

SPORTS



Homecoming changes ought to be revoked

Naomi Prale
Sports Editor

“The purpose behind ‘homecoming’ is the idea that alumni can ‘come home’ to Niles West and attend the game,” student activities director Jessica Fliman said told me when I asked why the Homecoming game and parade had been moved to Saturday.

Considering that alumni turnout at the previous three Homecomings was sparse, I delayed writing this column until after

At Oct. 17’s game, less than 2/3 of the grandstand was occupied, and the student section was about 1/3 of its usual Friday night turnout

Saturday’s game to see how many alums “came home.”

The answer: not many, perhaps a couple hundred.

Furthermore, Fliman said that the Homecoming parade was moved to Saturday to make it more accessible for the community to participate. Maybe it was the early hour (9 a.m.) or the steady drizzle, but according to editor in chief Rexly Penaflorida, who took photos on the parade route for two miles, the “community” numbered approximately 20 people.

In past years, the parade was held on Friday afternoon, and according to reports, hundreds of spectators lined the streets for the afternoon parade. Furthermore, the stands were packed for the Friday evening game.

At Oct. 17’s game, less than 2/3 of the grandstand occupied, and the student section was about 1/3 of its usual Friday night turnout.

Based on the school spirit seen on Friday, my expectation was that the stands would be packed with students on that rainy Saturday afternoon. Yet, students did not show up to the homecoming game, due to a variety of reasons.

Other sports were taking place at the same time. Girls were at

I propose that next year, the homecoming game schedule switch back to the old schedule of a Friday night game and Friday afternoon homecoming parade

hair and makeup appointments. Some students probably just did not wake up early enough by 1 p.m.

Clearly, most of Niles West felt preparation for the homecoming dance had higher importance than attendance at the homecoming game.

Granted, the school did its best to make the appeal of coming to the homecoming game more inviting. A beauty salon was set up for students to pay for hair, makeup and nail services. I checked the tent of the beauty salon and only saw a few student in line.

The feeling of school spirit and excitement that has been felt in homecoming games in years past was lost due to the lack of participants.

Had more students attended homecoming game, the atmosphere of the crowd would have been filled with the energy and attetention that Niles West has seen in past years.

With all due respect to the new activities director, homecoming is for the students of Niles West, not the alums who barely “come home.”

Current students are the main participants in the homecoming game, the dance and the parade. Twenty-seven hundred students’ enjoyment of the weekend should not be sacrificed to accommodate a few hundred alums and community members.

I propose that next year, the homecoming game schedule switch back to the old schedule of a Friday night game and Friday afternoon homecoming parade.

This way, the students can participate more in the homecoming activities, in particular attend the homecoming game, and enjoy the weekend of school that represents the spirit of Niles West.

Win ends gridiron season on high note

Daniel Friedman
Staff Writer

The Wolves football team acquired a modicum of respect and salvaged an otherwise disappointing season with a 21-14 victory over Waukegan last Saturday in its final game of the 2009 season. Junior quarterback Seve Loubriel threw for 64 yards and a touchdown in replacement of senior Tyler Rosell. Rosell was sidelined after suffering a concussion during the game against the Evanston Wildkits. Junior running back Donte Logan turned a strong performance against the Bulldogs with 126 rushing yards and a touchdown.

Despite the late season injury, Rosell led the team with 46 completions for 588 yards and six touchdowns. Senior running back Dwight Smith led the Wolves’ rushing attack with 242 yards on 65 carries, including four touchdown runs.

With the victory over Waukegan, the Wolves avoided being shut out in the Central Suburban League (CSL) South, finishing 1-4 in the conference (2-7 overall).

On Oct. 17, the team sent a soggy homecoming crowd home unhappy, losing to the Wildkits 38-14.

Highlights were few and far between in new head coach Scott Baum’s rocky inaugural season, a circumstance that surprises team members who had expected more success.

According to senior lineman Kevin Villanueva, all the pieces that the Wolves needed to win were there, but in the end the team simply couldn’t put them together. “We had all expected wins throughout our season. We trusted each other and believed in each other to win, but in the end the wins didn’t come out,” he said.

