

Managing three sports is no sweat for Alec Chang

Tri-season athlete serves, sprints and sabers to success

by Emma Willcocks

Every day after school this winter, Alec Chang goes straight to his New Trier varsity fencing practice until 6 PM. On Mondays, he goes afterwards to play for his Spike League team, and Wednesdays for Night League. Tuesdays and Thursdays find him leaving for his Vortex Volleyball Club practice at 7:30 and returning home at 10:30.

With multiple hours of sports every night, Chang is a rare example of a student-athlete taken to the extreme.

Some athletes at New Trier have times when they're on or off season, but Chang has no time off. His fall season consists of New Trier cross country, club fencing, and club volleyball. Winter season is New Trier fencing, club volleyball, Night League, and Spike League. Spring season is time for New Trier volleyball and intramural soccer.

Even though he comes across as a "big sports guy," Chang believes he avoids the stereotype of a "jock."

"When I hear 'jock,' I think of the exact opposite of me. I consider a jock to be someone who plays football or basketball, wearing a letterman jacket with a nice military style haircut or a Justin Bieber flow," Chang said. "I probably get this image from 'High School Musical,' but I feel like it's a pretty universal idea of a jock. The sports I play are probably the least mainstream sports out there, besides bowling and bass fishing. I really wouldn't consider anyone who fences or plays volleyball a jock."

Throughout middle school, Chang began to find his passions for these three sports. He was introduced to fencing in fifth grade at a New Trier camp, then fenced competitively

for two years. He quit during middle school, because he "didn't enjoy it all that much and it took up a lot of time." He took it up again freshman year and has been fencing ever since.

Chang started playing volleyball the summer before eighth grade. He said, "One of my friends asked if I wanted to do a camp and my mom basically forced me to do it. Thankfully, I loved it and decided to play club volleyball that year." His mom also got him interested in running cross country in seventh grade.

A former soccer player, Chang found that it didn't interest him as much as his other sports. "I never had the same passion for soccer as I did for volleyball and running, and I was never that good at it. When I stopped playing soccer in eighth grade, I decided to continue cross country and volleyball instead."

Often, students enter freshman year as multi-sport athletes, but eventually have to choose one sport to focus their time on, either their favorite or the one they're best at. Not Alec. He is unable to give up any of the sports, because he enjoys playing all three of them. "I tried quitting, but every time I did, I would find that they mean too much to me."

Though Chang can't bring himself to quit one sport, if he had to choose only one to continue, he would pick fencing or running. He likes having individual control, and thinks that volleyball has

too many variables.

"In a weird way it's nice, because in fencing the only person or thing you can blame is yourself. No one else can change how you fence and no one else makes you better or worse," Chang said. "Cross country and fencing are way more personal. If I had to choose, I would fence only because I would still be able to run on my own, but not competitively."

Throughout all of the sports, Chang only has one ritual: applesauce. "I pretty much always eat an applesauce before I do anything," Chang said. An ideal snack, they are easy to bring anywhere and aren't too filling.

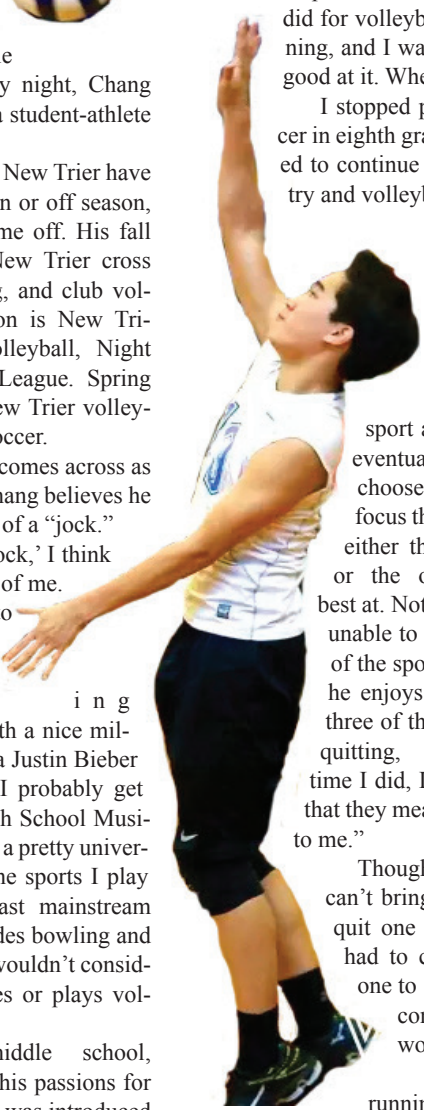
"Most of the time, I'll just eat plain apple sauce. But sometimes I spice things up and eat an apple strawberry one. But this all depends on if my mother buys them. I recommend strawberry applesauce; it's better than the normal kind."

