

VICTORY

Record Breaker

Sophomore Lydia Clubb already making mark for Wright City



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VICTORY

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Complete player

Levi Caldwell's balanced game helps Trojan find success

By Jeff Stahlhut

Troy Buchanan senior soccer forward Levi Caldwell has put together quite an impressive senior season, notching 13 goals and six assists as of Oct. 10, a continuation of what has been a solid career that's seen him enjoy a great deal of success.

Having been playing since he was three years old, Levi has also wrestled (seventh grade through sophomore year), and played tennis – where he was No. 1 in doubles and No. 2 in singles in the spring. It's soccer, though, where he has truly excelled and impressed people – including his coach the past two years at Troy, Ben Johnstone. And not just during games, but off the field as well.

“What stands out about Levi is that he can handle the truth, even when it is not what he wants to hear,” said Johnstone. “He takes feedback seriously and reflects on both compliments and criticism the same way. That is his best ability.”

Getting to that point has been a lifelong journey for Caldwell, who credits his parents and those around him for helping him excel. “My parents are the main influences. They put me in soccer when I was so young and have spent the time and money to keep me in it for all of these years,” he said. “My peers are also another great influence, without my team I wouldn't be anything. They encourage me and pick me up as I do them. The friendships and the memories I've made through soccer keep me eager for more.”

Johnstone knew as soon as he met Caldwell that he was going to continue to be a successful player. “From day one I knew Levi had the character and quality to be a top player and difference maker. It is not surprising to me to see him having this success with the team,” said the Troy coach. “Sometimes when players have success, receive a lot of compliments, and get more attention from the media, it can put a dent in their ability to continue the habits and actions that got them there. It can be an ego trap that many get caught up in. I do not see that as a trap that Levi will fall into. I believe he is wise enough to remember that being a good teammate, working hard and striving to be a great human will allow him to continue to maximize his potential.”

Early in his high school career, Caldwell began creating memories that he holds close to this day. “My first goal on varsity as a freshman was very special to me because I really wanted to prove myself to my teammates and coach because I was only a freshman,” he said. “It was a new feeling for me even though I've scored in countless club games, just something about scoring as an underdog felt great. Especially since the game ended 1-0, with mine being the only goal.”

Johnstone also has several fond memories of Caldwell – largely revolving not just around his offensive play, but also as a defender and learner. “This season my favorite moment of Levi's was collecting three assists in a 3-2 win conference matchup against Timberland. Something we have spent a lot of time on is Levi's ability to collect information as he is running with the ball and dribbling,” said Johnstone. “That game was a big step for us as a program, and Levi collecting three assists was a great objective measure of his improvement in this aspect of his game.”

Johnstone added that Caldwell's performances in a tournament earlier this season stands out to him, with an added note about his overall approach to not just offense, but defense as well. “Another



special moment for Levi is contributing three great performances in the St. Charles Tournament. Levi scored multiple goals including two clutch plays in the final vs. Pattonville,” he said. “And one piece of insight to Levi's leadership is that he defends with the same intensity as he attacks. Levi is a big part of our attacking strategy and it is common to see the ‘captain and goalscorer’ as a guy who defends when he wants to or on his own terms. Levi has aligned himself and his actions to the team's intentions and he is a great role model in our school.”

While his coach pointed out his efforts on defense help him stand out, Caldwell has always been a goal scorer. “Ever since I was little I loved being up top and the one to score goals,” he said. “The beginning of high school turned over a new leaf for me, proving I could perform against players much older than me. It made me realize I could have a lot of success in the sport.”

His success and love for the game doesn't just impact him on the field, but off the field as well. “I love soccer. It has not only helped me physically and competitively but it has helped me as a person overall,” noted Caldwell. “I've been the captain of my club teams and high school teams all growing up. That has taught me leadership and how important it is to try your best every day. When things get tough mentally, soccer is there to keep me fresh. As soon as I'm on the field, the only thing that matters is the task at hand, and everything outside of the game leaves my mind. Life would be boring without soccer no doubt. The competitiveness of soccer is like a drug to me and I can't get enough of it.”

What comes after such a strong high school career? “Levi has great aspirations to play in college,” said Johnstone. “He is a great student academically and I believe any college will be getting a great player but an even better person were they to give him a chance.”