Prior to the victory against Waukegan, the team had suffered five straight losses to Glenbrook North, nationally ranked Maine South, New Trier, Glenbrook South and Evanston. Coming into the final game, the team’s only win had come against the Maine East Blue Demons. The Blue Demons have only won two games in the past five years, with both of those victories occurring this season.

Despite the disappointments, the team still approached each game with the same level of intensity, and their sense of brotherhood remained strong throughout the season, according to senior lineman Shawn Afryl, who said that he couldn’t have been more proud of the way the senior players conducted themselves

Varsity tennis team finishes with strong record

Mary Basic
Business Manager

The #1 doubles team of senior co-captain Uzma Ahmad and sophomore Jewell Loyd advanced to the girls tennis state tournament for the second consecutive year on Oct. 17.

Although Ahmad and Loyd lost in the preliminary rounds of the state tournament on Oct. 22, their success highlighted one of the tennis program’s better seasons in recent, as it posted a 13-9-1 record behind Ahmad’s 20-6 and Loyd’s 20-5 record. The pair posted an 11-4 doubles record.

Ahmad and Loyd qualified for the state meet by beating Maine South (6-0, 7-6) and Maine West (6-0, 6-0).

The pair played five teams that also qualified for state. Ahmad and Loyd had to finish in the final four of their sectional and to do that they needed to win their first two matches.

As a team the Wolves finished in third place in the sectional behind Glenbrook North and Glenbrook South. They finished ahead of Maine West, Maine South, Maine East, Resurrection, Taft, Northside College Prep and Willows Academy.

“All of the coaches and tennis players were thrilled that Ahmad and Loyd qualified for the state tennis tournament again,” head coach George Bravos said. “It was one of our goals to repeat that and [they] were more than deserving to earn their trip back to the state tournament.”

Bravos did not discount the contributions of other team members.

“I was very proud of all of our sectional participants,” Bravos said.

Other team members include seniors Michelle Lisica, Danya Snowsky, co-captain Zoe Ljubic and co-captain Medha Patel; junior Kara Mui, sophomores Lexi Leftakes, Ricki Esses, Vicky Georgevich and freshman Alexa Bits. The team alternated the 1-4 singles and doubles slots, depending on matchups.

In the sectional tourney, Ljubic and Mui played singles, and the other doubles team was comprised of Leftakes and Bits.

Season highlights included hard-fought matches against district rival Niles North and Regina Dominican of neighboring Wilmette.

“I was most excited for the Niles North match because they are our rivals,” Leftakes said. “We ended up losing (3-4) but it

this season.

“[The seniors] have all played their hearts out every game and led by that example,” Afryl said. “It has been a true privilege to play with a group of seniors with so much heart.”

Afryl especially commended the Wolves’ defense for playing well this season, saying simply that “we stopped teams.” Against CSL North opponent Glenbrook North, the defense held the Spartans to only six points. Versus district rival Niles North, the defense kept the Wolves in the game deep into the fourth quarter and gave the offense opportunities to put points on the board.

According to Baum, the strong play of the defense has been the result of two key players: senior strong safety Nate Borjas and senior linebacker Jimmy Xamplas.

“The play of [Borjas] and [Xamplas] has really improved from last year.” Coincidentally, Borjas and Xamplas finished the season tied with each other for most tackles, after accumulating 82 tackles a piece over the course of the season.

Even though the season hasn’t gone the way he planned, Villanueva said that he will still cherish the memories he shared with his teammates.

“I will always remember us walking in to our stadium or another team’s stadium, in silence, all of us knowing our assignments,” Villanueva said.



Senior wide receiver Kimo Bajamunde catches a pass in the homecoming football game.
Photo by Rexly Penaflorida

was fun watching everyone play, because all the matches were very close.”

Bragging rights figured into the Regina victory.

“I was most excited for the meet against Regina because I know some of the girls that play on varsity. We won (5-1), and we had a lot of fun,” Bits said.

The Wolves tied for first place in the Maine East tournament and placed second in the Buffalo Grove and Niles West invites during the season.

According to Bravos, the Wolves’ primary goal was to have a winning record and they accomplished this. Their second goal was to do better in the Central Suburban League South conference tournament. They fell short on the latter, finishing fifth.

Bravos expressed satisfaction at the team’s performance.

