

Students confirm sports are worth the commitment

Students, at the dawn of their careers, felt sports were the right path to take

by Rhea Mech

Many students contemplate, “why do I play sports?” as they struggle to decide if the positive side of the commitment outweighs the sacrifices they make.

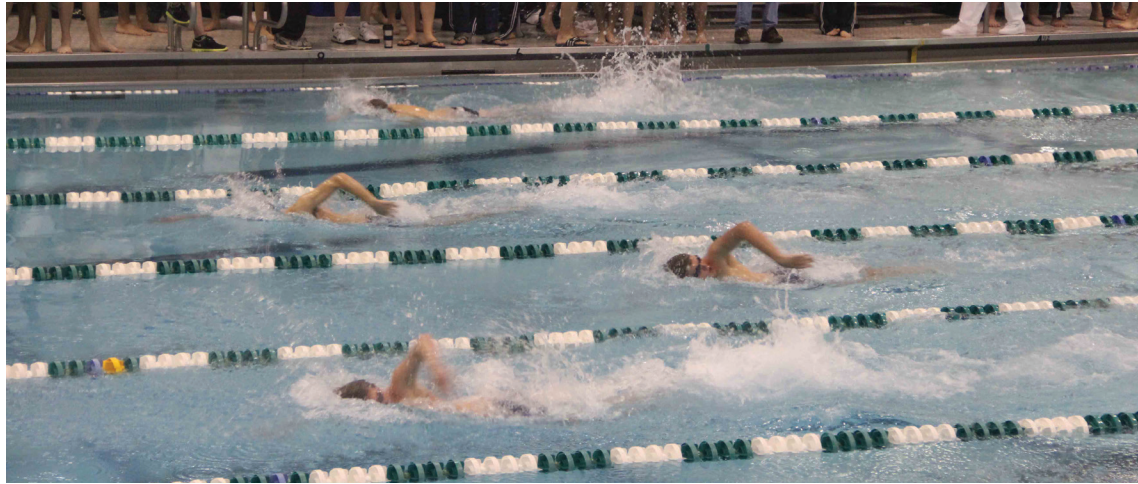
“I love playing Ultimate Frisbee because it’s high energy throughout the entire game, and every player gets involved,” said junior Robert Booden, who plays both on the New Trier club team and in a league outside of school.

While the time commitment for Ultimate Frisbee varies depending on the weather and field conditions, Booden sometimes spends up to 15 hours per week on the sport in the spring.

While stress is a constant factor in a high schooler’s life, Booden feels almost none of it while playing ultimate frisbee. “There’s something about the atmosphere of the game and the team, it’s a stress reliever,” he said.

Junior water polo player and swimmer Scott Grodecki agrees with Booden. “I feel less stressed during the season,” said Grodecki. “It gives me a strict routine, plus the KW release gives me another free period to get work done.”

Commitment to his club team



Student athletes decide that competing during the school year is worth it, despite the intense time commitment | Allison

is relaxed compared to the school season.

“I’ll maybe go to 6 practices a week for club, whereas I need to go to 9 a week during season.” It also disciplines me mentally, gives me something to do, and the team is fun to be around,” said Grodecki.

“Sometimes during season I sacrifice sleep due to morning practices, but it’s poor time management on my part,” he said. “The sacrifices are definitely worth it, even if I may be a tad off kilter in the morning”

Students who play multiple sports, or have long seasons, do not seem to mind the commitment.

Junior Katie Busch contemplated playing three sports before entering high school.

“At one point I wanted to play basketball, but then I decided not to,”

said Busch, who runs cross country and plays lacrosse for New Trier. She is also involved in lacrosse club teams.

“I realized that being a tri-sport athlete would be too physically tiring, plus I wouldn’t have any time to do school work or have a social life,” she said.

While many have a passion for the game they play, student athletes are forced to change their typical routines in order to keep up with school work, like junior Sothio Suzue-Pan, who plays club hockey.

“I sacrifice a lot of studying time, so my study habits definitely had to improve,” said Suzue-Pan.

“During my sports season, I have less energy during the school days because of late night practices, but I have gotten used to it.”

Some students, like junior Signe

Mason who did ballet for 13 years, have had to quit their sports due to their large commitments.

“The last year I danced I was doing roughly 15 hours a week,” said Mason. “I quit last year because of an injury that still plagues me today. It was really hard to decide to quit because I love dance with a passion, but it was slowly killing me physically and mentally so I was forced to make a choice.”

Though she misses it, Mason knows she made the right choice. She said she now has more time to do homework and hang out with friends.

“I don’t miss the constant fear of never being good enough, the anxiety associated with performing, or the negative mindset I developed while dancing.”

Mason is not the only student who felt the need to stop a program

she invested so much time in. Senior Maureen McNerney, captain of one of the New Trier club girls hockey team, recently quit AAA hockey, due to the commitment.