Caldwell added, “I plan to continue my soccer journey throughout college. I have many schools in mind that would be amazing to go to and several that are looking at me,” he said. “I haven't made a decision yet and will be looking forward to committing to one of them.”



Two-way contributor

Nick Bova stars for Trojan team with state title aspirations

By John Rohlf ■ john@warrencountyrecord.com

Nick Bova has been a lynchpin for the Troy Buchanan football team the past four years, playing key roles on both the offensive and defensive sides of the football.

A senior, Bova is the Trojans' starting safety. He also plays substantial offensive snaps as a running back. Seven games into his senior season, Bova had accumulated over 1,800 career rushing yards and 22 rushing touchdowns, along with 321 tackles in his high school career. Bova was a part of last year's Trojan team that made it to the state tournament semifinals.

Back in his freshman year, Bova did not expect to make the varsity roster and was hoping to make the junior varsity team. At a camp in Higginsville, Troy Buchanan coaches moved Bova from competing against the freshman to competing with the varsity team. Bova eventually made the varsity team as a freshman and played both offense and defense, with more of a focus on defense.

"After that, I started practicing with the varsity," Bova said. "And then eventually started for them. More on the defensive side. That was the main focus. And then later on in the season, I played more offense. I played both ways towards the end of the season."

Prior to high school, Bova had primarily played linebacker

on defense. He moved to safety during his freshman season. Bova said footwork and eye technique were among the changes with the switch to safety.

Troy Buchanan head football coach Ryan Nesbitt said Bova caught the coaching staff's attention the summer before his freshman year. He came to Troy Buchanan as a very talented incoming freshman.

"He ended up starting for us as a freshman on both sides of the football," Nesbitt said. "He's been a four-year, two-way starter. He was all conference as a freshman on the defensive side of the football. He's been playing at a high level since we've had him."

Even though Bova excels both on the offensive and defensive sides of the football, Bova's speciality is defense.

"I just like hitting people," Bova said. "It's just fun to lay the wood out there. That's just more fun to me. It's a little easier in my mind too. A little easier just to know the play, run and get the ball."

Bova had his best offensive statistical season his sophomore season. He rushed for 700 yards in the Trojans' last season running a flexbone offense. After a 3-7 season, the Trojans transitioned to a spread offense. While there were challenges adjusting to the new offense, Bova said the Trojans' strong

Continued on Page 5

performance in the season opener last season helped boost their confidence in the new offense. Troy Buchanan beat Ft. Zumwalt South 44-7 in last year's season opener.

"It was pretty hard at first," Bova said of the transition to the spread offense. "We don't do a huddle. So you had to learn all the hand signals. We had to learn all the new plays. But then as the weeks went on, by the middle of the season, we were all fine. We all knew the plays."

The Trojans finished last season with a 7-2 record. They won their first three playoff games before falling to Liberty North in the state semifinals. Bova pointed to the Trojans' work ethic this offseason. They are focused to finish this season with a state championship. The Trojans started this season with five wins in their first seven games against a challenging schedule.

"We're going to go and compete for the district championship and hopefully win that," Bova said in October. "Win the final four game. We've had this goal since the beginning of last year of the state championship. And that's been on our mind all this offseason is state championship, state championship."

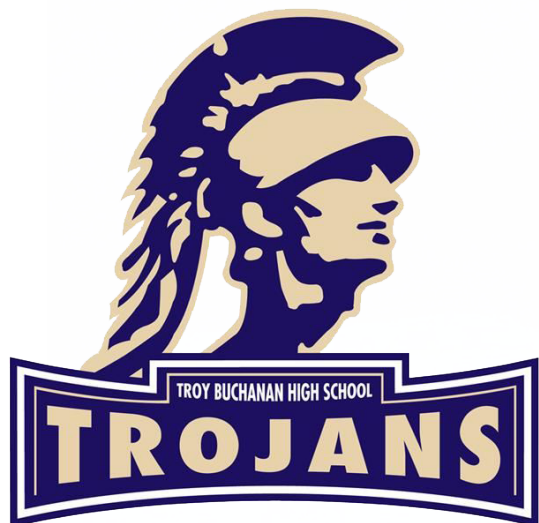
Nesbitt said the Trojans loaded up their schedule with the goal of testing the team early on. Nesbitt said in October he likes where the team is at as they look towards postseason play.

