

From NSAA to YMCA

Fresh Start. Seniors Betsy Ronspies, Neeia Cooperwood, Maddy Coble, Molly McCarthy and Chelsea Lawson strike a pose during the first practice of their intramural basketball season. This is the team's second year playing in a league of high school boys. Photo courtesy of Betsy Ronspies.

A FRESH look into intramural and high school athletics

Brooke **Urzendowski**

One win, 15 losses. Not quite the outcome they dreamed of this season, but an acceptable record. Not to mention that every other team in the league consisted entirely of high school boys. Yet, Fresh Fugi will always remember the afternoon garage practices, team bonding with fellow classmates and the grueling games. Who cares about wins and losses? After all, it's only intramural basketball.

Before the early bird season of intramural basketball through the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Marian seniors that make up the team Fresh Fugi got together for the first annual practice at senior Madison Babe's house.

"At the first practice we talked about how we wanted to win a game this year," senior Betsy Ronspies said. "We ended up winning the very last game of our two seasons."

Many Marian students participate in various forms of intramural sports. Intramurals give everyone the opportunity to play a variety of sports with a less time-consuming schedule and a lower level of

commitment than sanctioned athletics through the NSAA.

The YMCA is one venue that provides a multitude of leagues for anyone who wants to gather a team together and join. Volleyball, basketball and soccer are a few of the more well-known intramural sports in the leagues, but other options include flag football, softball and bowling. Although the sports don't change, high school and intramural sports are anything but the same.

"Intramurals are less competitive and are more laid back," Ronspies said. "You can focus more on the fun aspect than just trying to win, while still playing the sport."

However, there are fewer games in an intramural season than a high school season, and practices are entirely up to the players.

"We basically didn't have any practices besides the first one, and we played one game a week each season," Ronspies said. "But before every game we would listen to pump up music and just go crazy."

When it comes to high school sports, the more obvious difference is the level of

commitment required. Marian athletes can expect to dedicate almost two hours after school every day to practices or games.

In addition, a win or loss holds more value. A simple record will determine a team's fate for the rest of season, whereas an intramural team can brush off a loss in time for the next game. Senior Frannie Fuxa, varsity volleyball player, knows exactly what to expect this season with fellow classmates on their intramural volleyball team in comparison to her experience with the Crusader team.

"The skill level will be a big difference," Fuxa said. "I don't know the teams yet, but I wasn't playing club this year so I decided intramural volleyball would be a good way to stay in shape and still continue playing. The motive of intramural sports is just for fun, whereas playing high school sports requires more hard core practices. But you also get more out of a high school season and can focus on improving your skills."

Pressure is another major factor that all athletes must face. Every person deals with

pressure differently, and intramural sports become an outlet for those individuals who do not want to deal with the overwhelming pressure that high school athletics impose.

"I feel like I would be pushed too hard if I tried out for Marian basketball," Ronspies said. "It would still be a lot of fun, but I'd feel pressured to be good skill-wise."

On the other hand, pressure is a privilege. It is an honor to play for your school and do your best under any circumstance. The added pressure to win also makes each victory that much sweeter.

In any case, pressure plays a major role in deciding whether participating in an intramural sport or trying out for a high school team is best for you.

Ultimately, the decision is entirely up to each individual on what she wants out of the sport. Ronspies found her perfect fit in intramural basketball.

"The best part was being with all my friends and knowing that every Sunday I'd have a good time with them," Ronspies said.

Bowling for Numbers

Anna **Woods**

If it's not the basketball team, and the swim team is already in the pool, who the heck is that? It looks like a sports team, they act like a sports team: it must be the bowling team!

The bowling team has grown exponentially starting out with six players in 2003. This year, Marian bowling is making history. The team consists of almost 50 bowlers making up eight teams, not to mention the entire Northwest division.

Head coach Mr. Gary Anderson started the team not so long ago in 2003. His daughter Rachel and her friend Beth Gelecki wanted to have a bowling team, but Mr. Sporic [former Marian teacher] said they couldn't have one without a coach.

So, Mr. Anderson starting coaching because his daughter wanted him to. Thanks to Rachel's persistence, 47 Marian girls have found a new after-school activity this year.

When asked why she joined the bowling team sophomore Courtney Neneman said, "I joined the bowling team because I wanted something to do with my friends after school."

The bowling team competes on Mondays and practices on Tuesdays at Maplewood Lanes.

The first two teams are considered the "varsity teams" even though all eight teams play in the junior varsity division. The rest of the teams are arranged evenly, but in a way that bowlers can be on teams with their friends.

Other schools have certain chants that they cheer before every meet, but Marian

takes its own unique approach, chanting, "One! Two! Three! We got the beat the Marian beat! It goes [you can fill in the beat]."

"Girls come back because they have fun. They like it and some might even learn something," Coach Anderson said. "The best part about this team is watching girls who have never bowled before improve."

Although Coach Anderson does not believe bowling will ever become a varsity sport, he comes back so that the team can keep growing.

Freshman Jaime Aspen said, "It's so fun, you learn a lot and meet a lot of new people."