“I had minimal time to explore other areas or interests in my life, and had always wanted to play for New Trier,” said McNerney.

While she has the opportunity to play division three hockey, McNerney said she is leaning away from playing, due to the commitment. But, she is not planning on quitting sports all together.

“If I quit playing sports I would lose a group of people I can count on, a place to go and escape from everything, and being in a good fitness state,” said McNerney. “A great community can be created because of sports and it would be hard to lose having a group of people who are working towards similar goals.”

Sophomore and volleyball player Joe Monnig is one of many students who have accepted their sport as part of their identity, which they fear they will lose if they stop playing.

“I play sports because I would never have discovered the person I am now if I never tried,” said Monnig.

Regardless of the commitment, students agree that sports should have a positive impact on its players.

“A life where you’re doing nothing is boring,” said Booden. “Sports keep you fit and keep you interacting with people. It’s social and physical. A two for one deal.”

Tennessee Takeover: Baseball sweeps in Nashville tournament

After winning all of their games in Tennessee, baseball hopes to carry momentum to the rest of the season

by David Heiman

Over spring break, the New Trier boys baseball team went to Nashville, Tennessee for a tournament, winning all three games.

“It was a great opportunity to play in warm weather and give a lot of the guys on the team opportunities. At the same time, spending so much time in Tennessee helped our camaraderie more than anything, as we all got to know each other better,” senior outfielder Matt Roth said.

The team played Brentwood academy, a recent state champion in Tennessee, and won 9-0. They also played Immaculate Conception and Christ Presbyterian Academy, winning the games 13-0 and 8-2.

Having such a strong showing in Tennessee was a goal for the team to ensure that the momentum carries over into conference play.

Since the team was in Nashville for four days, they spent their free time taking advantage of the city.

“Outside of baseball, we played paintball, went to an escape room, and went to a Vanderbilt vs Lipscomb college baseball game,” senior middle infielder Evan Hummel said.

Roth added, “Everyone on our team was really excited for paintball. The best bonding was probably spending time in the hotel playing cards and Fortnite, since we all had the chance to spend time with each



Boys baseball celebrating after winning all three games in Nashville | Gorski

other for four days in a row.”

Building strong team chemistry is a goal for the team this year. Last year, the team was very senior heavy.

Adjusting to new starting roles is a key for the returning varsity players this year. “Last year our starting lineup was mainly seniors who had also started their junior year,” Roth said. He continued, “This year our starting lineup is still up in the air, and lots of guys will continue to get opportunities to earn their starting spots, whether they are seniors or juniors.”

Due to the team’s depth, we will all work hard day in and day out as we compete for open spots.”

Senior pitcher Drew Gorski said, “I think the difference between this team and teams from other years is the depth that we have on the mound and the ability to change the game with one swing of the bat due to a bunch of big guys who have the ability to hit one out of the park during every at bat.” In fact, the team has over 10 guys who stand at least 6’4.

While the team wants to win

another state championship for the program, they have plenty on their plate for goals this year. Gorski said that the team is focusing on bonding and enhancing relationships, while also playing error free baseball.

“We always strive to be competitive in everything we do as well as representing the program in the best way possible,” Hummel said.

The team consists of 23 players, 13 seniors, 8 juniors, 1 sophomore, and 1 freshman. The captains, all seniors, are Nathan Shapiro, Payton Burch, Cam Redding, and Anthony Calarco.

“They have all done a great job making sure everyone is working hard everyday,” said Hummel.

Currently the team is 8-1. “We are definitely looking strong but for sure have not played our best baseball yet,” Gorski said. Roth built on that by saying, “Ultimately, the team has a lot of potential but we can’t become complacent. We will have to work hard everyday at practice to get where we want to be at the end of the year.”

Questions with Senior badminton player Julia Yang

Yang talks about her badminton career and plans for after high school

by Lexi Shoup

Q: How long have you been playing badminton?

A: I have been playing since freshman year. I took a break junior year because my classes were too hard and I couldn’t fit badminton into my schedule.

Q: Why did you start playing badminton?

A: Badminton seemed fun and I enjoy racquet sports. Little did I know it required so much extreme conditioning.

Q: What’s your favorite part about badminton?

A: My favorite part about badminton is the team atmosphere and the competitive mindset. It’s fun to compete and work hard to win at tournaments when I get to play.

Q: What is the team dynamic like?

A: The team is very fun. Everyone has their own personalities and we get along with each other very well. At practice we all come together to



improve our strengths and work on our weaknesses.

Q: Do you think you’re going to continue playing badminton after this year?

A: I don’t think I’m going to continue with badminton in college but I am interested in playing club tennis.

If you would like to be considered for athlete of the week please send an email to ntnews@nth.net or send us a tweet @ the New Trier news twitter and state your name, grade, and what sport that you want to be interviewed for.