Although Bova is unsure of his plans after his senior football season, he is sure he wants to play football at the collegiate level. He has already received some offers and is waiting on a couple more offers. He anticipates waiting until the end of senior year to make his decision. Bova's top priorities are finding a school and program that has a family feeling and is hard working.

"I want to be part of a winning culture," Bova said. "A winning team, a winning program. That helps. And just has a good school. I want to have a good degree."

Nesbitt stressed the positive impact Bova has had on the Trojan football program over the last four years. Nesbitt said Bova has been a joy to coach over the last four years, adding Bova is one of the players that makes the coaching profession worthwhile. He said Bova is a player worthy of emulation.

"When you talk about leadership, he brings it in every facet of our program and his life," Nesbitt said. "You can see it academically. He's over a 4.0 weighted GPA. He's a 100% weight room attendance guy. He's one of our strongest players. It's really nice when your best players are your hardest workers. That describes him to a T."





Wildcat resurgence



Davis among seniors crucial to Wright City's turnaround

By John Rohlf ■ john@warrencountyrecord.com

Wright City senior Jeremiah Davis is one of several football seniors who have keyed the Wildcats' turnaround.

After winning only one game last season, Wright City won four of its first five games this season. Davis has been a key contributor in all three phases for the Wildcats. Through seven games this season, Davis had 324 receiving yards and two receiving touchdowns. He also had two kickoff returns for touchdowns on special teams. Davis also starts at linebacker and had 25 solo tackles, along with two fumble recoveries, one interception and one sack.

"He is a tremendous asset to our football team," Wright City football coach Tyler Rickard said. "He's really stepped up this year. He just does a good job of being a vocal leader. And he does a good job of being a vocal leader when needed but always being a leader by example. He's just somebody we can rely on."

After playing the running back position growing up and early in his high school career, Davis shifted to wide receiver this year. Davis said it was a pretty smooth transition to a new position.

"I've actually moved around a lot," Davis said. "My first ever position I played was running back because they saw I could run. So they just threw me back there and said run the ball. But then, after that, they moved me to receiver because of my size."

On the field, Rickard stressed the qualities Davis brings to the Wildcat team. He cited Davis' versatility. Davis has played multiple positions over the course of his high school career.

"He's a guy that we can move around and find multiple ways to get him the football," Rickard said. "And he's a guy that when you give the ball to him, good things are going to

happen. He's going to slip a tackle and he may take it 100 yards. Or he's a guy that's going to make a few guys miss and at least get positive yardage out of a play that maybe didn't look like it was going to."

Davis also has moved around on the defensive side of the football. Davis has played cornerback, outside linebacker and hybrid safety over his high school career.

Rickard said it was clear when Davis was a freshman that he had the skill set and the tools to be a quality player for the Wildcats. Since then, Davis has developed into a better football player. Rickard said Davis not only got bigger, faster and stronger, but his football IQ also improved.

"He's just grown leaps and bounds in so many ways from his freshman year to now," Rickard said. "It's been so encouraging because he's put in a lot of hard work. I'm just really proud of him and really happy for him."

After last season's 1-8 campaign, Davis and the other Wildcat seniors led the way for Wright City's resurgence this season.

"It's our leadership," Davis said. "Last year, our leadership wasn't that great. We had multiple seniors that gave up on us. This year, we're all family. We're working together. We're talking to each other. A lot better communication. And we set some ground rules. That's on the coaches."

Davis said the senior group was extremely motivated to improve on last year's one-win season. The work for this season started over the summer.

"We came out not playing around in the summer," Davis said. "That's when we started too. We told them we were not going to play around this season. And that we weren't going to give up on the underclassmen too."

Continued on Page 7

Rickard believes Davis and the other senior leaders on the Wright City football team were key to the Wildcats' turnaround this season. They started leading in the offseason, with Davis and multiple other seniors always in the weight room in the offseason. Rickard added Davis and the other seniors are setting a tone for the rest of the classes.

"Obviously wins and losses, we're making memories," Rickard said. "But they're going to set a precedent and affect the future of this program in more than just their wins and losses but by that leadership. And that's what I'm excited about. They're going to be able to look back, 10, 15 years down the road. We helped get that thing going."