“Ahmad is finishing a stellar career. She has been our number one singles player for four consecutive years, something that is unheard of in high school tennis,” Bravos said. “She finished her season with a singles record of 9-2 and a doubles record of 10-3 for a combined 19-5,” garnering her all-conference honors.

A master of understatement, Bravos said that he and the Wolves are very happy that Loyd decided to go out for tennis her freshman and sophomore year.

“Loyd is probably the best athlete in our conference,” Bravos said. “She did equally as well as Ahmad finishing 7-1 in singles and 12-3 in doubles competition.”

According to Bravos, co-captains Ahmad, Ljubic and Patel, as well as Lisica and Snowsky, have shown a tremendous amount of poise and leadership during their successful season and their high school tennis careers.

“It will be really sad when the seniors leave because they are so caring for us and they are always looking out for us,” Bravos said. “They encourage us so much and just make tennis season better for everyone. It will be extremely hard next year without them.”

Bits said it will be a big change next year without the seniors, but she thinks they will do well next year.

“It has been kind of tough for me, being a freshman playing with and against older and more experienced people, but I [had] a lot of fun,” Bits said.

Leftakes concured.

“[The season] has been so much fun and amazing because just being with all the girls on the team makes playing really fun,” Leftakes said.

WestWord

Cross country wraps up successful season

w Zoe Ljubic
Editor in Chief

The Niles West boys cross country team finished in fifth place above Mather, Evanston and Notre Dame at the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) regional meet at Harms Woods on Oct. 24.

Head coach Vachee Loughran said that the Wolves had a “plan going into the meet to beat Mather.”

The plan “worked out perfectly, because each guy ran according to where they were suppose to and they passed the right people at the right time,” he said.

Senior co-captain George Davros finished eight overall with a time of 15:59. His teammates produced quality times, helping the team qualify for the IHSA sectional meet. Senior co-captain Matt Miller ran 16:46, right in front of sophomore Mas Hoshi who finished at 16:51. Sophomore Marc Julien finished at 17:04, junior Zach Koukios finished at 17:31, senior Shawn Laudencia finished at 17:42 and senior co-captain Daniel Friedman finished at 18:04.

The Wolves finished in fourth place out of six teams in the Central Suburban League South conference meet on Saturday, Oct. 17. Davros ran 15:48, finishing seventh overall.

Loughran said that Davros ran his “best race of the year.” His teammates, Hoshi (16:50), Julien (16:55), Miller (16:58), Koukios (17:24), Friedman (17:27) and Iverson (17:42), each broke their personal records.

Miller was “pleased” at how well the Wolves performed at conference.

“The sophomores did exceptionally well,” he said. “[Hoshi and Julien] ran the second and third best on our team.”

Loughran and Davros agreed. A highlight of the season included the 37th annual Pat Savage invite on Oct. 3. Davros said that the Wolves ran “extremely well” despite adverse conditions.

Unlike the other meets, Davros explained, the home course “was running a bit slow” because of soggy grass from recent rains.

“Most runners ended up running 20-30 seconds slower than they usually do,” he added.

Perhaps because they were accustomed to the course, West runners shone, including Davros (16:06), Julien (16:50), Miller (17:08), Hoshi (17:09) and Friedman (17:34). As a team, the Wolves finished in eighth place in the white division.

“Out of all the runners that ran at the Pat Savage meet, the most impressive would have to be [Julien], who ran in pain, Davros said.

According to Loughran, Julien hasn’t been diagnosed, but the “trainers believe he has Osgood-Schlatter [disease], which is a growth plate [knee condition]” He attributed Julien’s success to a proper balance of “resting and working out.”

His success is even more impressive Loughran said, because “[Julien] is doing three quarters of the work [each runner] is doing; he needs more rest.”



George Davros races to the finish.
Photo by Naomi Prale

According to Julien, “the reason why I am doing well is because of my teammates. They are pushing me to run well.”

In turn, Julien inspires his teammates, including Davros, calling Julien a “trooper, because he is so tough. I am so proud of him.”

Team members were unanimous in their assessment that they had a successful season. Miller looks forward to watching the Wolves succeed in years to come as well.

“We have very good sophomores leading the team,” Miller said.

Loughran agreed that the season was productive, commenting on how “encouraged I am by how well [Davros] did this season,” and he is looking forward to next year.