Going against the "sports guy" stereotype, Chang can't just be defined by his athletic ability. When he's not on the court, the strip, or the course, Chang plays trumpet in Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Symphony Orchestra at New Trier.

"It's a completely different experience than playing sports, but it's just as important and impactful," Chang said. "Besides the two periods a day, we have concerts each quarter, and we are going to Italy over spring break."

In his rare free time, Chang enjoys playing piano and guitar. "Although I am pretty bad at the two, it's a great way to relax and make time less boring," Chang said. "It's also a great thing to do if I only have twenty minutes to kill."

With fencing, volleyball, cross country, intramurals, band and orchestra, Chang doesn't mind being busy. "Everyone says, 'Don't you want to have fun in your life?' But to me, everything I do is to enjoy life. Sure partying every weekend would be fun, but it's so much more fulfilling to win a volleyball match or run a race. The joy from fencing outweighs the joy from partying nine times out of ten. That one other time is when you get your butt kicked."



His head's in the game, his heart's on the stage

Struckman excels on lacrosse field and center stage

by Liz Byrne

When High School Musical premiered on Disney Channel in January 2006, Troy Bolton stole every tween's heart. Who couldn't resist his dazzling smile and perfect hair? He was a star on the court and on-stage, combining the best of both worlds.

New Trier, meet your resident Troy Bolton:

Zack Struckman. On top of being a two-time varsity state lacrosse player, he has an intense dedication to the performing arts, taking two periods of theatre every day.

Struckman is no stranger to sports. Before he started playing lacrosse, he was a dedicated hockey player. He said his love for lacrosse started the summer before sixth grade at a Wildcats sports camp. He was motivated by his friends' common love for the sport.

"I first played at the Wildcats Sports Camp over the summer and I loved it so much I started playing the next year," Struckman said. "Also, all my friends had started the previous year, so I felt kind of left out."

Struckman has loved playing lacrosse ever since. A member of the New Trier lacrosse team since freshman year, he helped the varsity team win two state championships. While Struckman said that winning state two years in a row "with the boys" was a great experience, he admits the best part about the season is the much-hyped Loyola vs. New Trier game.

"All the guys get really hyped all week for the game because it's our big rivalry," Struckman said. "There's just something really exhilarating about being out on the field during that game."

When Struckman is not out on the field defeating the Loyola lacrosse team, he can be found in the McGee Theatre, rehearsing a scene for class or helping out the perform-

ing arts department in general.

Struckman said he fell in love with acting and the performing arts at the beginning of his junior year, but he said he was first introduced to the craft in third grade, when he was cast in a community theatre production of High School Musical.

Due to his busy lacrosse and hockey schedules, Struckman was never able to find time to try acting, before junior year, even though he wanted to be involved since he was young.

"After I retired from hockey, it took me a year to stomach up the courage to try something entirely new, with people I didn't really know," Struckman said. "It was totally worth it because I love acting so much and the theatre squad is the best."

To Struckman, performing and being on stage is all about the people who are involved in the performing arts at New Trier.

"I love the people," Struckman said. "I feel comfortable acting like a weirdo for two periods and after school everyday."

This past fall, Struckman was cast in the New Trier Performing Arts Department production of "She Kills Monsters." This was Struckman's first extracurricular production at New Trier and he said it was one of the best moments of his senior year.

