

Academic Learning Packets

Sports Stories

1999 Edition

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Contents

1. She raised her game (Volleyball)
2. High passing grades (Football)
3. Some losses hurt more at Central (Football)
4. Tucson football star has heart for sports (Football)
5. Bahrami used to little attention in tennis world (Tennis)
6. Creatine use worries state high school officials (Drugs)
7. State's top scorer leads Maple Grove while remembering dad (Soccer)
8. Life and sports go on for legally blind soccer player (Soccer)
9. Girl kicker aims to be more than footnote in Goodrich success (Football)
10. Olympic gymnast shadowed by bitter family fight (Gymnastics)
11. Freestyler joins Web's fast lane (Swimming)
12. Former players get thrills as coaches now (Basketball)
13. Heartwarming story of how Athens star found saving grace in goal (Soccer)
14. Team tennis, anyone? (Tennis)
15. The solitary riders (Equestrian)
16. Robbed of football by leukemia senior aspires as coach (Football)
17. Families strong despite divided school loyalties (Football)
18. It's no mystery for Drew why she plays baseball (Baseball)
19. Home run derby (Baseball)
20. Recruiting process is relative (Basketball)

Answers to Questions and Puzzles

A Note To The Teacher: Use of Academic Learning Packets:

Academic Learning Packets are designed by educators to make your professional life easier. Immediately! These packets can be used to “fill some empty time,” or to enhance instruction. They are built around current, interesting, and newsworthy topics. And their use in your classroom is limitless. Here are a few recommendations:

1. **Individual Lessons.** Students who are unable to participate in physical education can be provided a sports story to read. In most cases the article can match the teacher’s planned activity. Physical Education Packets and Sports Stories are the next best thing to actual student participation.
2. **Group Work.** If you want students to work together on a project, the articles and questions can be used as a starting point. You can divide your class into groups of three or four and give each group a different article to study. The groups can complete the questions or puzzles together and then report back to the whole class on what they have learned. This can be an excellent way to promote *cooperative learning* in your classroom.
3. **Testing Situations.** Select an article and a puzzle and make several copies. If a student finishes a test early, give him or her the article and puzzle to work on while others are still taking the test. This can count as extra-credit or simply be used as an enrichment experience. If a student was absent when a test was given, he or she can be sent to a study hall or the library with an Academic Learning Packet when you hand back the exams to the rest of the class for review.
4. **Substitute Plans.** Photocopy the article summary pages and take them home with you. Put the Academic Learning Packet Notebook with your substitute folder in your desk or in the school’s office. If you are suddenly ill and have no viable lesson plans, skim the summary pages to select an article which might be appropriate. When you call in sick, give instructions for your substitute to copy and use the selected article, questions and/or puzzles.
5. **Study Hall Monitor or Homeroom Teacher.** When students come to study hall or homeroom with “nothing to do,” an Academic Learning Packet can provide a meaningful activity.
6. **Discipline Uses.** Students assigned to detention or suspension rooms can complete Academic Learning Packets during their assigned time. This not only helps to make better use of a student’s time while detained, but also provides a meaningful activity for students to focus on while being held out of class or after school.
7. **Extra-Credit Assignments.** Academic Learning Packets are an excellent way to control the nature of extra-credit assignments. There will no longer be a need for accepting reports plagiarized from the encyclopedia, or copied word-for-word from a newspaper.

She raised her game

1

Jody Conradt had to scrimp on everything but success

The Dallas Morning News

AUSTIN - Before victory No. 700, the 183-game Southwest Conference winning streak and Texas' undefeated 1985-86 national championship team, and long before Jody Conradt's induction into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame, there were kazoos, straw hats and a pyramid scheme passing as a promotional gimmick.

Conradt, who grew up in tiny Goldthwaite (population 1,300), 100 miles northwest of Austin, and played basketball collegiately at Baylor, got to the top the only way she knew how. That often meant players driving their own cars to away games when she took her first college coaching job at Sam Houston State in 1969.

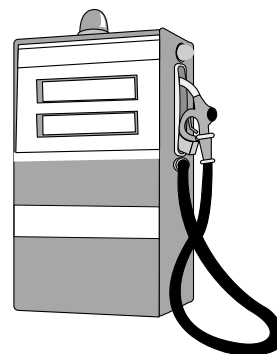
"There was no athletic budget for women's sports," said Conradt, 57, who taught seven classes and coached volleyball, track and six-on-six basketball at the Huntsville school. "So if you had a car, you had a good chance of making the team."

Dana Kraft, a 6-3 post for Conradt's Bearcats, can vouch for that.

"I not only had a car, but my dad was a wholesale gasoline distributor, so my place on the team was pretty safe," said Kraft,

now an associate athletic director at Southwest Texas State in San Marcos.

"Ms. Conradt - it was Ms. Conradt back then, not Coach Conradt - kept asking us for our gas receipts after road trips, and I would always say I forgot mine because I knew there was no budget and she was paying for everything out of her own pocket," Kraft said. "I was using my daddy's gas card, and that was just fine with him. We didn't want her paying for everything."



After building a 74-23 record in basketball over four years at Sam Houston, Conradt left in 1973 for UT-Arlington, where she became women's athletic director.

She coached basketball, volleyball and softball, earned a salary of \$12,000 and had an athletic budget of \$1,200. Money was so tight, all three teams shared the same uniforms.

"The only way I could tell which sport it was in the team pictures was by the socks,"

Conradt laughed. “If it was volleyball, they had footies on. Basketball, they had socks up to their knees, and for softball, they had the stirrups.”

Conradt went 43-39 in basketball over three years at UTA before Donna Lopiano, then women’s athletic director at Texas, hired her to coach basketball and volleyball for the Lady Longhorns in 1976.

“Woman Gets Man-Sized Salary,” read one local headline upon Conradt’s arrival. She was making \$19,000 per year.

It didn’t take long for Conradt to learn that Lopiano was a brash, knows-no-bounds promoter of women’s athletics whose Connecticut upbringing was a stark contrast to Southern culture.

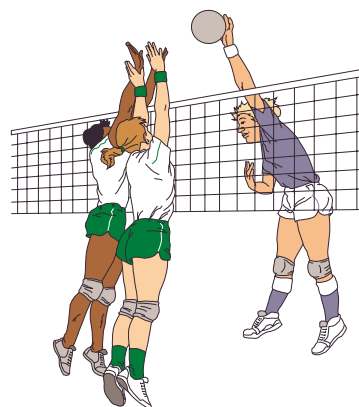
In Conradt’s first year, Lopiano successfully bid for Texas to host the women’s national volleyball championship. It was a 16-team field, which included Conradt’s team simply because Texas hosted the tournament.

Lopiano, who now heads the Women’s Sports Foundation in East Meadow, N.Y., had a \$10,000 budget for the event and wanted to wow the visiting schools with an Olympic-style opening ceremony replete with Western costumes.

Lopiano ordered straw hats. Conradt assumed they were straw cowboy hats. But when the boxes arrived, they were filled with the stringy-edged, Huck Finn variety.

“Everyone looked like scarecrows,” Conradt said.

“What was I to know that this wasn’t a cowboy hat?” Lopiano said.



Then, there was the kazoo band.

Fed up with playing basketball to virtually no crowds at 5 p.m. prior to men’s games, the Lady Longhorns began scheduling their own dates in the late 1970s. Lopiano wanted some way to generate enthusiasm and spirit.

The band and cheerleaders wouldn’t come to women’s games, so Lopiano suggested buying a flood of kazoos and giving them to students, who would in turn squawk out “The Eyes of Texas” in a tone similar to Charlie Brown’s teacher trying to hum.

“It was awful,” Conradt said. “Finally, I said enough. We tried to round up every one of those kazoos and throw them out.”

“Looking back, it was pretty bad,” Lopiano said. “But kazoos are probably the cheapest instrument. I had her convinced this would become a Texas tradition.”

“We were a good combination because she was my reality check,” Lopiano added. “I was the adamant Yankee, and she let me know when my ideas wouldn’t work in Texas.”

Lopiano wanted to offer a keg of beer to the fraternity or sorority who came to a women’s basketball game and cheered the loudest. Conradt said no.

“I think we ended up with pizza,” Lopiano said. “I still think we would have gotten more students there by giving away the beer.”

The promotional gimmicks came and went, but Conradt’s commitment to winning and innovation remained constant. She used the double low post, played a transition game and pressed full court on defense - things almost no one in the women’s game was stressing in the late ’70s and early ’80s.

To build a fan base, Conradt and Lopiano called literally everyone they knew in the area and extended invitations to the games. Those who attended were then asked to bring two friends to the next game, and so on and so on.

“It was a lot like a pyramid scheme,” Lopiano said.

Before long, notable figures such as former U.S. Rep. Barbara Jordan, author James Michener and former Gov. Ann Richards were sitting courtside, part of crowds that averaged 8,000 per game. Even with an exciting and successful

brand of basketball, Conradt wanted to make the games a personal experience. So she invited fans to meet with the players after games and ask them questions in an Erwin Center ballroom known as the Burnt Orange Room. It’s a tradition that continues today.



Conradt, who is about to embark on her 23rd season at Texas, has succeeded Lopiano as UT women’s athletic director and now earns \$272,000 annually. She has built an overall record of 709-210, including a mark of 592-148 while leading the Lady Longhorns. No other coach in women’s Division I has won more than 700 games.

“I’ll tell you why Jody is such a success,” Lopiano said. “She not only produces a product full of maximum effort on the court, but she has always reached out to everyone. She built the fan base one person at a time by going to every Girl Scout meeting and Rotary Club gathering, shaking hands and looking people in the eye. People appreciate that.”

The Hall of Fame does.

Sports Questions

name _____

1

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. Why is Jody Conradt such a legend?

2. Why did Lopiano order straw hats for a Texas hosted national volleyball championship? What went wrong?

3. In what ways was Conradt considered an innovative basketball coach at UTA?

4. How did Conradt make basketball a personal experience for the fans?

5. Why did Conradt collect receipts from her basketball players while she was at Sam Houston State?

Sports Crossword

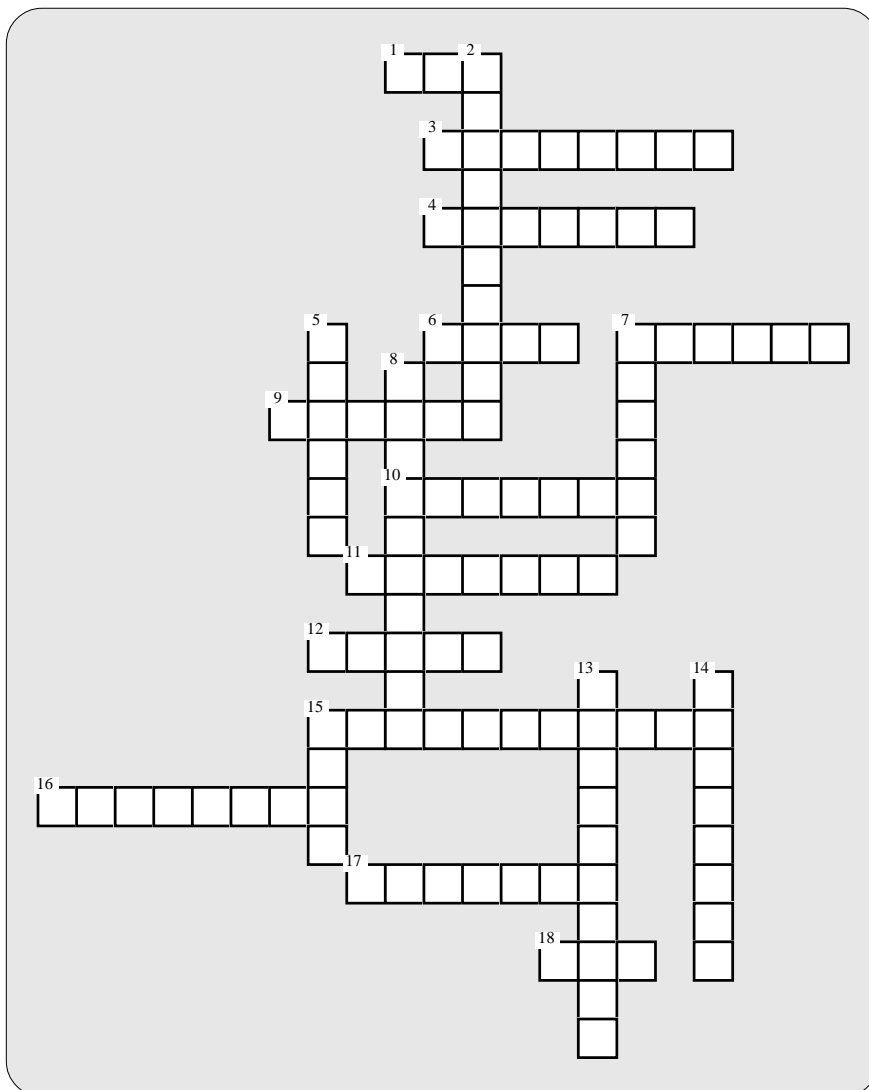
name _____

1

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

1. The coach had to pay for this out of her own pocket in the early days
3. The Basketball Hall of Fame is named after him
4. Jody's _____ often used a full court press
6. The coach used a double low _____ as one of her innovations to women's basketball
7. When she first started coaching at the college level there was no athletic _____
9. The coach bought a bunch of these and gave them to students before the games
10. She hired Jody to coach the Lady Longhorns in 1976
11. They used a _____ scheme to get more fans at games by calling people and telling them to bring two friends
12. She used her dad's charge card so Jody wouldn't have to pay for the gas
15. Jody grew up here
16. He was a famous author who started coming to women's basketball games
17. She was inducted into the hall of fame
18. If you had one of these in college it meant you had a good chance of making the team