For Julien, who has two years of eligibility remaining, the season was a learning experience.

“This year was different from last year because I have finally realized what cross country running is like,” he explained. “My injury showed me how much I can push myself in cross country and next spring in track,” he said.

As for next year, Julien wants to “get more people out for our team so that we can have a stronger team.” He is confident that by his senior year, the entire team can make it to the state competition.

Loughran concurred, commenting on the fact that “we have a really strong returning core.”

The Wolves will compete tomorrow in the IHSA sectional meet at the team’s home course at 10 a.m.

Injuries result in soccer team’s regional defeat

w Daniel Friedman
Staff Writer

After finishing with a record regular season record of 10-8-3 (1-2-2 in the Central Suburban League South), the Niles West boys’ soccer team advanced to the regional final against conference opponent Evanston where their season came to a close. The 1-0 loss to Evanston was preceded by a win in the regional semi final versus Von Steuben. The team started with a record of 8-3-1, but the early surplus in the win column was partially erased by injuries to two of team’s strongest and most experienced players: senior forward and co-captain Mahi Mameledzija and senior defenseman and co-captain Joe Kosir.

Prior to his injury, Mameledzija was enjoying an incredibly productive season. On Sept. 19 in the Rockford

tournament versus Winnebago, he surpassed the school record for most careers goals by scoring his 37th goal since he was promoted to varsity his freshman year. The previous owners of the record were Bruno Rasich and Kamil Szczepanski who shared the record since 2007.

Mameledzija had scored 19 goals in only the first 17 games and was viewed by many of his teammates and coaches as a potential All-State nominee.

The impressive strength of the team was put on display at the highly competitive Rockford-Hononegah tournament. The team placed second to Hersey, who escaped with a victory over the Wolves only after double overtime and penalty kicks. According to Kosir, “It was the first time that Niles West ever got that far in that tournament and it is the third best tournament in Illinois.” Other important victories this season were a 3-0 win over Niles North and a 4-3 win over conference opponent Glenbrook South.

In light of the injuries to captains Mameledzija and Kosir, the Wolves were forced to make some formation shifts for their offense and defense. After those changes, two juniors in particular stepped up to lead the team: midfielder and co-captain Thomas Villamil and keeper Danny Niedzielski.

Kosir feels that, “[Villamil] has picked up his game. He is a key guy in the midfield, and [Niedzielski] in goal has made some great saves.”

These juniors and the rest of the team faced tough competition in their regional bracket from Von Steuben and Evanston.

Even though this year will see the graduation of several key senior players, the team has many junior and underclassmen players to fill the spots next year. This group includes not only Villamil and Niedzielski, but also juniors Eric O’Neill, Arek Solawa, David Dawood and Pero Jovcic, sophomores Michael Tabar, Jaime Zepeda, Lane Mita and Pawel Dabek, and freshman Robert Urosev.

Boys golf team expresses optimism for next year

w Adriana Zalloni
World Editor

Coming off one of the most successful seasons in school history, the golf team’s 2009 record 2-10 (0-5 in conference) might seem disappointing. However, head coach Mitch Stern looks back at the season and counts the losses as gains.

“One of our goals was to get [one of the boys] out of regionals,” Stern said. “That did not happen; unfortunately, we came up a little short.”

However, junior Claudia Mak more than salvaged the season by advancing to the sectional round, making her only the second girls in school history to make it out of the regionals in what is,

technically, a sport designed for boys.

“Mak benefited from playing with the boys all season long,” Stern said. “They gave her a lot of healthy competition, and she had to play on some golf courses she would not normally play.”

Mak expressed surprise at her success.

“I had a bad season, but towards the end, things started to look up for me,” Mak said. “At regionals, I really did not expect to advance to sectionals because I did not play my best game; however, with my score, I still made it to sectionals.”

Her storybook season ended in the sectional round. “Although I did not advance to state,” Mak said, “it was a good experience. I’ll try to step my game up next season.”

Despite the team’s uneven performance and subpar record, Stern views the season positively and expressed optimism for next year.

“It was a learning season,” Stern said. “It is a young team; we will return a lot of golfers next year.”

