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St. Charles East's Martines always on the move

By Craig Brueske

Some high school students choose not to get involved in extracurricular activities.

They attend class daily, attain decent grades and cause few problems but at the same time miss out on the ample opportunities offered to them during what could be the most memorable four years of their lives.

I have to wonder if later in life these same people ever regret not getting more involved during their high school years.

Take it from a father of four who has already sent two daughters through high school — it's always better to have your kids participate in after-school events.

My oldest daughters were members of the drill (dance) team when they attended high school. They made lifelong friends and enjoyed a variety of experiences.

About 10 years ago, I remember a former co-worker telling me that her kids' high school years went by very fast.

It was sound advice.

And once you graduate, you can't get those four years back.

By the time St. Charles East senior Annie Martines graduates next May, she will have shared enough high school experiences to fill a bunch of scrapbooks.

A three-sport varsity athlete, Martines recently completed her cross country season as an alternate on the Saints' third-place finishing team.

Two weeks ago, Martines was in the starting lineup for the Saints' girls basketball team's season-opening game against Glenbrook South at the Schaumburg tournament.

Last May, Martines earned county and Upstate Eight Conference championships in the 300-meter hurdles for the Saints' track team.

In addition to teaming with Brittany Williams, Lauren Towne and Kelsey Gentry for a conference title in the 4x100 relay, Martines went on to qualify for the Class 3A state meet in the 300 hurdles.

"I enjoy the competition," said Martines, who literally jumped from the state cross country meet to the first day of basketball practice just two days later.

"It's pretty much nonstop," Martines added of her schedule.

Ironically, Martines had no plans of joining a track or cross country team when she entered high school.

"I never expected to be a runner," said Martines, who was a member of the St. Charles Comets' U12-15 travel softball team. "It (running) was a last-minute decision my freshman year."

Despite her near year-round athletic schedule, Martines still finds time to take a few breaks.

"I like to relax on Sundays," she said.

Being heavily involved in high school athletics hasn't kept Martines from participating in other school-related activities.

The senior class president is a percussion section leader in the concert band and wind ensemble. She is a National Honor Society and Math Honor Society member.

She has volunteered as a student math helper, summer track camp coach, broadcasting announcer, vacation Bible school leader, helped out at Brighton Gardens Nursing Home and has participated in the ALS Walk-Chicago, Autism Walk-A-Thon, numerous food drives and mission trips (Hurricane Katrina relief in New Orleans, for one).

Did I mention that she has worked as a hostess at Neo's Pizza since August?

Kind of makes you think you could do more with your time, doesn't it?

"People always ask how I do it," said Martines. "I've always had a go-go type of schedule. With two older siblings (Alec, Amanda) around, it was always busy at our house. But I've always known that homework comes first. Both of my parents are teachers."

"Annie is a leader in so many things," said St. Charles East band director Jim Kull. "She's proven that you can do a lot of different things and do them well. She always gets the job done. You can trust her."

"She is someone you want on your team," said Saints girls basketball coach Lori Drumtra. "The kids voted her as a captain this season, which doesn't surprise me at all."

"She started out last year being injured," added the coach. "That had to be hard because I know she had higher expectations. And I'm sure it was hard to be a junior and have a freshman (Amanda Hilton) playing in front of you. But she always has a positive attitude. She's a team player."

For the time being, Martines' playing days have been put on indefinite hold after a routine EKG test recently offered through the high school showed possible complications.

"I took the same EKG test my sophomore year and had no problems," said Martines. "This time, something came up that may have shown some sort of abnormality."

After undergoing a series of tests, Martines was put through a stress test last week at Rush-Copley Medical Center in Aurora.

"Most people make it 8 to 12 minutes before stopping," said Annie's dad, Bob. "She was able to go for 16 minutes. They (doctors) were saying she should have been flat on her back after that."

A follow-up ultrasound revealed a possible compromise to her left ventricle. More tests were scheduled for early this week.

"It's scary," said Martines. "It definitely puts everything in perspective. I'm not sure why it's happening but I'm glad we're taking the proper precautions. My family is here to support me."

"The first thing I said to her after I heard the news was how glad I was that she had the EKG test done," said Drumtra. "Hopefully, it's nothing."

"It makes you enjoy what you have while you have it. Basketball is just a game."

“Obviously, we’re going to error on the side of caution,” said Bob Martines. “She’s not going to come back until she’s received 100 percent clearance by doctors.”

Until then, Martines will reluctantly follow orders.

“Being out is frustrating,” she admitted. “I still feel no symptoms. The only thing I feel myself getting is lazy.”

Based on her past, there’s little chance of that happening.

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