Down:

2. Everyone looked like these after they ordered straw hats for the fans
5. Players answered questions after the game in the Burnt _____ Room
7. Jody played college basketball here
8. In her first year, Texas hosted a national tournament for this women's sport
13. One of the sports coached by Jody
14. The nickname for Jody's team
15. Jody even went to _____ Scout meetings to try to get more fans

Chicago Tribune

The basketball hoop standing prominently in a driveway on East Elm Street in Wheaton, Illinois is a testament to overcoming failure.

The backboard faces toward Elm, where a lone streetlight reflecting off the white paint provides enough illumination to move about in the darkness.



It was here two years ago that a 6-foot, 135-pound Wheaton Warrenville South sophomore missed 300 or so attempts at dunking a basketball.

Well into the night, tears of frustration streaming down his face, he finally jammed one home.

Things haven't always come easily for Jon Beutjer.

He remembers the hurt when the kids in first grade labeled him the worst reader in

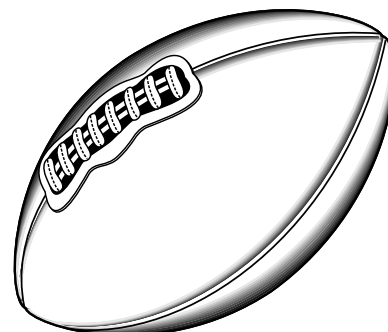
class. A subsequent evaluation uncovered a reading disability that even today has Beutjer working twice as hard as his peers to maintain a 4.7 grade-point average on a 5.0 scale.

All four years at Wheaton Warrenville South High School, he asked to be driven to school at 6:30 a.m. for an extra hour of tutoring before his first class.

He and his mother, Nancy, spent countless hours reading to each other until Jon was a freshman. There were special reading programs in grade school and tutoring in the summers.

But life did have its moments, and two things seemed to come naturally—throwing a football and shooting a basketball.

His 4th-grade teacher, Lloyd Thomas, used to bring other faculty members outside during recess to marvel at a 10-year-old's long spirals. Beutjer would throw to this kid named Jon Schweighardt, and no matter how hard he tried, the quarterback could never overthrow his receiver. Schweighardt would catch everything.



Beutjer has grown to nearly 6-5, weighs 180 pounds and has emerged as the best quarterback in the Chicago area. He has completed 62 percent of his passes in Wheaton's first seven games for 1,794 yards and 32 touchdowns with just three interceptions.

Should the undefeated, second-ranked Tigers advance deep into the playoffs, Beutjer could break the state record of 48 touchdown passes in a season set by Dusty Burk of Tuscola.

In his best outing so far, Beutjer threw for 312 yards and a school-record seven touchdowns in a wild 56-42 victory over No. 14 Naperville Central.



"There was no way to stop him," said Naperville Central defensive back Erik Axelson. "What hurts you the most is his accuracy. He can put the ball anywhere he wants. It's demoralizing. You try your hardest, but no matter what, he beats you. He is one of the best quarterbacks I've ever seen."

Wheaton Warrenville South coach John Thorne will never forget an early demon-

stration of Beutjer's splendid hand-eye coordination.

"He was an 8th-grader who would shoot around after our varsity basketball games," Thorne said. "My wife, Kathy, and I were sitting in the stands watching one night when Jon made nine three-pointers in a row. I turned to her and said: This guy is going to be really special in high school."

The summer before he became a Tiger, Beutjer was attending ex-Bull B.J. Armstrong's basketball camp when the baby-faced guard challenged the kids to a three-point shootout.

There was a dead silence until Jimmy Stewart Beutjer volunteered his kid brother.

"I was scared to death," Jon remembered.

It started out with B.J. and "J.B." each hitting 4 of 5 shots. The first tiebreaking session saw each hit two. Finally, Beutjer swished all five and Armstrong could only make four.

Beutjer is grateful for his God-given athletic ability and, realizes how much genetics have helped.

His father, Jim, was a two-way player recruited out of, Wheaton Central by Wisconsin and Northern Illinois in 1970 to play defensive back, but he wound up at Augustana, where he was supposed to succeed a quarterback named Kenny Anderson. Instead Jim played basketball for one

of the top small-college teams in the country.

Grandpa Harold Beutjer was a two-year starter at end for Wheaton in 1943-44 and was a talented baseball player whom the Cubs invited for a tryout. But his athletic career was cut short when he was drafted into the Army.

Taking advantage of Beutjer and a quintet of sure-handed receivers, led by Tribune All-Stater Schweighardt, Thorne devised a four-receiver, one-back, quick-passing offense similar to the run-and-shoot.

Beutjer's three-step drop, quick release and ample protection from linemen Jeff Simpson (6-2, 325), Nick Schull (6-0, 267) and Bill Englehart have prevented defenses from unloading on the quarterback.

Last year, after suffering concussions in back-to-back games against Naperville Central and Glenbard East, Beutjer sat out the following three weeks.

Beutjer underwent a comprehensive examination that included a brain scan. Doctors concluded he was at no greater risk than anyone else on the field. Just the same, he began wearing a helmet with an

extra shell of protection.

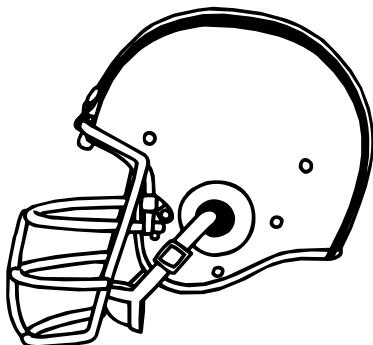
His first game back, he passed for a play-off-record 420 yards in an opening-round loss to Lockport.



Beutjer's fast start has elicited scholarship offers from Iowa State and Northern Illinois. Iowa, Illinois, Michigan State, Arizona State, Kansas and Boston College have shown serious interest.

He and best friend Schweighardt are hoping to play together in college. The 5-10, 175-pound Schweighardt, who is getting looks from Illinois and Northwestern, leads the Chicago area with 36 catches for 713 yards and 15 touchdowns. He could eclipse ex-Richards High School star Kenny Carrington's single-season state record of 23 TD catches.

"There's always a mismatch in our offense," wideout Eric McGoey said. "If Jon Schweighardt or I have single coverage, we know Jon Beutjer is throwing to us. Sometimes defenses have to cover Jerome Collins or Brian Whitkanack with a line-



backer.”

Beutjer is the straw that stirs Wheaton’s potent concoction, and he leads with compassion. During times when the 325-pound Simpson is having difficulty finishing wind sprints, a tired Beutjer, who is already done, will run alongside him offering encouragement.

“He is so kind to all the players on the team,” Thorne said. “Jon makes the last backup seem just as important as our best player.”

A psychological evaluation Beutjer underwent during the search for his reading dis-

ability uncovered a high degree of sensitivity.

“The psychologist told me Jon is the kind of person who will feel great joy and great hurt,” Nancy Beutjer said.

Two years ago Jon was invited to a turn-about dance by a Wheaton Warrenville South student who has cerebral palsy.

He had made a previous commitment. So Beutjer brought the young lady a rose and said they would get together another time.

“That’s better than any pass he has ever thrown,” Jim Beutjer said.



Sports Questions

name _____

2

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. Why haven't things always come easy for Jon Beutjer?

2. How did his mother try to help overcome his learning disability?

3. What professional basketball player did Beutjer beat in a three-point shoot-out?

4. How has genetics help Beutjer excel in athletics?

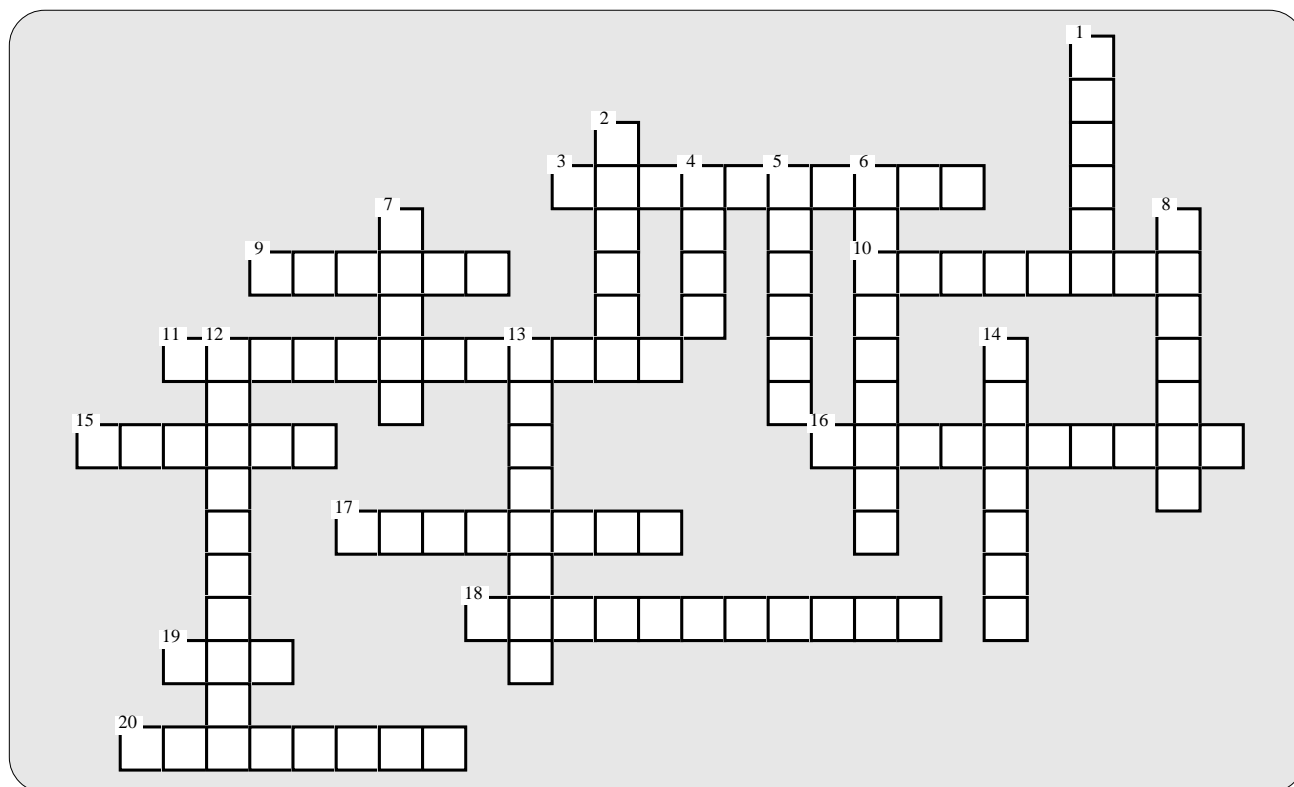
5. How does Beutjer build team morale?