After football season, Davis' high school athletic career will continue. He also stars on the Wright City track and field team. Davis participates in the 100 and 200 meter dash. He also competes in the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 relay races. Davis has his sights set on qualifying for the state tournament.

"I plan to go to state," Davis said. "We probably would

have gone last year but I had to go to Florida. That was so tragic. This year, no vacations. We're going to state. I've got the same people on my relay team as last year. That's going to be nice."

Wright City track and field coach Fred Ross noticed in Davis' first season on the track and field team last season that he wants to win for both himself and his teammates.

"He just has another gear," Ross said. "He just competes so well and works really well with those kids in the relays with him. That's just the competitiveness he has. When he gets close, he's got a second gear."

Davis believes his experience running track has helped improve his speed on the football field. Ross also sees football helping his performance on the track.

"He's just gotten stronger," Ross said. "With football, he's in the weight room over the summer. So he's doing a good job with that. And that's just going to help him. That strength's just going to help. I expect better things this year out of him."



Jeremiah Davis (right) holds the ball after recovering a fumble against Van Far earlier this season.



MULTIPLE RECORDS



Wright City's Clubb breaks two school softball records in sophomore campaign

Story and photos by John Rohlf ■ john@warrencountyrecord.com

Not even halfway into her sophomore year, Lydia Clubb already holds three Wright City school records in two sports.

Wright City's starting shortstop, Clubb broke the school home run and hit records this season for the Lady Wildcats. She hit 12 home runs, eclipsing the school's previous record of eight. She had 48 hits this season to set a new school record. She also set the school record in the 4x400 relay last track season.

Clubb had a successful freshman season on the softball diamond. She finished with a .582 batting average, which is top-five in school history. She hit two home runs and had 39 hits last season. She finished this season with a .552 batting average. Clubb's 1.161 slugging percentage this season was over .300 points higher than last season.

Clubb thinks strength training over the offseason and

a change in approach helped her power numbers this past season.

"I've been working out a lot," Clubb said. "That's probably the main reason why. Using my legs more instead of all my arm power. Last year, I was just using all my arms. Now I've transferred that to my legs."

Wright City softball and track and field coach Fred Ross believes Clubb's work in the weight room was a big factor for her power surge. He also thinks Clubb was more selective when deciding which pitches to swing at this season. Ross said Clubb chases less bad pitches after being a little over anxious at the plate last season.

Ross also believes Clubb's decision making at shortstop was better this season.

"You always want the kids to do the best they can and trying to make that extra effort," Ross said. "A couple of

times, she probably should have just shut it down and not made the throw or tried to make the throw. She's done a much better job with that this year. It's just another year of maturity."

Clubb excels defensively at shortstop for the Lady Wildcats despite only playing the position for a couple years. She grew up playing outfield and catcher.

"Growing up, I never wanted anything to do with the infield until about two years ago," Clubb said. "I started playing shortstop and I'm like this is the spot for me."

Clubb played select softball growing up, which she believes helped prepare her to be successful on the diamond at the high school level. However, there was an adjustment to high school competition. Clubb saw slower pitching at the high school level than she did during the offseason.

Ross also saw the pitch speed difference as an area Clubb needed to adjust to during her freshman season.

"I think she knew she was a good player," Ross said. "But to take it to the varsity level, it's a little different than select ball. Because you're playing around kids of all different levels. Not just all elite players."

Clubb is a switch hitter, meaning she hits both right-handed and left-handed depending on the pitching matchup. Clubb thinks she has more power from the right side but sees benefits to hitting from the left side against left-handed pitching.

"Normally, if it's a left-handed pitcher, they're mostly going to throw inside on lefties. And I like the inside hitting left-handed. So that's when I would go left-handed."

Clubb thinks running track has helped her softball game to the next level. Track has helped her speed, she said.

Ross stressed the benefits of Clubb playing softball and running on the track team. As a softball, wrestling and track and field coach, Ross knows the benefits of an athlete playing multiple sports.

"I see too many kids get burned out in their sport before they make it to a senior in high school," Ross said. "Or their body breaks down...You talk to college coaches, most of them are looking for multi-sport athletes."

Ross added he thinks Clubb's competitiveness helps her both on the track and on the softball diamond.