Senior Jeffrey Yoo agreed with his coach’s assessment. “It was a bumpy ride this year,” Yoo said. “We had our moments, but as a whole team, we could not pull it together. However, if we give the team a few months to recuperate, I see no reason why the golf team can’t be as good or better to the team of 2008,” Yoo said.

George Curran, who joined fellow seniors Matt Moy, Rexly Penafiora II and John Kim on this year’s squad, concurs.

“The underclassmen are hard workers,” Curran said. “If they practice like they have been, they will be great. As for this year, we worked our hardest. It was a good year.”

Underclassmen include: Junior Jason Kaatz and sophomores Nick Hester, David Lotsof and Logan Bland.

Girls swimming and diving team hopes to succeed at conference

w Mary Basic
Business Manager

Heading into tonight’s 5:30 p.m. home showdown with New Trier, the girls swimming and diving team stands 3-3 (1-3 in the Central Suburban League South).

The team includes seniors Kristie Jurkovic, Raquel Marcos, Carolyn Masterton, Nadia Sarnecki and Maggie Kearns; juniors include Alexis Yusim, Jaci Moy, Holly Norberg, Deann Okrzesik, Jenny Lee, Jessica Nianick, Emma Capps, Alexandra Romanelli, Emily Fung and Heather Funai and sophomores Emina Djelovic, Kelly Sanks, Jenny Marin and Emme Deamont.

Head coach Jason Macejak expressed satisfaction with last Friday’s 84-47 home victory over Waukegan.

“We went up against a team is that significantly better [and] we took the opportunity to swim different events,” Macejak said in explaining the victory. “Waukagen was a break from what we normally do in a meet.”

According to Macejak, many girls recorded their best times of the season and, in some cases, of their careers against Waukagen.

Norberg had her season best in the 100 butterfly with a time of 1:07.

Although the Wolves lost their Oct. 16 meet vs. Glenbrook South by a 110-72 count, Macejak found reasons to be optimistic.

“It was a great opportunity because we [will swim] at Glenbrook South for [the CSL South meet] and sectionals,” Macejak said.

Macejak said that the highlight of the season thus far was the 95-91 victory over North.

“[I was most excited for] our dual meet with Niles North. It was our first meet of the season against our cross-town rival,” Macejak said.

According to Sarnecki the season had ups and downs, but overall, the wolves have accomplished much.

“It has been [a] very exciting [season], and the team has been doing well,” Yusim said. “There have been a lot of personal best times.”

The Wolves will close the dual meet portion of the season tonight against New Trier before preparing for the CSL South meet on Saturday, Nov. 7, and the Illinois High School Association sectionals on Saturday, Nov. 14, both beginning at 9 a.m. at Glenbrook South’s Glenview campus.

SPORTS

Staff marathon runners finish with impressive times

W Naomi Prale
Sports Editor

Four West faculty members took part—and finished—this year’s annual Chicago Marathon on Oct. 11. Math teachers Sean Delahanty and Matthew Fahrenbacher, dean Mark Rigby and science teacher Julieann Villa all completed the 26.2-mile course.

Rigby finished with a time of 4:45. Rigby has run competitively since the age of 19. This is his third marathon, his two others being in 1997 and 2008. His personal record (PR) is 3:30.

“I do a lot of half marathons,” Rigby said. “I would like to do a half marathon in every state.” With nine states down, Rigby is looking good for the future.

“Usually I run three six-milers during the week, and two extra long runs on the weekend,” Rigby added. “I started running in college, and decided I liked it. Running is where I can get a lot of thinking done. I find meaning in the routes I use to get to my destination.”

Fahrenbacher finished with an impressive time of 3:27:58, but wants to become more competitive. “I have run six marathons overall,” Fahrenbacher added. “My PR is 3:17:58. I want to run a 3:10 and qualify for the Boston Marathon.”

As for his weekly training regimen, Fahrenbacher does six-10 miles a couple of times a week, a speed workout, some tempo runs and a long run on the weekend.

“For me, running started in junior high,” Fahrenbacher said. “I continued through high school, took a break in college and then

started again later.”

Fahrenbacher’s future plans include the aforementioned Boston Marathon, then possibly a marathon outside the U.S.

“I would love to do Paris, London and somewhere else. That is in the future,” Fahrenbacher said.

Delahanty finished his first marathon this year with a time of 4:00:31. He runs three days per week, with one long run, one speed workout and one easy run. He also bikes three-four days a week, around 30-50 miles total.