Sports Crossword

name _____

2

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across:

3. One of Jon's sports
9. One of Jon's coaches
10. Wideout McGoeys said there is always one of these in their offense
11. Jon's best friend
15. Jon's fourth grade teacher
16. Jon suffered two of these in football games the previous season
17. Jon goes to school early every day for this
18. Jon has been offered one of these from Iowa and Illinois
19. Jon's father who played basketball at Augustana
20. This has helped Jon as evidenced by his dad and grandfather

Down:

1. Jon has an extra shell of protection in this
2. Jon's grandfather who tried out for the Cubs baseball team
4. Jon is _____ to all the players on the team according to his coach
5. The nickname of Jon's football team
6. Jon won a three-point shooting contest against this professional basketball player
7. Jon had a _____ scan after his injuries
8. Jon goes to school here
12. Jon leads his team with this
13. One of Jon's opponents said his _____ is what hurts you the most
14. He has overcome a reading problem to keep up good grades while quarterbacking his football team

Some losses hurt more at Central

3

The Arizona Republic

Losing is like a disease. In some cases, terminal.

Take Central's football team. Please. Somebody. That has been the punch line for most of the '90s at the central Phoenix school.

Not many Class 5A programs have languished in defeat longer than the Bobcats.



Athletes have transferred out. Once, an assistant coach, so frustrated by the losing, left in midseason.

A 12-game losing streak snapped last season has been replaced by one that is expected to grow to nine shortly.

Five starters are academically ineligible. Two more are out with injuries.

Then, as if things couldn't get worse, Coach Rick Mazza was recently told that his top two linemen, Joe Moreno and Gabriel Santana, guys he helped save from the streets, can't play anymore. They go to a non-accredited charter school, a school near their homes that is not affiliated with the Phoenix Union district but gives them the specialized attention they need to graduate.

That left Mazza last week with 21 players in uniform and a familiar result: Central ZERO, Glendale Mountain Ridge 35.

"You lose nine starters . . . that kills you," Mazza said. "I thought the kids did a credible job for not letting them beat them by more than that."

Mazza can deal with the transfers, the academic and physical losses, the losses on the field. But losing two players because they go to a charter school hurts him deeply.

Moreno and Santana learned all about humility and staying loyal in the face of adversity before this.

Moreno had family problems. He had to work to help his family. He often had to baby-sit after school, Mazza said. He

ended up making all-region last year on the defensive line. Football gave him purpose.

Santana, Mazza said, ran with the wrong crowd before he got into football last year. Since Mazza began working with him during his junior year last season, Santana has been the ideal student-athlete. Never a day in trouble, Mazza said.



Mazza prides himself in making headway with troubled teens, and that, to him, is bigger than winning football games.

“If I can keep a kid from a gang banger, if I can keep him from a pimp on the street, from a murderer on the street, if I’m keeping him off the street, I’ve done something,” he said.

But two days before Central’s second game, news that Moreno and Santana no longer can be part of a program that helped them defeat personal demons, if not opposing backs, deflated Mazza more than any loss.

Where are they now?

He prays they don’t return to places that were draining their lives.

“I may not be winning football games, but I’m saving souls,” he said. “My players took it to heart. They’re wondering what is going on. Why did it happen when it did? It’s just a no-win situation.”

Moreno and Santana go to an alternative school that doesn’t have a football team. Because it is not chartered by the Phoenix Union district and it is not a member of the Arizona Interscholastic Association, they’re ineligible to play, said Glen Treadaway, the AIA’s assistant director.

The accelerated courses they take at the charter school will allow them to graduate with their peers. So they stay put. Without a team.

“If they allow them to play, they end up forfeiting, which isn’t a big deal,” said Jim Cummings, spokesman for the Phoenix Union district.



Especially since there are no games to forfeit.

“But Central could risk sanctions (by the AIA) for the entire athletic program, and that’s a big deal,” Cummings said.

Mazza questions the timing. He believes that the athletes deserved a better fate, a chance to finish the season.

“It took me a long time to get the kids to turn the corner, to understand respect, team loyalty and love for family,” Mazza said.



“Now, they’re nowhere around.”

Parents call in support. Mazza calls the school board, seeking a change. It may be too late for Moreno and Santana.

But if he can help others in similar positions . . .

“This was these players’ last year,” Mazza said. “I put one boy’s head on my shoulder as he cried. It was a tearful thing for me. I just said, ‘I don’t want to lose you, son.’”



Sports Questions

3

name _____

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. Why has Coach Mazza had bad luck with his teams?

2. Why has Mazza's two top linemen, Joe Moreno and Gabriel had difficult lives?

3. What has happened to Moreno and Gabriel that has handicapped the team?

4. What is more important to Coach Mazza than winning games?

5. What kind of change is Mazza seeking from the school board?

Sports Crossword

name _____

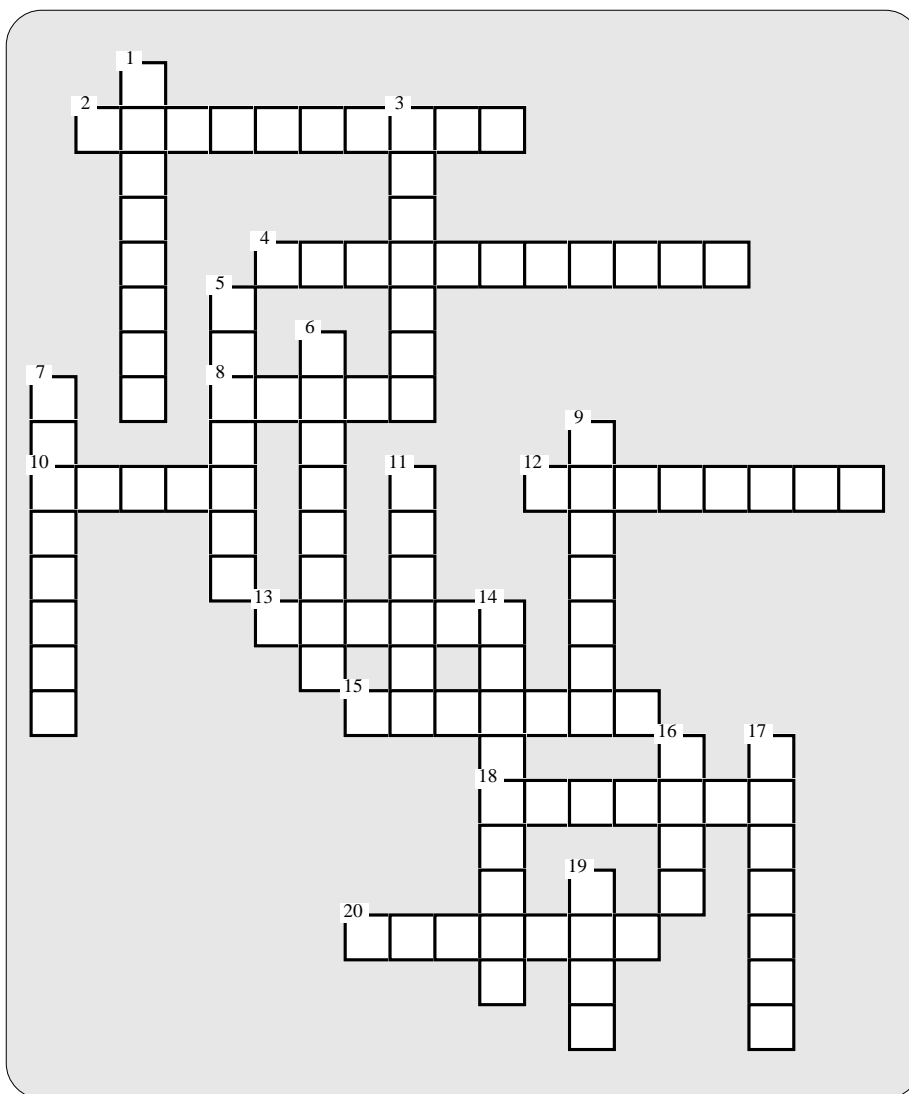
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

2. Five football starters are academically _____
4. Two students go to a charter school where they can get this type of attention
8. Coach Mazza said he may not be winning football games, but he is saving these
10. He is the football coach at Central
12. Mazza coaches this sport
13. Mazza said "if I can keep him off the _____, I've done something"
15. Mazza said it took a long time to get the kids to understand team _____
18. This football player ran with the wrong crowd before he got into the sport
20. The team lost two players because they go to this type of school

Down:

1. Two football players are out because of these
3. The nickname of the Central football team
5. Losing is like a _____
6. Moreno and Santana learned all about this
7. His is an athletic spokesman for the Phoenix Union district
9. The team would have to do this if Moreno and Santana play
11. One of the football players who had to work to help his family
14. The term given to players who move away to another school district
16. The coach wants to keep his players from joining one
17. Mazza had received calls from them supporting him
19. Scoring this number of points is familiar for Mazza's team



The Arizona Republic

A 12-inch scar runs down his chest. A wire the size of a No. 2 pencil lead lies beneath the skin to hold the sternum together. There are two holes in his belly.

Battle wounds?

Jacob Hantla likes to tell a naive freshman football player at Tucson's Rincon/University High School how he was shot and stabbed while saving a woman from getting her purse snatched.

Then, just as the standout varsity athlete has the kid buying the story, he begins to laugh.

"I have fun making up stories about it," said Hantla, a two-way starter at halfback and defensive end for the Rangers. "They think it's pretty cool."

It wasn't too cool two Christmases ago, when his cardiologist, Dr. Scott Klewer,

told Hantla that he needed open-heart surgery and couldn't play sports.

They might as well have ripped his heart out then, he felt upon hearing the news.

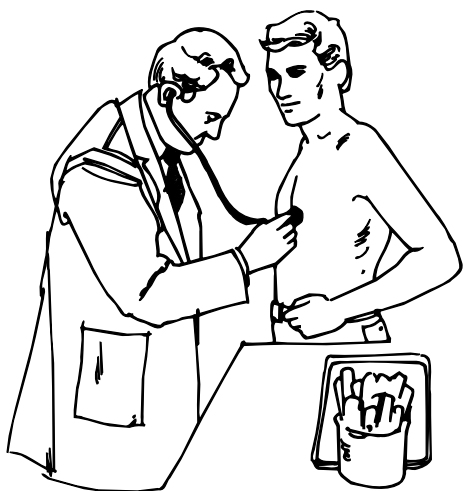
"That was the hardest thing," Hantla said. "I had no symptoms. I was in the best shape of my life. I had just come off a triple-double (in a junior varsity basketball game) the night before."

In July of last year, Hantla had a rim of tissue that developed under the aortic valve removed by world-renowned heart transplant surgeon Dr. Jack Copeland. The procedure allowed for blood to flow more smoothly through the left ventricle.

"It wasn't something he absolutely had to have, but if he did not have the surgery, he wouldn't be able to do anything more active than play golf or pingpong," said Jacob's father, Jeff Hantla, a physical therapist who was an all-state linebacker at Scottsdale Coronado in the early 1970s. "He wanted to keep doing sports."

Now, medically cleared, Jacob, a strapping 6-foot-2, 210-pound senior, is playing football for the first time. It's a sport in which his father and grandfather, Bob Hantla, excelled. Bob Hantla, who lives in Scottsdale, played for the San Francisco 49ers in the 1950s.

"I wanted to play football before, but with

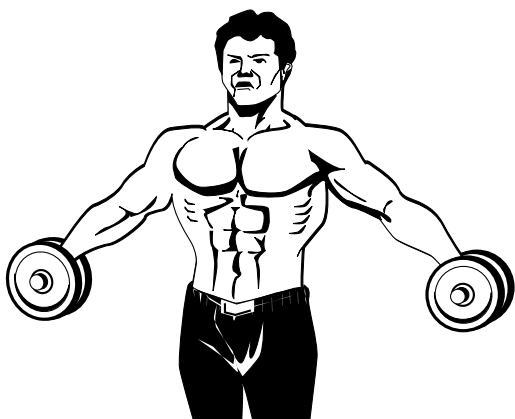


the heart thing . . . ,” said Jacob, a National Merit Scholarship student with a 4.28 grade point average at University High, which is combined with Rincon on the same campus. “Now, I’m really excited about it.”