Aspen is a member of the Marian C team, and is the only freshman on her team. "It intimidated me at first, but now I've made good friends with the upperclassmen!" Aspen said.

Marian bowling creates an atmosphere where underclassmen can interact with upperclassmen, and they can learn something from each other. Much like other Marian sports, bowling is an individual, but also a group effort.

This after school activity costs a little more than Marian athletics, costing \$75 without a shirt and \$95 with a shirt (uniform shirts are required). When broken down, it costs about a dollar for every practice and the rest goes to league, compared to the steep bowling prices on the weekends.

The basketball team might already be on the court and the swim team might already be covered in water, but Marian has a new squad to look out for: the bowling team. Marian bowling is ready for a striking season.

Marian High School and Creighton Prep Present...

The Crucible

Performances will be located in the **Marian Quad** on **Feb. 18-19** at 7:00 p.m. and **Feb. 20** at 2:00 p.m. **Cost: \$8** for adults \$5 for students Tickets will be available at the door.

Graphic by Allison **Dethlefs**

Specialized Spells Problems for Freshman Teams

Alex Eilers

Freshman Amanda McClanahan's name written on her gym uniform t-shirt presses against her blue shorts as she bends down and laces up her tennis shoes again. For the second time today, this soccer player is preparing to enter the small gym, not for class but for basketball practice.

Despite missing tryouts, McClanahan and her twin sister, Megan, decided to play on the freshmen basketball team after they received encouragement from head coach and Weight Training teacher, Mrs. Beth Dye.

In order to fill the freshman basketball team, coaches encouraged all freshmen who came to open gym and showed interest before the season to join the team.

"We were really surprised that only about 20 freshman out of 215 tried out this year," freshman basketball coach Jeff Hacker said. "That is less than 10 percent of the class."

"Initially I was not going to play because of my busy schedule," McClanahan said.

The McClanahan sisters already have soccer practice up to three times a week and out-of-town tournaments four times throughout the winter taking up a lot of their free time.

Adding a basketball practice every day has been a difficult commitment.

"Some days I go to basketball for two hours and then soccer for three hours. I have to split my dinner by eating half of it before practice and half after. I usually use the long drive to school in the mornings to study with my sister," McClanahan said.

The hectic practices would be hard for anyone to balance, and some choose not to take on the challenge, sacrificing a high school sport for their club team.

Hacker said he sees the year round commitment to an individual sport as one of the reasons for the low numbers.

"Girls feel the pressure to be good and to specialize in one sport," Hacker said. "To be the best you don't have to play one sport 12 months out of the year. I think you can try other sports, too."

If the goal is to be the best overall athlete, the entire body needs to be

conditioned and allowed time to heal. Separate sports during separate seasons may help to do that.

"From a physical point of view, an overall body view, it's better to play multiple sports because you're not stressing the same ligaments and joints all the time," athletic trainer Mrs. Melissa Brusnahan said.

For example, sports that involve jumping have a higher possibility of causing knee problems because of the constant strain put on a single joint. Along with resting specific body parts, other sports focus on different skills that may improve the overall athlete.

"My goal with basketball is to improve my vertical jump and hand-eye coordination," McClanahan said.

She also sees similarities in her two

sports, claiming that basketball enhances her soccer skills.

"Basketball helps me with transitions because it is so quick going from offense to defense," McClanahan said.

For some, playing one sport from a young age is also a mental struggle. By varying the sport and activity, a person may become less likely to burn out, or quit due to over exposure. In a typical burn out situation, the athlete simply runs out of fuel. She no longer has the drive or desire to play.

This doesn't happen to everyone. Some athletes can't get enough of their favorite

sport, and they devote their time and energy for the love of the game.

"Yes, I play a lot of soccer, but I don't

regret it. I also love soccer as a sport because it presents a challenge. The only way to win and be good at the sport is by passing, crossing, blocking and doing what it takes to help your team out," McClanahan said.

Another reason for the low tryout numbers may be because the girls that do not specialize feel intimidated. These girls think they will not make a team because they do not play on a club team.

"Some girls are discouraged to come out because they're nervous to get cut, that they are not competitive enough," Hacker said.

This perception is not true. Coming into their first practice, the McClanahan sisters had not played basketball since sixth grade. They admit that they struggled with skills such as dribbling and shooting.

"I had forgotten how to play, so I guess I started from scratch," McClanahan said.

The coaches are willing to work with players and teach them the skills.

"Some of the players do not have any basketball experience but are natural athletes. We can teach you to shoot a lay-up," Hacker said.

However, over a short time the freshmen team has improved. Through practice, the players have grown more confident in their skills.

"[Their improvement] is exciting and fun to watch, seeing the girls mature and improve throughout their career," Hacker said.