“My freshman year of high school, I wanted to join a sport; my history teacher was the cross country coach, and he approached me. I really have not stopped running since. When I go on vacation, I always look forward to running around wherever I am staying,” Delehanty said. “I have gone running in the Rocky Mountains, New York’s Central Park, New Orleans, the parkways of Spain and the coast of Ireland.”

As for future plans, Delahanty is not sure about running a marathon again. “I will keep running, but I don’t know if I will ever run a marathon again. It took a lot of training, a huge commitment of time and energy,” Delahanty said, but if the circumstances are right, I will be out there again. I would like to run the New York Marathon.”

Villa finished with a time of 4:01 this year, a PR. She has run six marathons. This was her fifth Chicago Marathon, and

she has run for competition for eight years now.

Her training regimen generally includes 5-6 sessions per week. Usually, Villa runs two days of speed workout, two days of shorter runs, one day of a longer run and two days for yoga and rest. Like Delahanty, she also trains by cycling.

“The main reason I got involved in running marathons is for charity,” Villa said. “I run for *Team in Training*, raising funds for the *Leukemia and Lymphoma Society*. My brother is a leukemia survivor.” This year the marathon team raised \$1.1 million for leukemia research and to help patients and their families.

“Remembering the people I am running for makes running and training for a marathon a lot easier,” Villa added.

In the future, Villa plans to run the Hot Chocolate 15k, and more half marathons. She sees herself running another marathon.

“In 1997, when I lived in Argentina, I started running with another teacher at my school. The teacher I ran with encouraged me to start running; she had run a marathon before,” Villa said on her start to run marathons. “It was the first time I thought to myself, ‘If she has ran a marathon, maybe I could too one day.’ For any Niles West students [considering running a marathon], always remember anything is possible if you are committed to it,” she said.



Runners begin marathon. Photo courtesy MCT

Girls cross country’s Hoshi has good shot for state berth

W Daniel Friedman
Staff Writer

After finishing the regular season by placing third as a team in the Central Suburban League South conference meet, the girls cross country team qualified for the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) sectionals by placing third as a team at the IHSA regional on Oct. 24.

According to head coach Anne Heselton, the team accomplished the goals they set before the race, including qualifying for sectionals.

“[Assistant coach Tricia Brown and I] are extremely pleased with how the girls ran at the regional meet and we are proud to say that they are going on to the sectional as a team.”

Senior Megumi Hoshi led the team with three-mile time of 18:33. She was followed by freshman Michelle Karp, who ran 19:25, senior co-captain Carmin Beck (19:36), sophomore Jessica Sutfin (20:09), senior co-captain Allie Coursey (21:05), senior Asha Mannancheril (21:39) and senior Becky Traisman

(23:36).

The meet was hosted by Loyola Academy at the Harms Woods Forest Preserve, which was essentially converted into a swamp by the recent rains. Although some runners lament muddy conditions because it usually means slower times, Hoshi saw the mud puddles differently. “It was so fun jumping over [the mud].” Nevertheless, Hoshi did not let the fun get in the way of getting down to business. Her time of 18:33 was the best on the team and the third best overall in the meet.

At the CSL South meet, the team was led by Hoshi whose 18:38 three-mile run earned her fourth place in the CSL South and all-conference honors in only her first full season of cross country. Hoshi was joined in the awards ceremony by freshman Michelle Karp who became the first freshman all-conference athlete at the varsity level for the first time in 11 years. Karp placed ninth in the CSL South with a time of 19:19. Karp’s teammates have nothing but praise for the young runner.

According to Hoshi, “[Karp] is doing so well this season. I think she has the talent and the ability to make it to state eventually.”

Hoshi and Karp were joined by Sutfin (19:37), Beck (19:38), Mannancheril (21:13), Coursey (21:26), and junior Lindsey Karp (22:06) to make up the top seven runners.

Just one week prior to the conference meet, the girls team represented Niles West at the Walt Disney World Cross Country Classic in Lake Buena Vista, FL. Hoshi placed seventh in the Elite Girls division with a time of 19:52 for the five kilometer race (roughly 3.2 miles). Hoshi’s time was less than a minute off the winner Kaitlyn Davis from Stafford, VA, who completed the course in 19:00. The team took eighth place out of the 11 teams in the Elite Division.