So is his coach, Jeff Green, who coached Jacob’s father at the University of Arizona in the 1970s. Green was the defensive-ends coach under Jim Young, and Jeff Hantla was a linebacker.

Watching Jacob work out this summer, Green had no idea about his medical history until he saw him in the weight room one day with his shirt off.

“He’s got this great big scar on his chest, and I asked him what happened,” Green said.



Hantla didn’t try to snow his coach with a wild story.

“He said, ‘Oh, I had heart surgery,’ Green said. “By then, he was one of our tougher and best-conditioned kids in the weight

room and in the passing league.”

Born with a heart murmur, Hantla was diagnosed early in his childhood with a subaortic membrane, Klewer said. At the time, it didn’t seem to cause a problem, and Hantla grew up like most children, running, playing ball, not a worry in the world.

The only difference in his life from that of his friends, he said, was going into the University Medical Center once every three years to have an echocardiogram.

“I thought it was a cool way to get out of school,” he said.

Then, just before Christmas of ’96, his echocardiogram showed him in peril if he continued sports without the surgery.

Klewer said Hantla’s aortic valve had begun leaking. Surgery was needed to prevent further deterioration.

“He was so healthy and in good shape,” Klewer said. “But we couldn’t recommend competitive sports, based on his heart problem.”

Jeff Hantla’s insurance allowed for Copeland to do the surgery. They felt in good hands, but the final decision for the surgery was left up to Jacob.

“I’m in better shape than most people now,” he said.

Several months after the surgery, however,

Hantla experienced extreme chest pains. Significant amounts of fluid had built up around his heart, Klewer said. He was treated with anti-inflammatory agents, and it was resolved.

Hantla spent two weeks in the hospital. Teachers took schoolwork to him. Classmates dropped by for study hall.

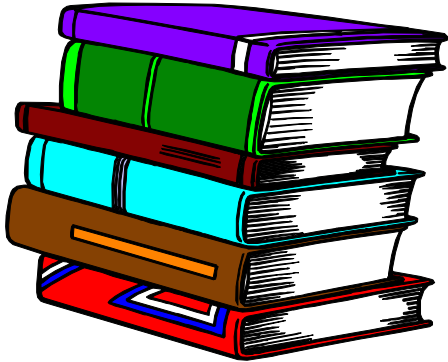
He caught up on his studies but was too late for varsity basketball tryouts. He was allowed on the JV team, where he posted impressive numbers in scoring, rebounds and steals.

It was during basketball season that Hantla said he thought, for the first time, of his own mortality.

“After the shock of surgery, you look down and see the scar,” he said. “It was weird to play with that. It made me think. I was afraid of my heart going out when I got real tired.”

He doesn’t now. He said he shows it off.

“It’s my battle scar,” he said.



Sports Questions

4

name _____

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. What was the bad news that Jacob Hantla got two Christmases ago?

2. What made it necessary for Hantla to have heart surgery?

3. What did his echocardiogram show in 1996?

4. What complication were there several months after surgery?

5. What story does Hantla tell freshman about his scars?

Sports Crossword

name _____

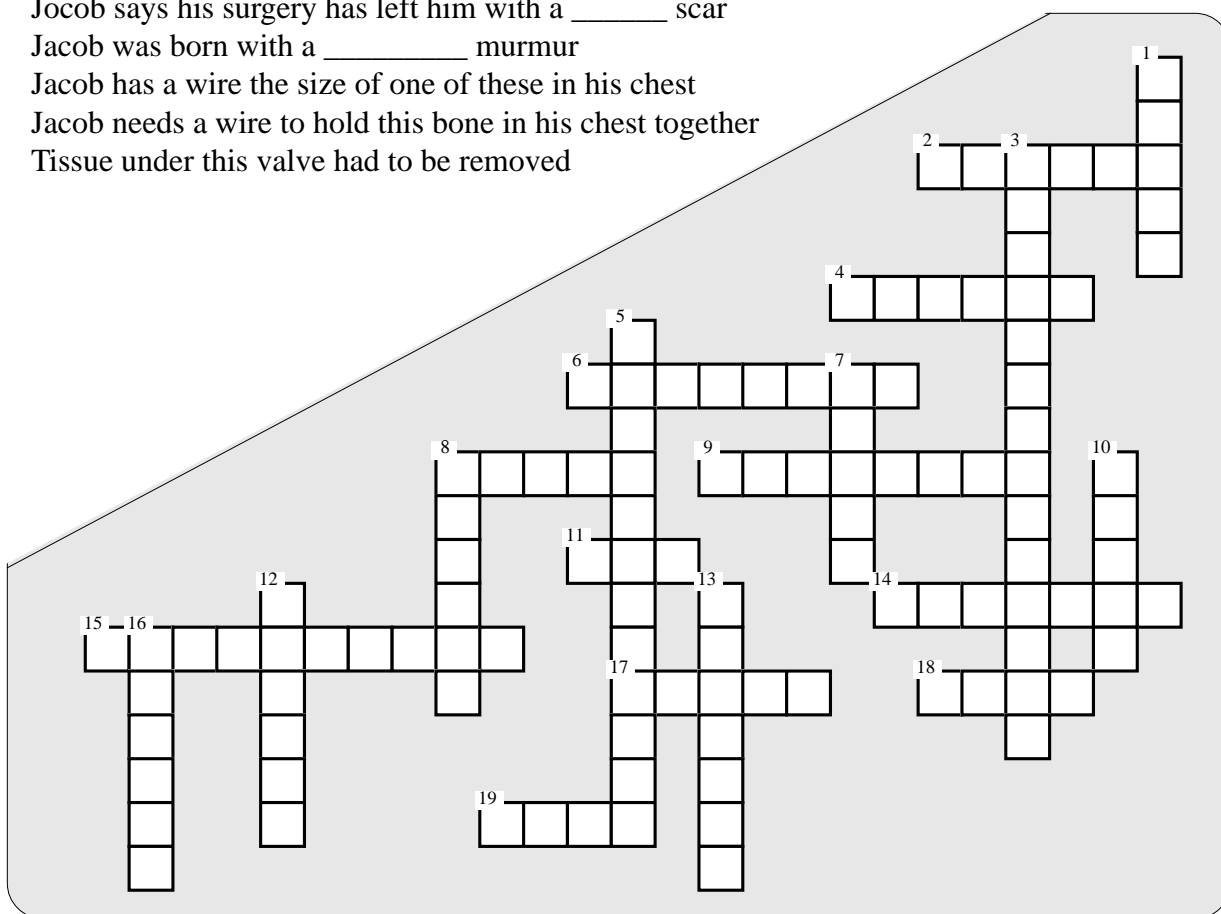
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

2. He is Jacob's heart doctor
4. Jacob goes to high school in this city
6. One of the positions that Jacob plays
8. Jacob needed an operation so this would flow more smoothly
9. He is a world-renowned heart transplant surgeon
11. Jacob's grandfather, who played professional football
14. In 1996 his echocardiogram showed that Jacob needed this
15. Jacob also plays this sport
17. Jacob's coach
18. Klewer said Hantla's aortic valve began to do this
19. Jacob at first tells a freshman his wounds came from being _____

Down:

1. Hantla is a National _____ Scholarship student
3. Jacob had to go to the Medical Center once every three years for one of these
5. Klewer's job
7. After the surgery, Hantla had extreme pains in this part of his body
8. Jacob says his surgery has left him with a _____ scar
10. Jacob was born with a _____ murmur
12. Jacob has a wire the size of one of these in his chest
13. Jacob needs a wire to hold this bone in his chest together
16. Tissue under this valve had to be removed



Bahrami used to little attention in tennis world 5

The Dallas Morning News

Mansour Bahrami recently walked into Arthur Ashe Stadium to play a late night doubles match at the U.S. Open only to find most of the crowd had already filed out of the stadium.

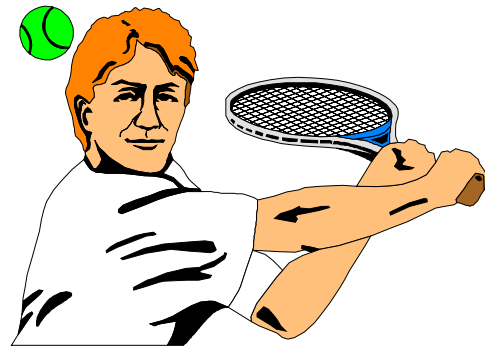
For Bahrami, it was not an unfamiliar feeling.

Bahrami, 42, spent most of his professional tennis career playing before small crowds or no crowds at all. Bahrami will not be confused with the legends competing in the Pricewaterhouse Coopers Champions tournament at the Four Seasons Resort and Club in Las Colinas. Jimmy Connors, John McEnroe and Guillermo Vilas had legendary careers.

In the first-round doubles match, Bahrami and partner Mikael Pernfors defeated Eddie Dibbs and Guillermo Vilas, 7-5, 7-5.



Bahrami, whose biggest accomplishment was reaching the French Open doubles finals in 1989, only has a legendary story.

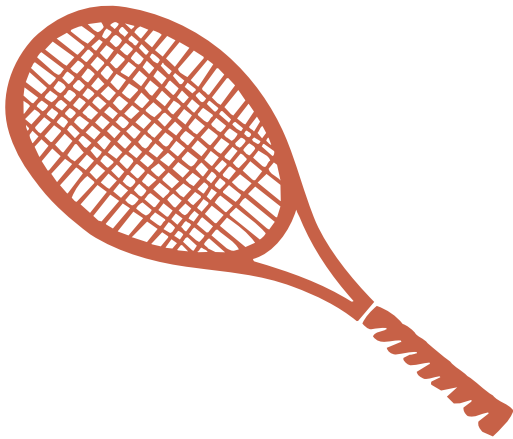


“I know people say, ‘Who is he’ when my name is announced,” Bahrami said. “Then, people come up to me after seeing me the first time and say I did a good job. They always say, ‘Where have you been all these years?’”

Bahrami has spent most of his life on the outside looking in. He grew up in Iran, where his father was a gardener at a Tehran tennis club. But Bahrami was not allowed to play on the courts. He never had a tennis instructor and he used his hand or a dustpan attached to a stick instead of a racket in his formative years.

Bahrami received his first racket when he was 12, but it didn’t last long. Bahrami and a friend sneaked onto the royal courts when nobody was around and started to play. The next thing he knew, Bahrami was surrounded by guards, who beat him before breaking his racket.

“I thought he the guard was going to kill me,” Bahrami said. “The guy grabbed me



and hit me on the head, and I fell down and was bleeding. I was so proud and happy to have my first racket, I was thinking I was in finals at Wimbledon. It hurt that the guy was in the same class as my family and he did this to me.”

The low moment turned into a high months later when the Iranian federation offered Bahrami training and later placed him on its Davis Cup team. Bahrami, who played Davis Cup from 1975-78, thought his career was going to take off at that point. That’s when his life changed forever.

When the Shah of Iran was overthrown, everything considered capitalistic and excessive ceased to exist in Iran. That included tennis clubs.

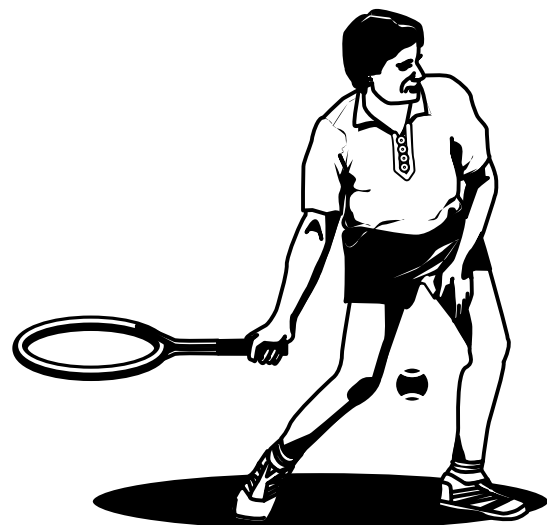
With his career on hiatus, Bahrami did what he could to survive. He played backgammon and lived off his savings before receiving visas to travel to Switzerland and

France in August 1980. Bahrami ended up in Paris, where he quickly found himself broke, homeless and unable to speak the language.