"She's such a competitor and when you're running in that race against other kids, she works hard to catch those kids or be closer to the lead because she doesn't want to let her teammates down," Ross said. "And she's like that here as well. She just loves softball and loves to have fun."

Clubb credited her parents for helping her get to

where she is as a softball player. She noted the time and money they have dedicated to help her grow as a softball player.

"They spent so much time getting me into softball," Clubb said. "They spent so much money on it too. Encouraging me every at bat. Finding the small things I'm doing wrong to help me do it right next time."

Clubb's long-term softball goals at Wright City are for the team to win the EMO conference crown and to individually earn all-state honors. She was recently named to the conference's first team.

Ross thinks with Clubb's talent and work ethic, she will start getting noticed by colleges soon.

"With her work ethic, she's going to start getting more and more attention from colleges to play ball somewhere at the next level," Ross said. "She's that good and I think she's still got some steps to take. I still think she can expand on her game."



“ They spent so much time getting me into softball, encouraging me every at bat. ”



Warrior ace

Kylie Witthaus' production on mound, at plate propels Warriors

By John Rohlf ■ john@warrencountyrecord.com

Warrenton southpaw Kylie Witthaus' production on the mound and at the plate have helped Warrenton to another winning season and district title.

A junior, Witthaus has served as the team's main pitcher after splitting time her first two seasons with Kathryn McChristy. Witthaus threw over 120 innings this regular season. Witthaus finished the season with a 10-8 record and a 1.22 ERA. She finished with 17 complete games. She started 17 games and pitched 19 games. Witthaus pitched 74 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings last season, finishing the season with a 2.07 ERA. Witthaus has increased the spin she generates on her pitches over the last couple years, which she sees as one of the keys to her recent success.

"I just continue to work on what I'm doing," Witthaus said. "I have great coaches and teammates and family who always pick me up and support me. I've also learned how to spin the ball better. I think I've gained a little more speed, so that's been helpful."

Witthaus' largest strides this season have come at the plate. After hitting ninth for the Lady Warriors last season, Witthaus

has hit second for Warrenton. She has led the team in most statistical categories. She finished the regular season with a .577 batting average. She hit six home runs and finished with 21 RBIs. She added 11 doubles and one triple on the season. Witthaus finished last season with a .250 batting average, with no home runs and 16 RBIs. She only had three extra base hits last season.

"In the offseason, I definitely focused on my hitting a little more and trying to see live pitching more so I can be ready for the season when it comes and step up," Witthaus said.

Warrenton softball coach Chad Berrey characterized Witthaus as an average hitter her first two years at Warrenton. Berrey believes Witthaus should have been an all-state player last year but her batting numbers were not high enough and she was overpassed by other players in the state.

"After a conversation that we had at the end of the season last year, she understood that her offensive game had to be elevated," Berrey said. "So as everyone can see, she worked incredibly hard with the stick and right now, she's at the top

Continued on Page 11

of the leaderboards in a lot of categories in the St. Louis area.”

While earning all-state honors was a motivating factor, Witthaus stressed she was more determined to improve offensively to help the team.

Berrey has also seen growth from Witthaus on the mound over the last several years. The Lady Warriors were blessed to have two quality starting pitchers in Witthaus’ first two seasons. Berrey said this is not common, especially at a smaller school like Warrenton. Over the past couple seasons, Berrey has seen Witthaus make strides both physically and mentally in handling difficult situations.

“We saw a huge growth in her mentally with staying poised in tough situations, getting behind in counts, runners in scoring position,” Berrey said. “As she was in middle school to her freshman year, she used to quake a little bit in tough situations. That’s not the case anymore. She digs her heels in in pressure situations and she actually performs better than she did if there wasn’t pressure on her.”

Berrey believes lessons with pitching coach Randi Davis helped Witthaus learn how to increase her spin rate and implement a rise ball.

Witthaus believes watching experienced pitchers succeed in

difficult situations and talking to them about pitching in those situations gave her confidence to succeed in those situations.

“As a freshman, I was like I don’t want to mess this up,” Witthaus said. “But now, seeing them succeed, it made me feel like I got this, I can do this. Not I don’t want to mess up.”

The Lady Warriors finished the regular season with a 12-8 record and the top seed in the Class 4, District 4 tournament despite only returning a few starters from last year’s team. Berrey saw Witthaus, along with the other returning starters, take on leadership roles this season.