Hoshi’s success with cross country follows her success on the track. During her sophomore season of track, she qualified for the IHSA state meet in the 800 meter run.

Heselton also has high hopes for the sectional meet. She feels that, “If everything goes as well as it did [at Regionals], then [Hoshi] should go downstate.”

The wolves will compete tomorrow in the IHSA sectional meet at the team’s home course at 9 am.

Volleyball team’s perseverance pays off as it approaches IHSA sectionals

W Sofiya Pershteyn
Staff Writer

The girls varsity volleyball team finished its season strong with an overall record 18-13 (3-7 Central Suburban League).

“Our girls played hard; they played amazing. Every single one of them was out there working hard,” head coach Stacy Metoyer said.

The team’s senior players included outside hitter Lauren LaGioia, defensive specialist (DS) Christine Ocampo, co-captain and right side hitter (RSH) Allison Guiang, setter (S) Colleen Galicia, DS Jennie DiJohn, co-captain and DS Kelly Kleppin and middle hitter (MH) Jaclyn Gremley.

Juniors included DS Nicole Poskrobko, RSH Denise Tossi, co-captain and MH Jordyn Toia, MH Nicole Moy, S Olga Kutkovska, MSH and RSH Kimberly Mercado, DS Aundrea Martinez, DS Casey Nakawatase and S Teagan Smith.

Overcoming a rocky start, the team focused on winning as much games as possible in the second half of the season.

“I think we had a somewhat rough start but we have really progressed and we have proved it in the second half of the season,” Smith said.

Moy agreed. “We have definitely had our ups and downs, but overall, we have all come to mesh as a team and have fun while doing it,” she said.

DiJohn attributed the many victories of the season to the team’s energy level.

“For the most part our season [was] really positive. We had our ups and downs, but when we [had] high energy we [were] unstoppable,” she said.

One of the highlights of the season was the girls’ Oct. 1 victory over New Trier, their first over the Trevians in 14 years.

“Our victory over New Trier was amazing and so unexpected because when all teams play New Trier they think they are going to lose but we came out with so much energy and desire to win,” Nakawatase said.

Other highlights include a third-place finish in the Deerfield tournament on Oct. 2 and a second-place finish in the Northside College Prep tournament on Oct. 3.

Going into the Illinois High School Association regionals

on Wednesday at Lincoln Park High School, the team expressed confidence that it would play in the regional championship game on Saturday Oct. 31.

“[Our] first goal is to win the regional championship and to make it to sectional final and win,” Guiang said before Wednesday’s match.

Tossi agreed. “We are going to try really hard to win sectionals,” she said. “That would be a great goal for us to accomplish and it would mean a lot to all of us.”

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SPORTS

Legends of the Fall

Naomi Prale
Sports Editor

With every new sports season, new talent emerges. The athletes work hard to leave a mark on the school by exceeding the expectations of their coaches. This year, two outstanding individuals shined brighter than the rest: soccer player Mahi Mameledzija and cross country runner Carmin Beck. In recognition of their hard work, *West Word* names Mameledzija and Beck the *Legends of the Fall*.

Beck works hard to lead her team to victory

What does it take to be a team leader? Female athlete of the season Carmin Beck knows.

"I try to be positive, outgoing and supportive," senior girls cross country co-captain Beck said. "I want to encourage people, to push themselves to be the best they can be."

Senior co-captain Allie Coursey acknowledged Beck's leadership. "Despite being quiet, she leads by example and always is doing what she is supposed to be doing. She follows the motto 'being a great leader is doing the right thing when no one is watching,'" Coursey said.

Beck admits that she was not always so focused. "Freshman year, I didn't understand that I was acceptable at running," Beck said. "I didn't know to push myself harder."

Head coach Anne Heselton recognizes Beck's improvements. "Carmin has grown to deal with injuries and setbacks, and yet she is still one of our top athletes. I think this has made her mentally tougher," Heselton said.

Senior co-captain Josephine Tritsch also sees Beck improving over her cross country career. "Carmin is the epitome of progress," Tritsch said. "She does what she needs to and gets results."

