

Regional championships: Senior soccer player Andy Denesongkham, left, and the football team celebrate. Photos by Mersadie Kiewel



Left: Junior Miles Wash celebrates a defensive play. Photo by Mersadie Kiewel Center: Junior running back Dylan Edwards looks for running room in a 63-14 win over Wichita East on Nov. 5. Photo by Mersadie Kiewel Right: Senior Scott Simmons tracks the ball during the regional soccer championship on Oct. 28. Derby won 1-0 to advance to the quarters. Photo by Mersadie Kiewel

PLAYER WATCH

ALEX KEY



"Coming together as seniors to make our last ride special, also for the legacy for the guys behind us."

PHOTO BY NATALIE WILSON

FONTAINE WILLIAMS



"I'm looking forward to ... team dinners and just getting my last opportunity to play basketball and grow with my brothers."

PHOTO BY REESE COWDEN

MARY ARCHER



"The people I've been surrounded with playing high school basketball has definitely made my experience worthwhile."

WILL MCCABE



"This team is going to be so diverse.... We're going to have many new swimmers this year."

TATE RUSHER



"I have practice every day. I do a lot of conditioning and working out and I'm extremely excited for the season."

AMARA EHSA



"I'm super excited this year. I'm expecting to do really good and hopefully become Derby's first girl champ."

Finally, winter seasons begin



Boys basketball players condition.

PHOTO BY LUIS LOZANO

STORY BY JEWEL HARDIN

Winter sports started practicing on Monday. This will be the last time some students can participate in their favorite sport, while others are competing for the first time.

Regardless, preparing for the season is a must.

All but football and boys soccer wrapped up in October, so now the spotlight shifts to basketball, wrestling and boys swimming. Bowling starts in January.

Some students have been dedicated to sports for years.

"It was definitely early elementary school when I started playing," said junior Maryn Archer, who plays basketball and has committed to Arkansas. "It's something that I really enjoy doing and I just love being around it."

The players do conditioning before the season begins.

"We have offseason conditioning four times a week, so Monday through Thursday we go after school and run (and) lift weights," junior Addy Brown said.

There were even plans for the week of Nov. 8-12.

"We'll do scrimmaging ... during the dead week

because our coaches can't be involved with us," Archer said.

While competing in winter sports, it's a dream of many to be recruited by college scouts and possibly play a sport at their dream college.

Archer already committed to play at Arkansas during her sophomore season, while Brown has had more than 20 different college offers.

"A lot of schools that reached out far away, I didn't continue the conversation (because) I wanted to stay closer to home," Brown said.

Another example is senior Will McCabe, who has competed in boys swimming since his freshman year. He finished fifth in Class 6A in the 500 freestyle as a junior.

Athletes prepare for their season on their own time as well.

"I'm going to start swimming soon, I've been working out daily anyway," said senior Kevin Phetsomphou, for boys swimming.

Brown added: "I work out after (school), even if that's just shooting or working on ball-handling."

Sports should be more than final score

Sports are something everyone talks about, especially the scores, the player stats and what happened in the games.

But there can be so much more behind the scenes that people don't see.

The connections. Bonds. Chemistry. Relationship.

Sports help to connect people through strong social bonds on and off the field. Behind the scenes there is so much heart that goes into the work they put into every practice, simply to get into the game.

It is not just how hard you work but how much you can bond as a team to reach that goal.

How good you are on a team or who the best player is, to be honest, sometimes doesn't even matter. Rather, it's about how well you work together to get the job done.

Many people think all you need is talent, and that may be true.

But that makes it boring. You want to have a family backing you up every minute of the game, just like your family or friends do for you.

To me playing sports and putting in all the work is just half of what I am doing. I am also building a family around me with strong bonds. That is how you win games.

Sports are more than just you kicking or playing around with a ball it is about the people and family you build from it.

It is twice as fun with a family to celebrate with after the win anyway.

- Shelby Pronk



Best wishes to our seniors!



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