“We can see her talking with other players a little more, organizing, taking in the information from the coaches and making sure everyone’s on the same page,” Berrey said. “So she definitely makes the girls around her better.”

Witthaus said she would like to play softball at the collegiate level. For now, her focus is on helping the Lady Warriors achieve success on the softball diamond.

“She played with me since seventh grade,” Berrey said. “I’m really proud of the accomplishments and the growth that she’s had and seeing her grow as an individual has been a blessing over the last five years. And we’re not done yet, we have another year.”



Kylie Witthaus fouls off a pitch during a regular season game earlier this season.

Senior runner

Madelyn Marschel looks to cap senior season with more success

By John Rohlf ■ john@warrencountyrecord.com

Madelyn Marschel has made tremendous strides as a cross country runner since she picked up the sport in middle school, highlighted by three trips to the state tournament her first three years at Warrenton High School.

Cross country running is in Marschel's blood. Marschel's grandfather started cross country at Warrenton High School. After playing soccer from the age of four until eighth grade, Marschel picked up running in middle school and has not looked back. She runs on the cross country and track teams at Warrenton High School. Marschel has participated at the state tournament in both sports.

"I like both," Marschel said. "I like that cross country is smaller. I also like track with the shorter distance. But I like both."

Marschel recalled her first cross country practice in middle school when she could barely run a mile. Marschel does not think she was too prepared for the long distance running cross country required her freshman year. She thinks running over the summer after her sophomore year is when she felt more prepared for the season workload.

"I honestly think running over the summer helps a lot," Marschel said. "Because freshman year, I didn't really run at all over the summer. So I feel like that helped a lot. This summer, I ran the most. So hopefully that pays off."

Warrenton cross country coach Jeremy Collins thinks Marschel has looked strong the last couple years since she started running over the summer. Marschel participated in a 14-mile run at the West Plains cross country camp this past summer.

"Going into it, she's like, 'I don't know if I will do it or not' because they don't have to do it," Collins said. And she decided to do it. She did an awesome job. She's just gotten a lot stronger. That's going to really help her at the end of the season I believe."

One of Marschel's favorite aspects of running on the Warrenton cross country team is the team atmosphere. The Warrior runners get together and have pasta parties on Fridays before Saturday meets. They also do their best to cheer on teammates running when they are not personally participating in a race.

"I played soccer," Marschel said. "I know how it is if you're on a team that's not so individual. But in cross country, your team also relies on you with points and everything. I think just with it being an individual sport, you want to make sure you're positive and keep yourself going."

Collins stressed Marschel is not only the Warrenton girls cross country team's best runner but is also a great teammate.

"Even though she's our top runner," she's interested in what the other people are doing," Collins said. "So I think with that encouragement, they see the success she's had and that she also cares about other people. And so I think with her success but also her being a great teammate is a great encouragement for everybody."

Marschel hopes to break her personal record before the end of the cross country season. She ran a 21:01 at the state meet at Gans Creek her sophomore season. She ran the state meet last season with shin splints. If Marschel qualifies for state, that would be a meet she could have a chance to run under 21 minutes, Collins believes. She ran a race at Gans Creek earlier this season in 21:26.

"Hopefully she'll qualify for state," Collins said. "That would be a meet where she can really have an awesome time. She's been really consistent. Even though her sophomore year was her best time, she's been really consistent in that 21 minute range a lot of times. I guess a strength for her is her consistency."

After she graduates from Warrenton this year, Marschel plans to go to school with the goal of working in the medical field.

"I haven't decided if I want to run or not," Marschel said. "But I'm thinking Maryville at the moment. I still need to tour more schools but we'll see."





Winning Culture

Makenzie Gladney helps Elsberry to four straight district titles

By John Rohlf ■ john@warrencountyrecord.com

Makenzie Gladney has been an anchor for the Elsberry Lady Indian softball team the past four years, helping them to over 60 wins and multiple district titles.

Gladney has helped the Lady Indians to 66 wins over the past four years as Elsberry's catcher. They won district titles each of the past three seasons.

Gladney started playing T-ball when she was about four years old. She joined a select softball team around fifth grade. Gladney has been a starter all four years, but noticed an increased comfort level the last couple years.