Three years later, Beck has a better idea of what it takes to excel. Beck's best three-mile time is 18:48.

"I want to beat my previous [best] time. [Also,] right now I am third on our home course [all-time list] with a time that is about 10 seconds slower than 18:48. If I can beat that, I can beat the girl who holds second in that spot and secure my name in second place."

However, as a co-captain, Beck has concerns beyond her own performance. Coursey acknowledged Beck's determination for the team to succeed.

"Carmin is willing to put the team's needs in front of hers. Even if a girl is beating her, she will still encourage that girl to do her best and keep pushing her. She wants the team to succeed, and even if that means girls will be beating her, she accepts that," Coursey said.

Senior team member Becky Traisman agrees that Beck's attitude is what sets her apart from the other team members. "She is always positive. If someone is feeling pessimistic about a race, she'll tell them something encouraging."

Sophomore Annie Goudes recognizes Beck as "one of the friendliest on the team."

This quality helps Beck see the silver lining in the darkest of clouds.

"In general I love rainy days because it bonds everyone and it is fun to run in the rain even though it is cold and wet," Beck added.

Beck said that such bonding is a big part of the team's success.

"We are a very close team, a variety of girls who work together and have so much fun. The [October] trip to Walt Disney World helped us all get closer."

As for the future, Beck hopes "to run on a team in college for cross country and track, but that doesn't happen I will join a running club because it is important for me, physically and mentally, to keep running," Beck said.

Beck said that she will miss her years

at West. "Just remember everyone can run. It is about you personally and not you compared to other people. Cross country is more of an individual sport than any other sport."

Mameledzija shatters records

Senior Mahi Mameledzija has worked for four years on the varsity boys soccer squad, and as a co-captain is finally starting to break the records that will leave him in the history

books of Niles West.

"I broke the school record of career goals. I have 47 so far, and the record was 36 [held jointly by Bruno Rasich and Kamil Szczepanski]," Mameledzija said. Mameledzija also broke the record of goals over a season, breaking the past record of 19 with 22.

"He has had one of the best seasons of any Niles West player ever," head coach Scott Ackman said. "He has a very good shot at making the all-state team."

Mameledzija believes in hard work. "I set an example for everyone. Soccer requires a lot of physical conditioning, and I work hard in practice. I just want the team to do well."

Senior co-captain Joe Kosir recognizes Mameledzija's improvement over four years. "Freshman year, there were times where [Mameledzija] could have won the game for us but could not find the back of the net. Since then, he has collected a lot of game winning goals, three or four this season alone, and has become a really good game finisher," Kosir said.

Due to a recent injury, Mameledzija is out for the rest of the season. "He has a huge leader, he is our offense, so now to lose him is pretty tragic. He is been here for four years, captain for two. He works in the off season, and got the whole team together for conditioning. He ran sprints and got the guys all ready for this year," Ackman said.

Things look better next year for Mameledzija. "I am looking into playing at University of Illinois at Chicago. I have already talked to the coach about that," Mameledzija said.

Ackman said that Mameledzija brings "confidence and leadership to the squad. Mameledzija works well with all the guys, and he is just a great captain."

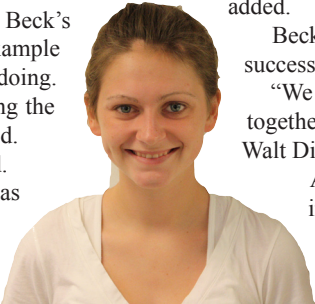
"He has brought good advice to the underclassmen," Kosir added.

"We are all friends," Mameledzija said. "This helps the unity of our team. The players all hang out."

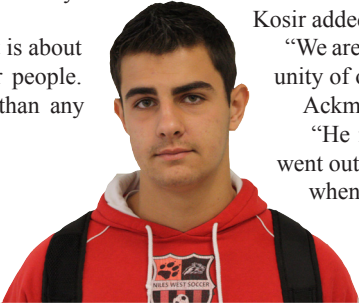
Ackman agrees.

"He is had team dinners at his house, and they all went out to eat all the time. The team is really confident when Mameledzija is around."

For the future, "a lot of the guys will be gunning for Mameledzija's record," Ackman said. "We have a very young team. But he was doing amazing. I wish him the best of luck at UIC."



Beck



Mameledzija



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