"There's something about being on stage, when you just kind of get lost in the moment, that is just so magical," said Struckman.

work at night." She (not surprisingly) later added that she gets little to no sleep at night. Outside of the classroom, though, Sennett has no problem finding free time to relax and hang out with friends.

Although Sennett doesn't know where she wants to go to college, she hopes to pursue lacrosse after high school.

Sennett and her peers say that the main reason she's able to manage everything on her plate is because of her positive attitude and her level-headed mentality.

Classmates, teammates, and her friends all agree that Sennett is a natural born leader who continues to excel both on and off the field.

Off the field, she has maintained exemplary grades and continues to flourish in all aspects of New Trier.

Finding time in between all of her extracurriculars is hard, but Sennett says, "I use all of my free periods and spend about two hours on home-

Sennett sticking it to the competition

Varsity junior leads the way on three playing fields

by Bella Geroulis

Sitting down with junior Isabelle Sennett, one would never guess that she is a three sport varsity athlete. Her laidback and modest attitude is everything you would expect from a 17-year-old girl, but her track record is anything but ordinary.

Where Sennett differs from others is that she has been playing varsity sports since her freshman year.

Her ice hockey career began in fourth grade, and through the years she has added field hockey and lacrosse to her reper-

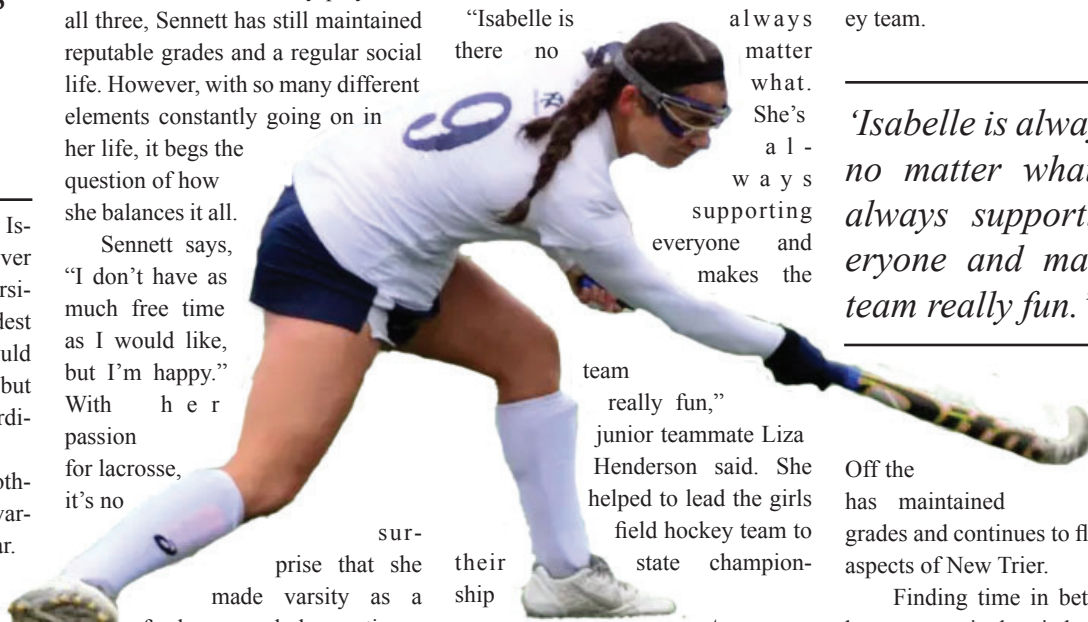
toire. A New Trier varsity player for all three, Sennett has still maintained reputable grades and a regular social life. However, with so many different elements constantly going on in her life, it begs the question of how she balances it all.

Sennett says, "I don't have as much free time as I would like, but I'm happy." With her passion for lacrosse, it's no surprise that she made varsity as a freshman, and she continues to act as a leader on the team. Her teammates have nothing but

good things to say about her. "Isabelle is always there no matter what. She's always supporting everyone and makes the team really fun," junior teammate Liza Henderson said. She helped lead the girls field hockey team to state championship two years in a row and was one of the select few underclass-

men to join the girls varsity ice hockey team.

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