"This year, I feel really comfortable obviously being a senior," Gladney said. "But last year with the seniors, I felt really comfortable because we've been playing since we played middle school together. And I never got to play with all the upperclassmen that were older than them."

Elsberry softball coach Levi Jacyna has coached Gladney the past four years. He said Gladney came in as a freshman as a raw athlete and steadily improved over the past four years. He specifically noted Gladney was proactive a couple summers ago to improve throws down to second base.

"Everything that we've given her, she's taken and ran with and made it her own," Jacyna said. "It's been a blessing to have that. You don't get a lot of kids that will take the initiative or ask. So when they ask and take the initiative on themselves, it makes your job as coach a lot easier and she's done that."

Gladney believes her strength is at the plate, but focuses equally on improving offensively and defensively.

"I try to do my best at both," Gladney said. "If I miss a ball catching and someone scores, I try not to take it with me. Or if I strike out, I

try not to take it on the field with me. I think it's a balance of both."

One of Gladney's early challenges was being a starting catcher as a freshman. As a catcher, she was expected to control the field, even though she was inexperienced at the varsity level.

Jacyna said Gladney was more timid than most freshman but was never afraid to be vocal when that is what the situation required, such as letting a teammate know when they were not hustling.

"As coaches, you don't always have eyes on every single kid at every single moment," Jacyna said. "It's good having her in that regard. She's really grown up into a leadership role and she's done a really great job with it."

Jacyna credits Gladney, along with fellow seniors Addyson Steele and Taylor Mooney, for Elsberry's steady progress the last four seasons. Elsberry has gone 40-11 the last two seasons after finishing with a combined 25-19 record Gladney's first two years.

"Each year, they've gotten better," Jacyna said. "And it started with the senior group. When they were freshman, they were raw. We knew the potential coming in. It takes time to develop kids and get them to buy into that and you just keep it rolling. When you have leadership like that, that burns into the underclassmen. This is the expectation for this program."

Despite receiving a couple college offers, Gladney's current plan is to attend St. Charles Community College after graduating from Elsberry this spring.

"I've got a couple college offers but I don't think I'm going to take them," Gladney said in October. "I think I'm just going to go to St. Charles Community College and get my associates there. And if I need more education, then I'll figure that out after my two years are up."

Dual roles

Winfield's Kaden Kaimann excels on pitch, gridiron

By Jeff Stahlhut

Winfield senior Kaden Kaimann has kept himself quite busy this fall, working overtime as a midfielder on the soccer team and kicker for the football team, where he was a Class 3 second-team all-state kicker last season. Which begs the natural question – why, and how does he have time for that?

“I’ve been playing soccer ever since I was in preschool,” said Kaimann. “It’s always been a family sport of ours. Football... I started my freshman year of high school not thinking I would take it as seriously as I do now.”

With eight goals and two assists thus far this season in soccer and a perfect 9-9 in point after attempts (PATs) and 1-2 in field goals on the gridiron, Kaimann makes his presence felt in both sports. To that end, he’s 44-46 on PATs over the past two years and 3-4 in field goal attempts.

“I think what allows Kaden to succeed is he’s been gifted with a great leg, but what really makes him stand out is his work ethic and determination to be great,” said Winfield football coach Cody Spegal, who has coached Kaimann for the past three years. “It’s really difficult playing two sports in the same season and he manages this with ease.”

Soccer coach Alex Rutledge, who has coached Kaimann for the past two years, also sees a great work ethic in the two-sport star. “What stands out about Kaden is how dedicated he is to working hard for his teammates,” he said. “His work ethic and attitude are qualities that should be admired by his teammates.”

Playing two sports in the same season does take quite a bit of time, but Kaimann does his best to stay focused so he can succeed in both sports. “My schedule is busy,” he said. “There’s not really much free time at all. It’s tough to play both and keep up with school but you have to stay determined and strong minded from going to soccer every day to kicking for football. It’s tough on your body as well. It makes you have to take recovery very seriously.”

Kaimann admits his family didn’t want him to play football as a kid, but he found a way to make it happen. “My favorite sports growing up were basketball and football,” he said. “My family was never too big on me playing football because they didn’t want me to get hurt, but they love me kicking. That way I can still play and be part of a sport I love.”

