Lions fans are asking themselves right now, and with the way the team is performing right now, things are looking good and fans are expecting many things from the team.

Senior Ben Toia had this to say about the Lions: "They look very good but I expect a second half collapse."

Although the Lions are off to a good start this year, they ended the first half of the 2013-2014 season last year with a 5-3 record, and improved to 6-3 two weeks later after a bye and were first in the NFC North division. Then, as expected, they went 2-6 in the second half of the season finishing with an overall record of 7-9, finishing third in the division behind Green Bay and Chicago.

This year the Lions got off to a good start of the second half of the season with a comeback win with under 30 seconds left in the fourth quarter against the Miami Dolphins at home.

Quarterback Matt Stafford found running back Theo Riddick in the endzone to give the lions a three

point lead, the extra point made by Matt Prater made the score 20-16.

Forcing The Dolphins to have to score a touchdown with under thirty seconds left in the game, and the defense proving them to be unsuccessful, this improved the Lions record to 7-2.

"The team is doing good, the offense needs to be better. I think they'll make the playoffs but lose in the second round," said freshman Brooke Kazimierzak.

However, the Detroit Lions have had an odd winning formula this year. The Lions, who have the NFL's best defense this year, are 19th in total offense, 25th in points scored, averaging 20.2 points per game this year.

This is an odd formula for winning football games. The Lions this year have struggled to score points this year, but usually find a way to keep the game close, and strike at the end of the game.

"A win is a win. Anyway game you can win is good, but it would be nice if the offense would show up in the first half and not have to make a last quarter comeback," said senior Ben Toia.

However, they were not able to find points Nov. 16 against the Arizona Cardinals who beat the Lions 14-6. The defense played good only letting up 14 points and intercepting former Detroit Lions quarterback, Drew Stanton, twice.

The offense was not able to produce points though, being held to two field goals through the first half and scoreless in the second half.

The Lions have had multiple fourth quarter comebacks this year, but were not able to move the ball down the field with under four minutes to

play against the Cardinals. The Cardinals then got the ball back and converted to a first down on third down to secure the win and take a knee to run the clock out.

With this loss the Lions dropped to 7-3 on the season, tied with the Green Bay Packers for first place in the NFC North Division.

"I think this formula for winning will continue to work. It's been working so far, and the offense has showed up when it's needed to. If they win their home games they'll be fine," said Ben Toia

The fans this year are enjoying the Lions winning success as of right now, considering the 2011-2012 season was the first and last season as of right now the Lions have made the playoffs since 1999. That 2011-2012 playoff appearance wasn't anything special since the team endured a 45-28 loss to the New Orleans Saints. Lately there has not been much to cheer for the Detroit Lions until now.

In order for any team to get better and progress, it starts with the quarterback position. That is true for the Detroit Lions as well.

If the Lions want to become a better team, Matt Stafford has to develop his game and take himself and the team to the next level.

"He needs to progress and become a better player. He's doing good but there is always room for improvement," said senior Collin Peltier

All in all, the team has performed good so far this year. They stand with a record of 7-3 and are tied for first in the division. If the team continues to improve and play well, we could be looking at a good season for Detroit Lions fans. But you never know...

Benoit

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said, "I oversee the entire athletic program and lead by example. Essentially create a vision of the athletic program and establish a culture."

Mr. Benoit has been no stranger to high school sports, so his position at RHS as Athletic Director isn't unfamiliar. "I've coached high school sports for 33 years," said Mr. Benoit.

During his time at Cardinal Mooney High School, he learned a lot from the priests there. They became role models for him and taught him lessons that one couldn't learn from classes or books.

There are also plenty of lessons he's learned outside of the school environment. "My son is a special needs child. Working with him as a parent has helped me become a good administrator," said Mr. Benoit. "It's helped me with students. My son deserves a lot of credit."

Mr. Benoit is grateful for the knowledge he's gained from Richmond Schools and how it has impacted his life. "I'm blessed," he said. "I've learned so much from so many people here; it's remarkable."



Jessica Hatcher

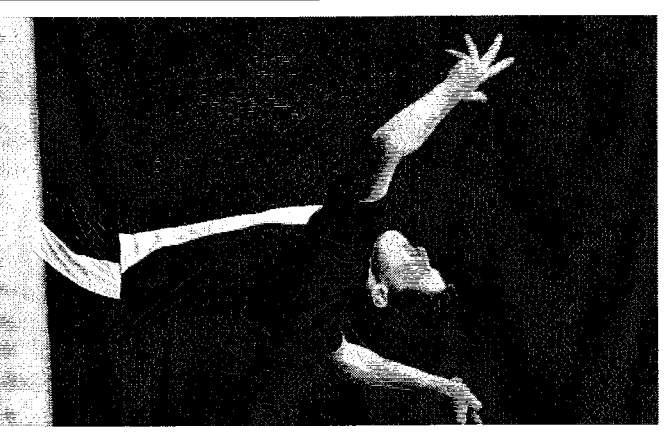
Nickname: J-Hatch
Age: 16
Grade: Junior
Sport(s): Competitive and Football
Cheerleading
Favorite pump up song: "Remember the Name" by Fort Minor
Favorite class: English with Rineer
Future Goals: Win States



Joe Ottenbacher

Nickname: Otter
Age: 16
Grade: Junior
Sport(s): Football, Baseball
Favorite pump up song: Beethoven's Fifth
Favorite Class: English with Rineer

Goals: Bring home some hardware



Deven Hill starts his serve in his match against Armada. Tennis is just one sport that has been impacted by the new athletic director.

Don't forget to buy your yearbook!!!

The Blue Devil's Advocate

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