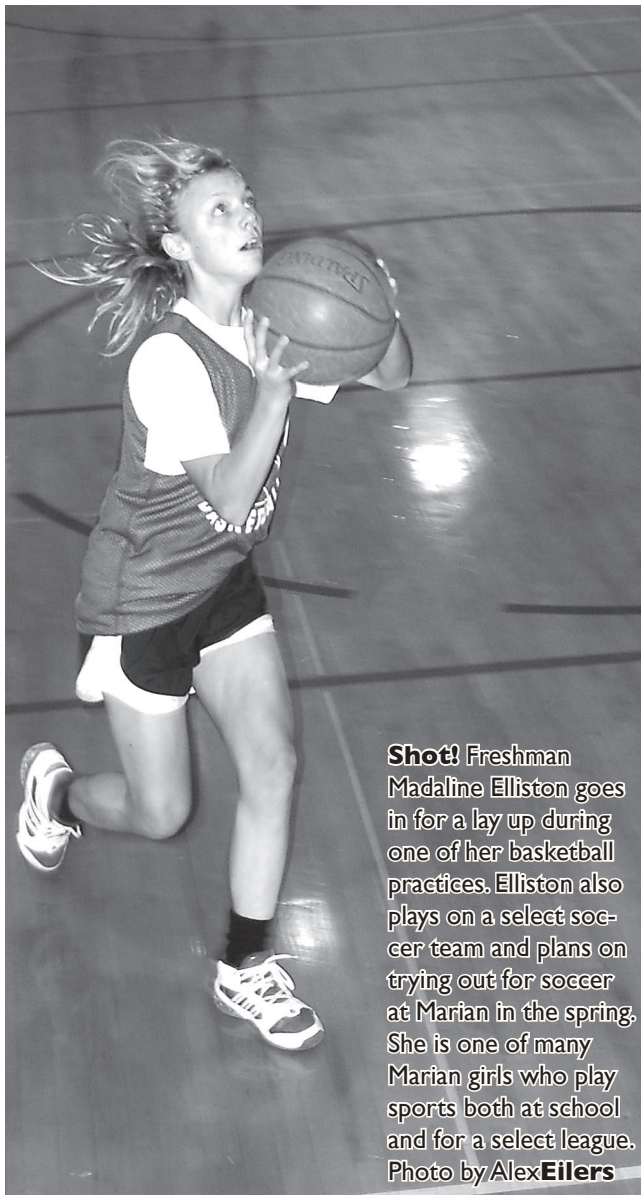
McClanahan enjoys the differences between the sports and the opportunity to meet new people.

"I like basketball because it's a sport like no other. It's challenging because you have a large ball and a small hoop to make it in, unlike soccer with a big goal. It's fun because it is a team sport," McClanahan said.

Still, McClanahan does not know if she will continue her basketball career. The freshmen team is less intense than the varsity level, and it is already a lot to handle.

"I haven't really decided. It depends on the classes I take next year," McClanahan said.

For now, she finishes lacing up her shoes and picks up a ball to join the rest of her team.



Shot! Freshman Madaline Elliston goes in for a lay up during one of her basketball practices. Elliston also plays on a select soccer team and plans on trying out for soccer at Marian in the spring. She is one of many Marian girls who play sports both at school and for a select league. Photo by Alex Eilers

• Olivia Hershiser • Eddie McGonigall • Kathleen Gerber • Carl Smith • Lauren Tussey •

Show Choir

• Lauren Nelson • Bob McCarthy • Emily Holt • Jeffmin Lin • John Paul Joyce •

This year, Marian and Creighton Prep assembled another show choir. The interest generated from the year before persuaded more students to audition, allowing the show choir to grow to 28 (compared to 16 the previous year).

Looking for some inspiration before the first rehearsal, the majority of the group went to watch Westside's Amazing Technicolor Show Choir perform, after which they were critiqued, on Jan 6. "Seeing the Westside show choir really got everyone excited to start our own songs, and it was also a good opportunity for everyone to bond," junior Bridget Brich said.

The show choir, named the 72nd Street Showstoppers, practices after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the choir room.

They will perform in the Pops Concert along with the Select Women's Choir, Chamber Choir, Ninth Grade Choir and Instrumental Ensembles on Feb. 13 in the West Gym at 6 p.m.

As for the future of show choir, that has yet to be determined. Some thought has been given to forming either a mixed choir or a permanent show choir to combine Marian and Creighton Prep in the future. Choir Director, Ms. Cathy Pruitte said she has been toying around with ideas of ways to do this, possibly even for this year.

"I wanted to see if we could do something for contest," she said. Unfortunately, this would not only require permission from the heads of school but from the state high school activities association as well.

Pruitte also has ideas regarding a future mixed choir, "something where they get credit for it." A mixed choir could possibly count as a class credit but would have to practice after school to accommodate for both schools' schedules.

But as of right now nothing is certain. One of the biggest problems has been finding boys from Creighton Prep willing to participate year after year, especially when there are large groups of seniors who will graduate. If there is enough interest, and if a stable agreement between schools could be reached, the possibility of either a yearlong show choir program or mixed choir might just become a reality in future years.

"It's been a building thing," Pruitte said, "but I'd like to do something with it."

Seamus Mulcahy • Bridget Brich • Emmett Burns • Grace Dickerson • Joe Wilson • Taylor Wyatt • Nick Trvrdy • Laura Gibbs • Mark Stockdale