Bahrami didn’t seek political asylum because he didn’t want to lose contact with his family in Iran. He avoided police and spent his nights walking around Paris because he was too proud to sleep on the streets.

Bahrami caught a break when, by chance, he met a fellow Iranian ex-patriate who helped him find part-time work teaching tennis at a club near Paris. Bahrami played in small tournaments and qualified for the 1981 French Open.

Bahrami kept his Iranian passport and needed visas to play in major tournaments. Sometimes he’d miss tournaments be-



cause the wait for visas was too long. By the time Bahrami did get a travel visa, his prime playing years had passed him by.

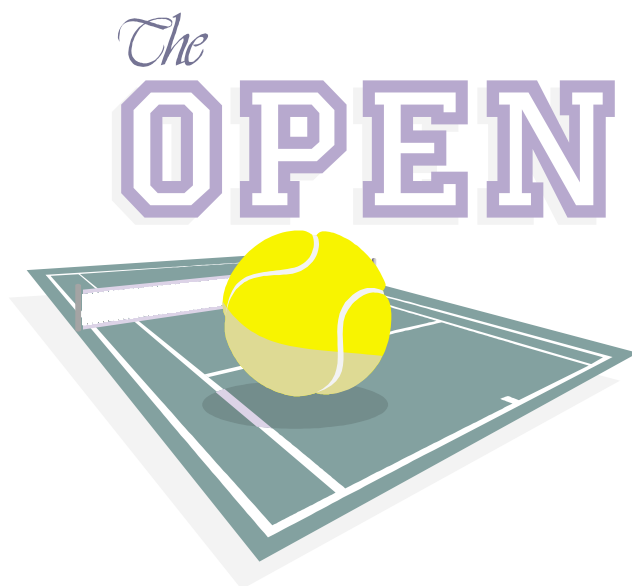
Bahrami joined the ATP Tour in 1986 when he was 30, about the time most top players are giving up the game.

“I really don’t think about it,” Bahrami says of what may have been. ‘I don’t know how good I could have been. Some people say I could have done very well. It’s really hard to say.’”

Now, Bahrami is a showman on the court. Bahrami can hold eight tennis balls in one hand and serve with the ninth. He hits

shots between his legs and can undercut a ball with such spin it can go over the net, hit on his opponent’s side and then bounce back over the net.

“It seems like today’s players don’t have time to have fun,” Bahrami said. “The way I play, it’s risky. People want to see different shots and some joking on the court. That’s why I think people like the way I play. I want them to have a great time.”



Sports Questions

5

name _____

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. What did the author of this story mean when he said, “Bahrami has spent most of his life on the outside looking in”?

2. What happened to Bahrami and a friend when they sneaked onto the royal courts?

3. When the Shah of Iran was overthrown, what happened to Bahrami’s tennis career?

4. How did a fellow Iranian help Bahrami when he was in Paris?

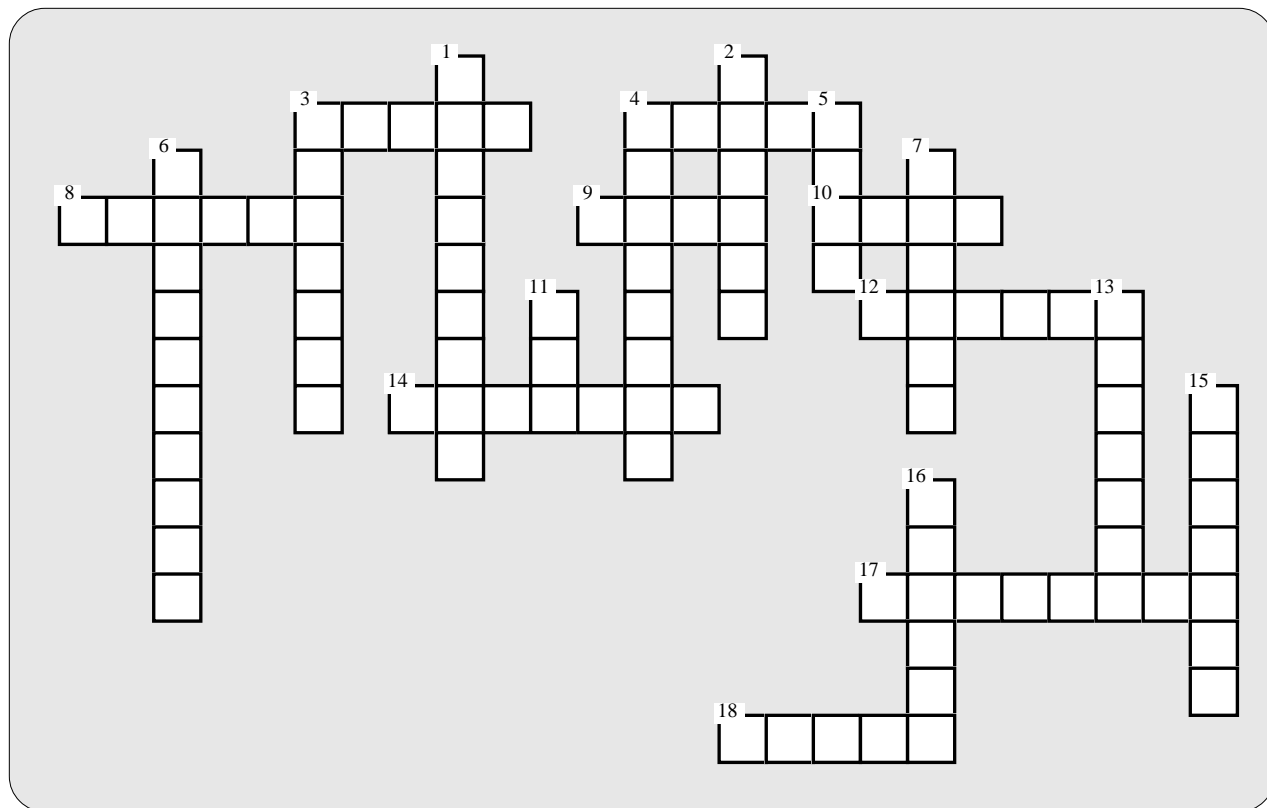
5. In what ways is Bahrami a showman on the court now?

Sports Crossword

5

name _____

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across:

3. Bahrami was put on his country's _____ Cup team
4. Bahrami ended up homeless in this city
8. Bahrami's sport
9. Bahrami grew up in this country
10. This tennis player has a stadium named after him
12. Mansour spent most of his career playing before small ones
14. This tennis player had a legendary career
17. Mansour's father had this job
18. He was defeated by Bahrami

Down:

1. When Bahrami had his first racket he pictured himself in the finals at this tournament
2. Bahrami's biggest accomplishment was reaching the finals at the _____ Open
3. Bahrami used one of these attached to a stick for his first racket
4. He is Bahrami's partner
5. When the _____ of Iran was overthrown tennis ceased to exist in the country
6. Mansour never had one in tennis
7. Bahrami finally joined the professional tour when he was this age
11. Manour says it seems like today's players don't have time for this
13. Bahrami is a _____ on the tennis court
15. Bahrami was not permitted to play at this tennis club when he was young
16. They broke Bahrami's first racket

Creatine use worries state high school officials 6

Minneapolis Star Tribune

The question was simple, and perhaps even a little naive. Have you ever heard of creatine?

The answer was nothing like the question.

“Sure . . . it’s a natural enzyme found in the liver. What it does is . . . everything’s broken down into adeno triphosphate and then it turns into adeno diphosphate and it just looks for the other phosphate. Creatine is just giving you more of that enzyme to make your body more energized.”

The answer didn’t come from a biology professor or a liver specialist or even a potential major college football player — it came from Brandon Anderson, a senior reserve on the Eden Prairie High School football team.

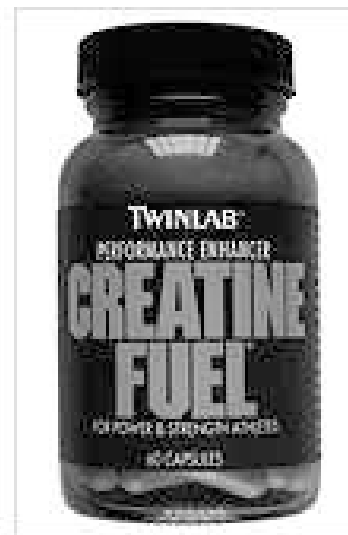
And he’s never even used creatine.

His parents stopped him. Their reason: Even though the teenager knows a lot about the over-the-counter weight-gain supplement, nobody knows for sure whether it will have long-term adverse effects.

The same concern motivated the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) to begin examining creatine and other supplements. The deaths last year of three college wrestlers in a six-week span —

one of whom was found to have an abnormally high level of creatine in his system — triggered a formal study by the league’s medical advisory board.

With creatine popping up in high school weight rooms, the MSHSL is preparing to take a public stance on the supplement. Its position statement, which will likely warn coaches against advocating creatine, will probably stand as official MSHSL policy after the full league meets in the future.



MSHSL associate director Skip Peltier said that, for a number of reasons, the league is not going to ban creatine. But he added that taking a stance — even a fairly neutral one — is important.

“I think most parents are unsophisticated in this. Also, I think there is a level of confidence in anything you can buy off the shelf,” Peltier said. “Part of the education

process is to warn people that just because it's there doesn't mean someone's regulated it."

What creatine is

Creatine is classified as a supplement and not a drug, so it never had to pass safety tests for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Creatine is a naturally occurring substance that helps molecules release energy. In the body, it's produced in small amounts in the kidneys, liver and pancreas, and it's also found in some foods, such as red meat, eggs and fish.

Made synthetically, it's sold most commonly as a powder to be mixed with water or juice. It's also available in tablets, wafers and gum.



According to some studies, creatine can increase muscle mass by increasing energy during workouts. It was found to enhance performance in activities such as weight lifting and sprinting, which require short bursts of energy.

At the same time, creatine has been linked to muscle cramps and dehydration. And the FDA has cautioned people to consult a doctor before using it, saying "much remains unknown" about its long-term safety.

No studies have been conducted on long-term effects, but so far, no serious concerns have come up in short-term tests. And until proven otherwise, many athletes are counting on it being safe. Creatine sales are expected to jump from \$100 million last year to \$200 million this year, according to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the preeminent governing body of college sports.

The concern is that harmful side effects could turn up and leave today's bulked-up high school athletes in a perilous position later.

"In my mind, the high school population isn't the one to be using this stuff," said Dr. William O. Roberts, a sports medicine specialist in White Bear Lake and member of the high school league's medical advisory board. "It's never been studied in that age group, so you don't really know how it could affect them."

With creatine or anything like it, the potential risks are always greater for teenagers than adults, experts say. "Just by the fact that they're still developing, they're more sensitive to any kind of a metabolically active supplement," said Don Quick, research director for the Minneapolis Sports Medicine Center, which advises

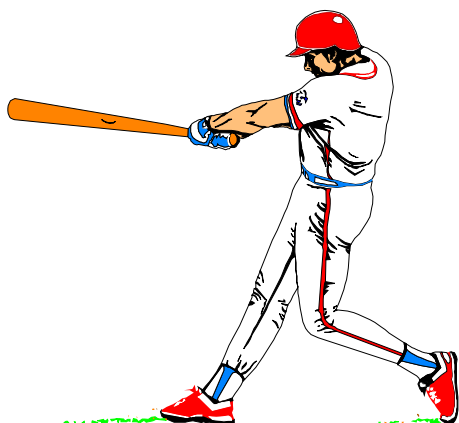
professional and college teams. And the problems may not surface for some time, he said. "If something happens, it's likely to be a subtle thing that's hard to recognize exactly what caused it."

So it's particularly risky, says Roberts, for a coach to even suggest it to a high school student.

Caught in the middle

For the high school league, creatine has created what Peltier sees as a dilemma. The league wants a policy that points out the potential dangers, but it hasn't been banned by any athletic organization, and hasn't been proven to cause lasting problems.

Coming out too strong against creatine could cause a backlash from its manufacturers, which in turn could lead to legal action. In addition, few high schools have the resources to test for substance use. Even androstenedione, the testosterone-producing supplement used by newly crowned home run king Mark McGwire and banned by the NCAA and NFL, is not regulated by the MSHSL.



