

Spring stars a pair of hard throwers

Saintoiry, Dahm rise to top as West Word's Athletes of the Spring

by **Jenna Temkin**
Editor in Chief

Senior Frisline Saintoiry entered the IHSA Class AA state track meet hoping to set a Niles West discus record that would be around for a long time, but even she was stunned with her school record-setting throw of 129-11 on the first day of the competition.

"It was a shock because it was really far. My goal was to make it hard for anyone else to break it, and I think I did."

Saintoiry has been breaking records since she began throwing and "has been a leader for the throwers," according to throwing coach Amy Hodges.

This all-conference athlete's record and outstanding season have made her an obvious choice for *West Word's* female athlete of the spring.

After breaking the school record during the preliminaries and making it to the finals along with 12 other girls, Saintoiry had disappointing throws the final day. Only one of her throws qualified, a 115-footer.

However, Saintoiry said she wasn't disappointed by her performance because her record-breaking distance carried over to the next day and got her an eighth place spot overall. This qualified her as an all-state thrower.

Even though Saintoiry was struggling with a fever during the meet, she said her health didn't affect her performance.

"During the two days it was really hot, so I just kept hydrated," Saintoiry said.

This isn't the only incident when she was struck by a cold during the season. A string of colds, not injuries, has been a major obstacle for Saintoiry.

Getting motivated to wake up at 6:45 a.m. to weight train at school was also a struggle, Saintoiry said. This year and the previous year, Saintoiry took an early bird weight training and conditioning class. Two days each week, she came to school before this class for extra training. During the season, following an afternoon of throwing after school, Saintoiry lifted weights again.

"Getting up that early shows her dedication to throwing," Hodges said.

Saintoiry has also excelled at shot put. She placed first in the Central Suburban South indoor track meet with a 34-1 throw.

Dabbling in shot put in eighth grade, Saintoiry participated in a junior high meet at Niles West, but really began to learn the sport during her freshman year. Saintoiry said some aspects of learning how to throw came naturally, while getting "the shot in the right position...and getting the speed was hard to learn. However, eventually it came together."

Saintoiry planned on joining the softball team in high school, but after talking to Niles West coaches in eighth grade, she joined the indoor track team and liked it so much that she threw during the outdoor season, instead of playing softball.

Hodges notes that Saintoiry has progressed tremendously since she first began coaching her two years ago.

"When I came here she wasn't spinning at all, but by the end of junior year, she spun when she threw the discus."

Hodges said she has high hopes for Saintoiry next year when she attends Eastern Illinois University, where she also hopes to take on hammer and javelin, two events that aren't offered at Niles West.



Saintoiry

by **Aatifa Sadiq**
Managing Editor

West Word's male athlete of the spring, senior Daniel Dahm, culminated his four-year baseball career with a bang. A four-year performer in football as well, Dahm closed the baseball chapter of his athletic endeavors by pitching a no-hitter against **Maine South**.

Behind a strong pitching staff led by Dahm, the Wolves finished second in the Central Suburban League South and even beat perennial rivals New Trier, who lost the finals of the state championship. On an individual level, Dahm's no-hitter is an accomplishment that is very rare, even among professional baseball players. Just ask the Detroit Tigers' Justin Verlander, who pitched one Tuesday night.

Of the feat, Dahm said, "I would never have thought that I could pitch a no-hitter. Once I found out in the fifth inning, I was very defensive to keep it. It was a great feeling, one that I'll always remember."

Dahm's pitching has been a great asset to the baseball team, according to baseball coach Gary Gustafson. "Danny's our number one pitcher; he's the go to guy for the team," Gustafson said.

However, this accomplishment didn't come without lots of work. Dahm exemplifies one of his favorite quotes: "Train like you're number two, but compete like you're number one." Dahm emphasized the importance of going out on the field and competing as one is the best, while realizing there's always room for improvement, especially when it comes to the weight room. "You definitely have to push yourself to success," Dahm said.

Although Dahm feels that, at times, his weakness is conditioning, he stressed that his strength as a pitcher is his body mass. "I have a lot of body mass, which lets me throw really hard. It allows me to really challenge hitters," Dahm said.

However, Dahm's success is not due strictly to his frame. "[Dahm's] strength as a player lies in his command of the curve ball. He has a powerful [arm] and can strike seven-eight guys out in one game," Gustafson said.

However, Dahm also feels that the best quality for a pitcher to have is short-term memory in order to avoid discouragement. "Just because you [give up] a home run to one [batter], the next person is entirely different. You have to hope for the best to come out of it," Dahm said.

Not only are body mass and short-term memory keys to strengthening his game, but Dahm's skill at pitching in particular and general baseball prowess come from years of hard work and persistence. "When I was seven, I played tee-ball, and ever since then I've been playing," Dahm added.

As a child, Dahm says, he was strongly influenced by his father and his uncle who encouraged him to play. "I've always loved the sport. My uncle is a coach at a college in Iowa, and I would always go down there and watch his team play. Every chance we could, my family would come together to watch all of the games on TV," Dahm said.

Despite all of his talent and dedication, Dahm's future career in baseball is still in question. He has chosen to continue playing football at Carthage College in Wisconsin, but he still has yet to decide whether to pursue his baseball career there. However, he remains open to continuing his dominance on the mound.

"Going to Carthage, baseball is still an option for [Dahm]," Gustafson said.



Dahm