So given all of his efforts to succeed in both sports, do his coaches think he’s better at one than the other? In a nutshell, according to his coaches, no. “He’s been blessed to be great in both sports,” said Spegal.

Rutledge echoed those sentiments. “I wouldn’t say that Kaden is better at one rather than the other,” he said. “He strives to do his best no matter what sports he’s competing in. He’s the ultimate team player and wants nothing but the best for both of his teams.”

Both coaches also agreed that Kaimann has come as advertised – he’s good at what he does. “Kaden has exceeded expectations in my opinion as a player,” said Rutledge. “I think he has another level to his game that we haven’t seen yet and I hope that I get to see that when the playoffs roll around.”

Spegal sees things much the same way. “I knew coming in he was a great kicker. He’s met my expectations,” he said. “The sky’s



the limit for Kaden for whatever he decides to do in the future.”

How does a two-sport (in the same season) athlete juggle both sports if they happen to have games at the same time? In short, it depends – and the answer is subject to change. “Over the past few years I would normally go to soccer over football,” said Kaimann. “But since I’m trying to go to college for football this year, I’m doing football before soccer.”

With regard to college, Kaimann is ready to go kick for whomever makes an offer. “I plan on kicking for football in college,” he said. “I don’t have any offers yet, but I would love to get an offer from anywhere.”

His coaches both believe he will get that chance. “He’s expressed the want to kick the football in college. I think he would be a welcomed addition,” said Spegal. “He’s never solely focused on kicking a football since he’s always played soccer as well. I think the sky’s the limit if he chooses to go kick in college.”

Rutledge agrees, “I know Kaden loves soccer but I think his passion and aspirations are to kick at the collegiate level for football. He works so hard at everything he does so I have no doubts that he could play soccer and football at the next level.”

It comes as no surprise that when an athlete spends so much time playing multiple sports that lots of memories will accumulate. “The best moment that I can think of was his field goal last year during the Warrenton game. We were really struggling to get anything going offensively and Kaden was able to kick a no-time-out field goal right before the half. This allowed us to get some points on the board and get some momentum. We later went on to win the game and we were able to win a conference championship for the first time in school history,” remembered Spegal, who noted that Kaimann being involved in so many things is a great trait. “Kaden is a great leader in school. He’s involved in everything and every program seems to prosper because he’s a part of those different groups.”

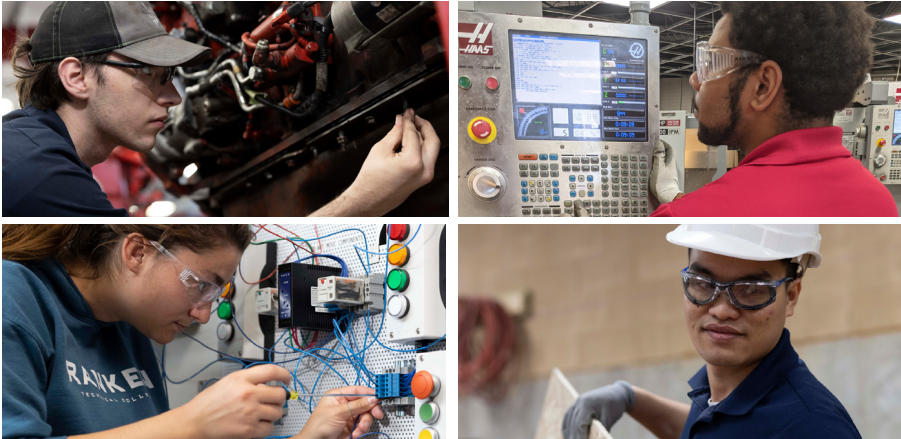
Rutledge was able to share a few memories as well. “Some of Kaden’s best moments on the field consist of his hard 50-50 tackles, long free kicks, and his goal scoring abilities from distance,” he said. “His ability to kick the ball from anywhere on the field and give someone else a chance to score is an awesome attribute of his.”

For his part, Kaimann has a couple of memories that stand out for him. “There’s a lot of big memories throughout my high school career, but my favorite in soccer was beating St. Charles West in districts last year,” said Kaimann. “We always would lose to them and to beat them where it mattered meant everything. For football I think when we won conference last year and to be named second team all-state kicker.”

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