But medical experts don't want to send a message supporting creatine because that might spur athletes to try even more controversial supplements, such as androstenedione. Public concern over young athletes using "andro" led ESPN to decide recently to pull ads for the supplement. Some high school athletes believe creatine is a recipe for a major college scholarship.

Peltier doesn't want to give high school football players more incentive to take creatine. Instead, the league's approach will be education. Peltier said its policy will likely mirror the one released recently by the National Federation of State High School Associations:

"Even natural substances in unnatural amounts may have short-term or long-term health effects. In order to minimize health and safety risks to student-athletes, maintain ethical standards and reduce liability risks, school personnel and coaches should never supply, recommend or permit the use of any drug, medication or food supplement solely for performance-enhancing purposes."

Supplement of choice

There are no studies of how many Minnesota high school athletes use creatine, but anecdotal evidence shows its widely popular.

Every athlete and coach interviewed for this story had heard of it, and several athletes said they have taken it.

Eden Prairie football coach Mike Grant, whose team has won two straight large-school state championships and 21 consecutive games, said he's seen players mix it before workouts and estimated that 10 percent of his athletes use it — maybe more.

"I figure for every kid who asks me about creatine, there's probably another 100 using it," said Roberts, the sports medicine specialist. "Because most of the kids don't ask."

And that, too, worries health experts. "They're not getting these supplements from people like athletic trainers and physicians. They're getting them from their buddies," said Scott Kulstad, a trainer with the Institute for Athletic Medicine in Robbinsdale. "They're getting them from places like . . . health foods stores, where I'm not sure that the information that they're given is adequate."



Nate Schmit, a 250-pound defensive tackle for Eden Prairie, began using creatine this summer, after an employee at a General Nutrition Center told him it could help

augment his workouts and gain muscle for the upcoming season.

"I was afraid I . . . well, I wasn't really afraid of anything," Schmit said. "I just wanted to get bigger."

Schmit said he drank a gallon of water every day for the two months he was taking creatine and never felt dehydrated. But long-term concerns led him to quit using it.

"They haven't done enough testing on it," he said. "I'm going to stop taking it until they do that."

Still, Schmit noticed an increase in energy when he lifted weights and estimated that he gained up to 10 pounds during the two months he used the supplement.

The high school league fears that students will keep using creatine if they see those kinds of results.

"Everyone's looking for an edge to get better," Peltier said.

Some, though, say creatine's reputation is overblown.

"I don't think it's much more dangerous than taking sugar, but it's also probably not much more helpful," said Quick, of the Sports Medicine Center. At most, he said, creatine may give a short-lived boost to certain athletes. "They probably are wasting their money," he said. Kulstad, the athletic trainer, agrees. "Part of it's psy-

chological — ‘I’m taking it, therefore I’m better,’” he said.

“If I was a coach, I would take a smart skilled player who eats right, who gets enough rest, who maintains enough fluid level and drinks a lot of water and juices . . . over a player who’s just juiced up on creatine.”

Guidance needed

So far, most coaches say they have taken a hands-off approach when it comes to athletes and supplements. “When kids ask me about creatine, I don’t have enough knowledge to say whether it’s safe or not,” said Rich Kallok, football coach at Cretin-Derham Hall in St. Paul.

At Blaine, head football coach Dave Nelson posted the Tampa Bay Buccaneers’ anti-creatine position paper in his students’ locker room. But even with its warnings of muscle cramps and other effects, Nelson said some of his athletes are using it.

Up to now, the high school league has stayed out of the debate.

Coaches say there’s no guarantee that the league’s upcoming position statement will change any athlete’s decision, but it’s a place to start.

“It’s going to have to be the high school league that does this,” Mahtomedi coach Wally Malmstrom said. “They need to address this.”

When asked what the league should say, Malmstrom chuckled. “That’s Skip’s problem,” he said.

Blaine’s Nelson says the league’s new policy should at least get people talking about the pros and cons.

That’s what the league is hoping for.

“It is a topic being discussed by coaches,” Peltier said. “If it hasn’t been, it will be.”

Sports Questions

name _____

6

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. What is the supplement known as creatine and what does people think it does for you?

2. Why did Brandon Anderson's parent's stop him from using creatine?

3. Creatine has been linked to what two problems in the body?

4. What is androstenedione and what famous person has used it?

5. Why does Kulstad, an athletic trainer believe that athletes are wasting their money on creatine?

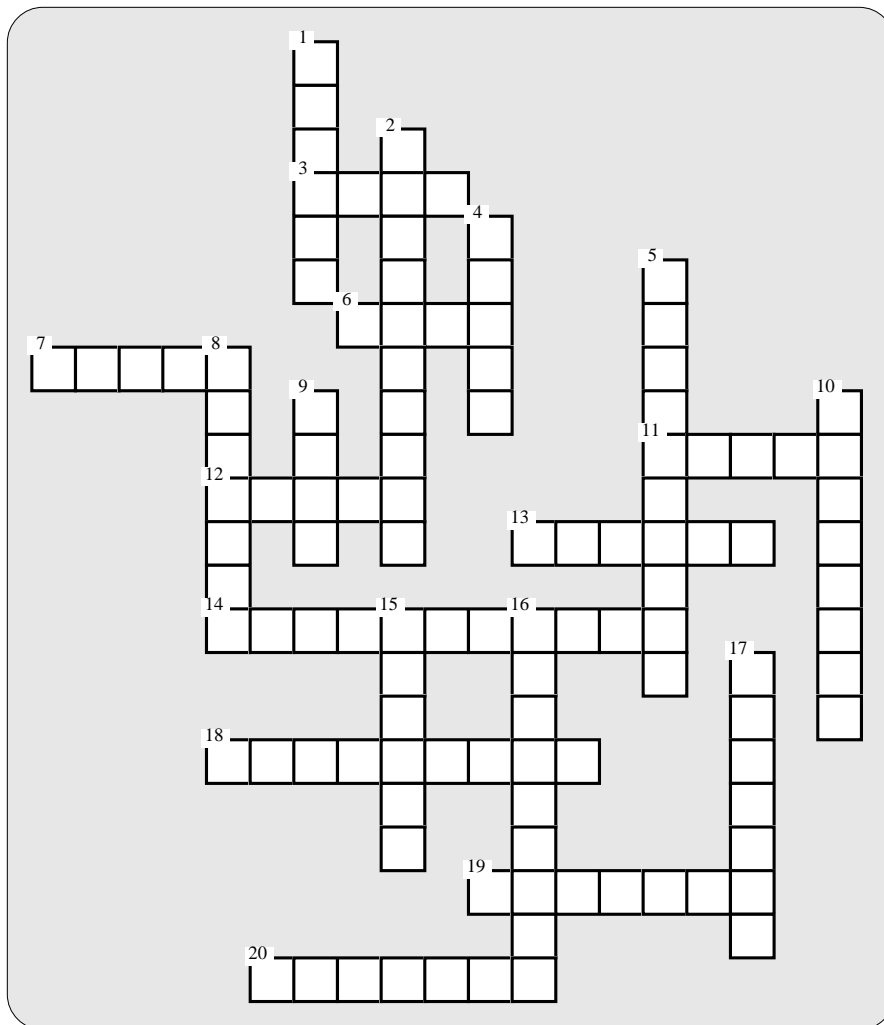
Sports Crossword

name _____

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

3. The "D" in FDA
6. Peltier feels that part of the education process is to _____ people about the over-the-counter problem
7. He is a research director for the Minneapolis Sports Medicine Center
11. Creatine is a nature enzyme found in this organ
12. Quick said creatine is probably not much more helpful than this substance
13. He is a high school athlete who quit using creatine because he had long term concerns
14. One of the problems caused by creatine
18. Three college athletes involved in this sport died in a six week period
19. The Associate Director of MSHSL
20. This doctor is a sports medicine specialist



Down:

1. Creatine often comes in this form
2. This professional football team has an anti-creatine position paper
4. Quick and Kulstad both think athletes are wasting this on creatine
5. Creatine is classified as this
8. He is a trainer with the Institute for Athletic Medicine
9. The "H" in MSHSL
10. Used as an over the counter weight gain supplement
15. Athletes should consult one before using creatine
16. With anything like creatine the potential risks are always greater with this group
17. He is called the home run king but used an over-the-counter supplement

State's top scorer leads Maple Grove while remembering dad

Minneapolis Star Tribune

Chad Morse was pushed, tripped and knocked down throughout Maple Grove's 3-2 triumph over Anoka recently in a matchup of boys' soccer powers. "That's the hardest he has been marked all season," said his coach, Giuseppe (Rob) Mendolia.

Morse, a senior midfielder who is the state's leading scorer with 19 goals and 17 assists, responded in a way that hurt the host Tornadoes the most. He kept passing and shooting.



He had assists on the Crimson's two first-half goals against Anoka, rated No. 4 in Class AA, and scored the game-winner with 8:31 left on a rebound.

"One of the tips my dad gave me was to control my temper," Morse said. "When I get frustrated, I just try harder. My goal this year is not to get any red cards."

He hasn't.

"I know he is watching me," Chad said of his father. "I'm devoting everything to him this season."

Michael Morse, 46, died recently of colon cancer. He had coached Chad and 11 or 12 of his teammates for at least four seasons when they were learning soccer.

"He was always so positive," said Cheryl Morse, who assisted her husband in his coaching days. "There were a number of kids who were not that skilled, and he pumped everybody up."

Early Crimson backer

More recently, Michael Morse was the first and only treasurer for the Maple Grove soccer booster club, which started in 1996 when the school opened.

The varsity and junior varsity teams at Maple Grove and even some younger players attended Michael Morse's funeral dressed in their soccer uniforms. "It was quite a moving experience," Mendolia said.

The varsity team remembers Michael Morse before each game by writing the letter “M” on their hands; high school league rules prohibit putting anything on uniforms. For home games, the U.S. flag flies at half-mast.

“Mike helped set up our program,” Mendolia said. “There was nothing he wouldn’t do. He even got cheerleaders to come to a game the first year.”

That season, Chad was a sophomore co-captain with one year of varsity experience at Osseo High School. But the Crimson had no field or regular cheerleaders as it does now. It played home games at a junior high with no amenities.

“We’d sell concessions,” Cheryl Morse said. “We’d bring coffee pots, coolers and card tables. We raised quite a bit of money doing that. And Mike coordinated it all.”

This season, as his nine-month battle with cancer neared an end, Michael Morse was too ill to attend Chad’s games. So his family or friends would bring game tapes to him at the hospice at North Memorial Medical Center.

Scoring touch found

Michael Morse had to enjoy them. The Crimson’s latest victory gave it a 12-0 record. Mendolia, who was worried about finding scorers, has found them as Maple Grove has climbed to No. 1 in the state ratings. That’s a school first in any sport.

Chad Morse, with 19 goals, already has one more goal than he had the last two seasons combined. Teammates Nate Olson and Federico Laurens, an exchange student from Argentina, have 17 and 14 goals, respectively.

“We rattled the cage a lot last season, winning 2-1, 1-0,” Mendolia said. “This year things are going nuts. . . . Everybody is scoring goals.”

Especially Chad Morse. “His ability to attack is just awesome,” said Mendolia, a former rugby star from Wales. “He has a sense of position on the field and from the midfield can put the ball on a forward’s foot.”



Chad started playing soccer at age 4, following brother Bret, now 20. That was about when Michael and Cheryl Morse got involved in soccer — Bret’s team needed coaches, they volunteered.

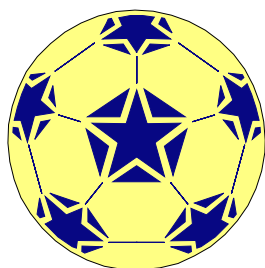
Starting soccer together

“We didn’t know anything about soccer,” Cheryl Morse said, “but Mike learned the

game and how exciting it was. He later played in an over-35 league. . . . Soccer became part of our life.”

Michael Morse even went to England, as a chaperone on a trip Chad’s Olympic Development team made in 1995. Soccer also took the Morse family across the United States to tournaments in such places as Lexington, Ky.; Orlando, Fla., and Las Vegas.

By seventh grade, Chad Morse dropped hockey, his other major sport. He was too busy with soccer.



“It’s just like fun,” Chad Morse said. “There are not all those stoppages of play. You have strategies and can use your creativity. I’ve met a lot of friends and had a lot of good experiences through soccer.”

“My father was a great help. He got me started. We had our son-coach conflicts, but he loved watching me play. . . . I have to play well for him.”

Is that putting too much pressure on yourself?

The day after his father died, Chad Morse got the winning goal in a 2-1 victory over Champlin Park, another state power.

“Even if they don’t win, but put up a good fight, Mike would understand,” Cheryl Morse said.

He was a soccer dad.



Sports Questions

name_____

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

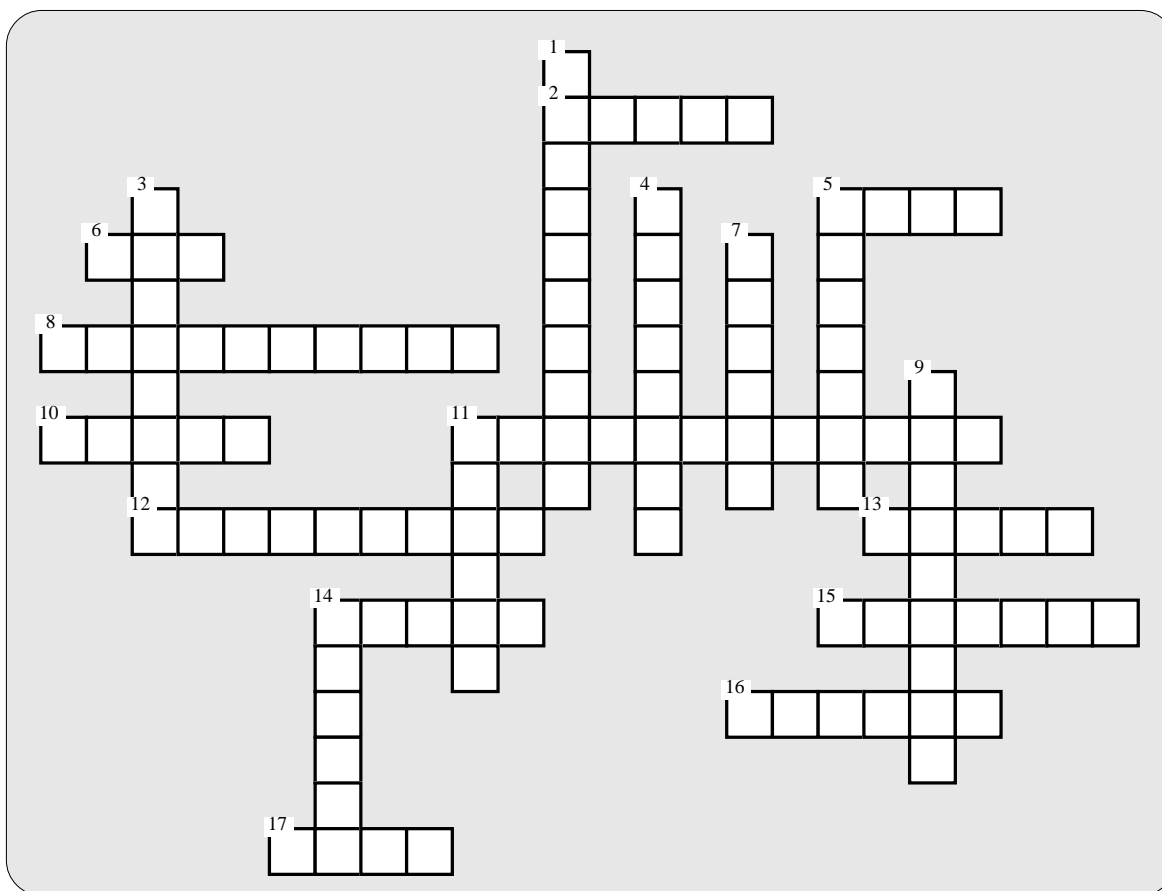
1. What was one of the tips Chad Morse's dad gave him?
2. How did Chad's dad die?
3. How does the varsity team remember Chad's dad?
4. When Mr. Morse was too ill to attend the games what would family and friends do so he could see the games?
5. What happened the day after Chad's dad died?

Sports Crossword

name _____

7

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across:

2. Chad's coach was formerly a star in this sport
5. It flies at half-mast during the games
6. One of Chad's goals was to not get any of these cards
8. The position played by Chad Morse
10. Mendolia comes from this country
11. Mr. Morse got them to come to one of the soccer games
12. One of Chad's teammates comes from this country
13. Students wrote the letter "M" on them
14. How Mr. Morse got to view the games just before he dies
15. One of Chad's teammates who is an exchange student
16. Chad's sport
17. He is Chad's brother

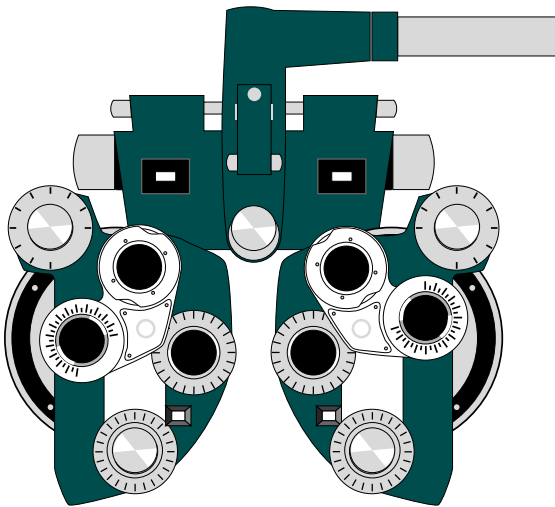
Down:

1. When Chad gets _____ he just tries harder
3. Chad's coach
4. Many students came to the funeral dressed in these
5. One of the states where Chad's team played in a tournament
7. Chad stopped playing this sport in seventh grade
9. Mr. Morse was the first one of these for the school's booster club
11. Mr. Morse died from this disease
14. Chad said his dad gave him a tip to try to control this

Life and sports go on for legally blind soccer player

Minneapolis Star Tribune

Three months shy of his 13th birthday, Joel Fischer had 20/30 vision. He was an honor student at Plymouth Middle School and a rising talent as a hockey and soccer goalie.



But a rare genetic condition called Stargardt's Disease was destroying Fischer's vision. Three months after he turned 13, the condition — which takes away a person's central vision — had reduced Fischer's eyesight to 20/200, meaning he was legally blind.

After the diagnosis, his parents, John and Jan, came home from the Mayo Clinic feeling devastated. Joel, however, saw a bright future even though his eyes couldn't focus.

"John and I were kind of teary and real sad," Jan said. "Joel had to write a paper that weekend about what his life was going to be like in the year 2010. He wrote this paper that was really moving. He finally told John and I that we had to stop being so depressed. He said, 'Look, I can live my life as a blind person, but I can't live as a depressed person.'"

Fischer, now 17, is a senior and captain of the Breck boys' soccer team. He no longer can play goalie, but that doesn't seem to matter. As a junior, he was named to the Tri-Metro all-conference soccer team and was a Class A all-state honorable-mention selection as a midfielder/defender.

The impact of Stargardt's Disease has not changed, and neither has his attitude.



"I'm not one to go up to people and demand attention," Fischer said. "I think of myself as just like anyone else, except with blurrier vision."

Living with it

Unlike people who simply have poor vision, Stargardt's Disease is not correctible. Although it's being heavily researched, there is no proven treatment or cure.



For a child to be affected, both parents must carry the recessive gene for the disease. One of every four kids born in such a circumstance will have Stargardt's. Joel's sister Jennifer, 20, does not have it.

The condition, which also is known as junior macular degeneration, makes it impossible for Fischer to see objects he is looking at directly. The only vision he has is peripheral.

Fischer gave an example by pointing at

some writing on his warmup jacket. He said that in order for the writing to enter his field of vision, he would have to look at a point six inches above it.

He plays soccer and hockey in the same manner. In sports where there is a contrast between the ball (or puck) and the playing surface, Fischer can see enough to compete.

Sports such as baseball, in which central vision is needed in order to bat, are impossible to play.

"He can still beat me at golf any time he wants to," John said. "But sometimes he'll be yelling, 'C'mon right, c'mon right.' And it will almost be in the right rough."

Soccer is hardly easy, considering a high kick often can find his blind spot. But Fischer's talent is enough to offset his condition. Breck coach Leon Willems said he didn't even know Fischer had an eye problem when he played varsity soccer as a freshman.

"His dad told me after the season that it meant a lot to Joel to play varsity," Willems said. "I figured he meant playing as a freshman. Then he told me about Joel's condition, and it really surprised me."

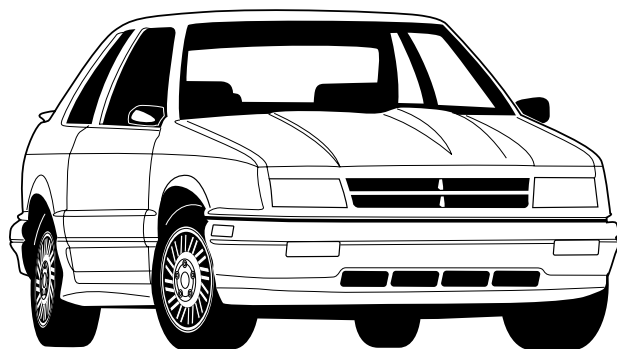
An equal

That's the way Fischer wants it. There's nothing in his appearance that would indicate he has an eye condition. And if no

one asks, he isn't going to tell them. Gustavus and St. Olaf, two schools looking at him, weren't aware of it. That's not surprising considering a few of his teammates also weren't aware of it.

The manner in which he deals with Stargardt's leads others to view him just like any other player. Willems will ride Fischer if he isn't playing well. As the senior shouted instructions during Breck's 3-1 loss to St. Paul Academy, his teammates listened.

The most serious concession for Joel is not being able to drive, Jan said. A 17-year-old with dozens of friends and no wheels can get frustrated. "He can't take a girl out on a date. He can't run through the drive-thru at McDonalds," she said.



Adjusting to the condition and remaining active is important, said Michael Raines, the director of development resources at the Schepens Eye Research Institute in Boston.

"You'll see that if patients don't pursue these things, their quality of life declines," Raines said. "It is an attitude. That's the biggest thing."

Considering that, Joel Fischer's name sticks in Raines' memory bank. He said he has met Joel and said he hopes to have lunch with the Fischer family when he is in Minneapolis next week.

If he does, he will see that Fischer still is being measured by the many things he can do instead of the few things he can't. Chances are it will still be that way in 2010.

"Last year against Holy Angels, I didn't see the ball and I accidentally kicked it into our net. They ended up winning 3-2," Fischer said. "There are times like that — easy passes where I don't see a person and I end up passing to another team. But if you're going to give up over one pass or one goal, why even play?"



Sports Questions

name _____

8

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. What condition was destroying Fischer's vision?

2. What advice did Joel give his parents when they learned of his eye condition?

3. How do children get (Stargardt) macular degeneration?

4. How does Fischer play soccer and hockey with this disease?

5. What is the most serious concession for Joel with this condition?

Sports Crossword

name _____

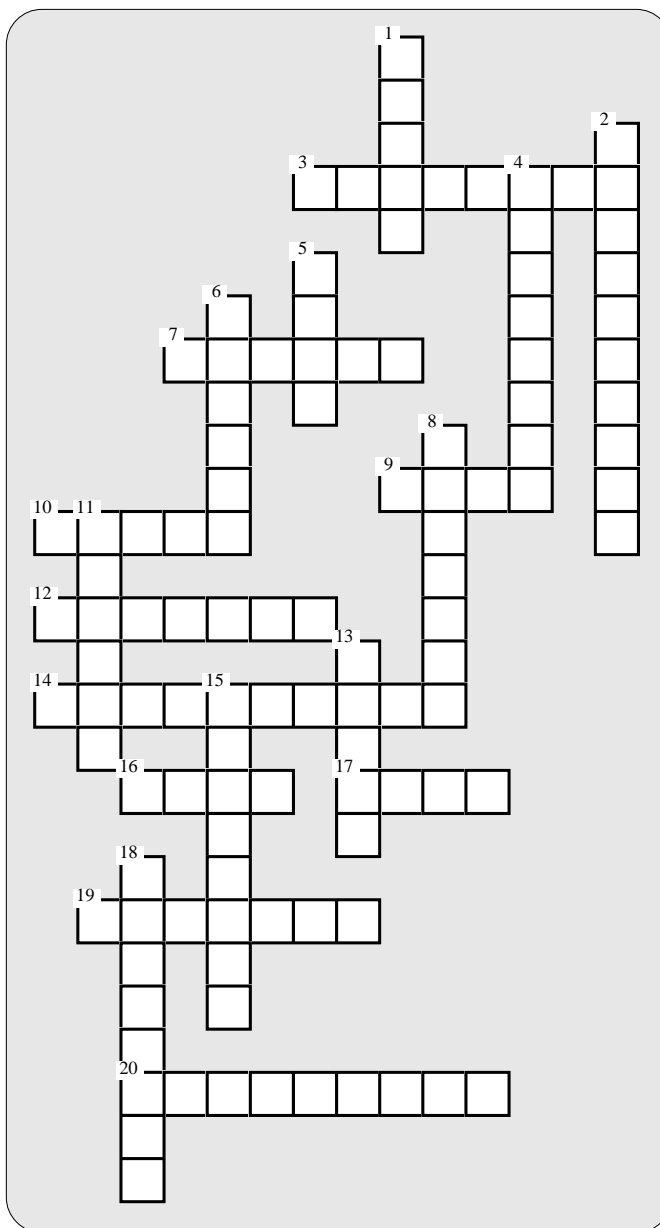
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

3. For Joel to compete in a sport there must be a _____ between the ball and the playing surface
7. Joel's sport
9. For a child to get the disease, both parents must carry a _____ for the disease
10. This is one teenage activity that Joel will never be able to do
12. Joel's coach
14. The only vision Joel has
16. The name of the clinic that Joel went to for his eyes
17. There isn't one for the disease that Joel has
19. Joel's condition is known as junior _____ degeneration
20. Joel said he is not going to go up to people and demand this

Down:

1. Because of Joel's disease, he is now legally _____
2. The name of the disease that Joel got
4. According to Raines, the biggest thing in how a patient handles the disease is _____
5. Sometimes in soccer a high _____ can find Joel's blind spot
6. The first position that Joel played
8. Joel's disease took away this part of his vision
11. He is director of development resources at the Schepens Eye Research Institute
13. The name of Joel's current school
15. Where Joel went to Middle School
18. This is one sport that is impossible for Joel to play

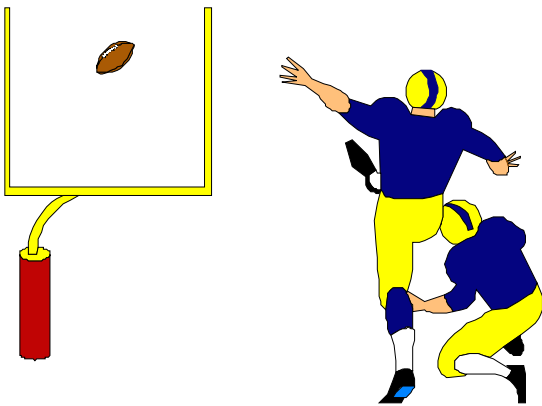


Girl kicker aims to be more than footnote in Goodrich success

9

Detroit Free Press

GOODRICH — It was the third quarter of the opening football game of the season, Goodrich was leading Burton Atherton, 20-0, and was about to make it 21-0 with the extra point.



Holder Jake Howells was already on his feet, admiring the ball as it sailed between the uprights, when he turned back and saw his kicker on the ground.

Wasting no time, Howells raced to the defender who roughed the kicker and pushed him to the ground. Howells and several Martian teammates were about to do some roughing of their own until the referee stepped in.

“It was a cheap shot,” Howells insisted. “He only did it because she’s a girl.”

A girl?

Yes, Goodrich’s placekicker is a girl.

Be honest. When you think of a girl playing football you picture someone 5-feet-11, 180 pounds. Not Goodrich’s favorite Martian.

Senior Madeline Hill is a petite 5-feet-5 and 105 pounds. Maybe.

But there she is each afternoon, refining her kicking style and waiting for her chance to help the Martians. She is 8-for-8 on extra points, and Goodrich has opened the season with two victories and earned a No. 9 ranking in Class CC.

“She’s the most accurate kicker I’ve seen in high school,” coach Tom Alward declared. “She just doesn’t miss. She has limited range, but she doesn’t miss from close in. Our practice goal posts are narrower and she’s inside them about all the time.”



This is Hill's first try at football, and it was not even her idea. Teammate Greg Johnson was the first to approach her about kicking when he learned the team would not have a kicker returning this fall.

"I just talked to her about it," Johnson said. "She's such an awesome soccer player, I thought she had a good foot."

Hill has started every varsity soccer game since she entered high school and has been an all-state selection. She also plays for the Genesee Stars club.

Initially, Hill thought Johnson was joking when he suggested she kick for the football team.

"He first started asking me in computer class," Hill recalled. "He asked me every day for a month. He kept telling me how much they needed a kicker."

Eventually, Hill relented and the coaches

arranged a tryout of sorts last January at the weight-lifting area near the gym.

"We couldn't tell distance or height inside," Alward said. "But her kick had a good thud to it."

That convinced Alward to give Hill a shot this fall. It helped that Alward and Hill's father, Vern, were teammates at Burton Bendle and that Vern is an assistant coach at Goodrich.

After receiving Alward's approval, Hill had to get permission from her parents before she began taking this seriously. Her father, a Saginaw Valley State linebacker for Muddy Waters in the late 1970s, was no problem.

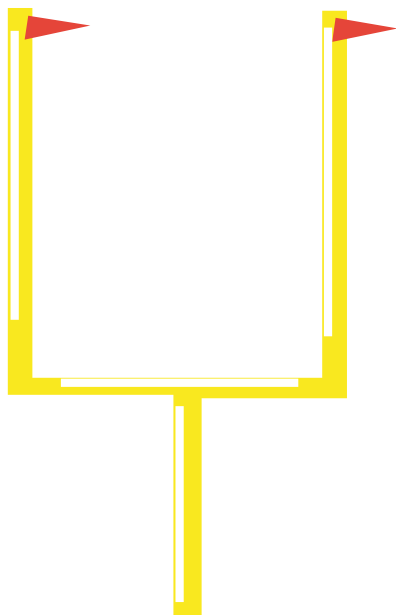
"My mom was scared," Hill said. "My dad's so into football it really didn't matter."

Hill's biggest fear was that she would come to practice and discover she wasn't good enough. She didn't want to be embarrassed in front of the entire team.

"I had to make sure I could do it for sure," she said. "I wanted to try it without anyone else there but my dad."

Her Goodrich teammates stand up for 5-foot-5, 105-pound Madeline Hill when opponents mess with her.

So in June, Hill and her father went to the field and she began kicking extra points. Eventually she was joined by her sister,



Maegan, 14, and her brother, Matthew, 12, who retrieved balls. Hill would kick 10 extra points, and then move to each hash mark and then back a bit.

“Her furthest is about 40 or 42 yards,” her father said.

Vern was confident Madeline was a capable kicker, but her mother, Vickie, had to be convinced she would be safe.

“Madeline just got her braces off,” Vern said. “She had them on for over three years. My wife said: ‘She’s got these beautiful teeth and we’re going to let her play football?’”

After watching her daughter practice all summer, and with some assurances from her husband that Madeline would be safe, Vickie gave her blessing.

“My husband told me they can’t touch the kicker until they touch the ball,” she said.

So Madeline was finally playing football. The first obstacle was figuring out the equipment. Because of her size, Alward had to use some junior high equipment. But Hill didn’t know where everything fit.

“Coach (Bruce) Edwards had to show me how the hip pads went,” she said. “And I wasn’t sure which way the knee pads were supposed to go in.”

“The first day of practice I was pretty self-conscious. I thought I looked weird. But everybody else was practicing so they didn’t pay any attention to me. They just

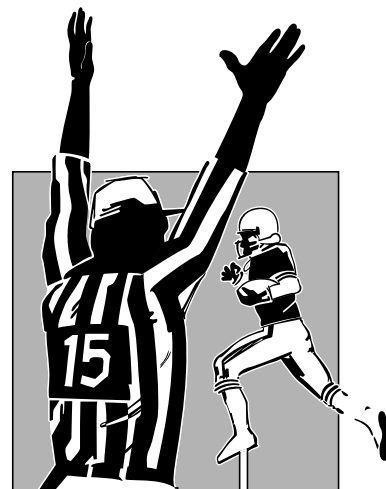
giggled a little bit.”

The diminutive Hill is a sight in all of her pads, but no one giggles when she lines up to kick. Because of her accuracy, Alward had no difficulty accepting Hill into his program.

“As far as her being a girl, that was never an issue,” said Alward, a former offensive guard who played with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in their inaugural season (1976) after a college career at Nebraska. “The question was: Is she going to be capable? This is no novelty thing. I knew she had the leg, but I wondered how she was going to handle the situation.”

Hill’s first test came in a scrimmage against Chesaning. Although no official score was kept, it was obvious that Chesaning had scored one touchdown, but missed the extra point. Goodrich scored on the last play and Hill ran onto the field for her attempt.

“She stroked it right down the middle,” Alward said.



Alward knew then Hill would be fine. But she wasn't convinced until opening night rolled around.

She sat alone on the bus on the way to the game.

"I was very nervous," she said. "I was more nervous than I am before one of my soccer games."



In the opening football game Hill played before more people than usually watch a season's worth of her soccer games. She realized the crowd was big when she went out to attempt her first extra point in the first quarter and heard the noise.

"It's kind of hard to concentrate because everyone is screaming," she said. "You just have to concentrate and keep your head down."

Hill's first attempt was perfect, but she admitted she raised her head and watched the ball go between the uprights.

"That's one of my faults," she said. "I look up too quickly."

The Goodrich fans were aware that Hill was the kicker and they celebrated her first point. She kicked four in the 36-7 victory.

"It was the loudest cheering for an extra point that I ever remember," Alward said.

The defender took a run at Hill on her third attempt. The ball was long gone when the defender hit Hill high and knocked her over.

"My guys jumped on him," she said. "The refs had to break it up. I rolled backwards, but it didn't really hurt. I'm kind of glad I got hit so I know what it feels like. After the game the guy apologized for hitting me."

Because the defender was penalized for roughing the kicker, Alward decided to negate Hill's kick, accept the penalty and go for the two-point conversion. There is an axiom in football that you never take points off the board, but Alward saw how incensed his team had become after the roughing penalty and he knew the two-point conversion was as automatic as one of Hill's kicks.

"The guys were really upset," he said. "There was no way we were not going to

get it. We just ran a quarterback sneak.”

Having her daughter roughed wasn't part of the bargain, but Vickie never saw a thing.

“I had the camcorder and I was making sure the ball went through,” she said. “I heard the people in the audience gasp. By the time I looked she was up.”

Hill had another 4-for-4 outing in Goodrich's 28-7 victory over Byron. By now Vickie is a football fan and is pleased how the players have accepted her daughter.

“The boys are wonderful around her,” she said. “I was afraid the guys on the team would think she was trying to outdo them. I don't know how this would have gone over 20 years ago.”

It might not have gone over well. But this is a different time and through it all, Vickie learned a bit more about her daughter.

“Actually, I'm proud of her,” she said. “Madeline has come out of her comfort zone. Usually she would need two or three of her friends or someone else would have had to do this first.”

Hill enjoys watching movies and has seen a couple in which girls tried to be football players.

“I don't think this is like ‘Quarterback Princess,’ “ she said. “I would say this is kind of like ‘Necessary Roughness.’”

Model Kathy Ireland starred in “Necessary Roughness.” Hill isn't quite ready for a Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue, but opponents have certainly noticed her.

“After the game we go through a line and shake hands with the guys on the other team,” Howells said. “After they shake hands with Madeline, every one of them looks back at her, checking her out. Every one of them.”



Sports Questions

name _____

9

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. How good of a kicker is Madeline Hill according to coach Tom Alward?

2. What did Madeline's mom and dad think about her playing football?

3. What was the first obstacle Madeline had with football?

4. What is one of Madeline's faults when kicking a football?

5. Why did the coach think a two-point conversion was automatic after the roughing the kicker penalty?

Sports Crossword

name _____

9

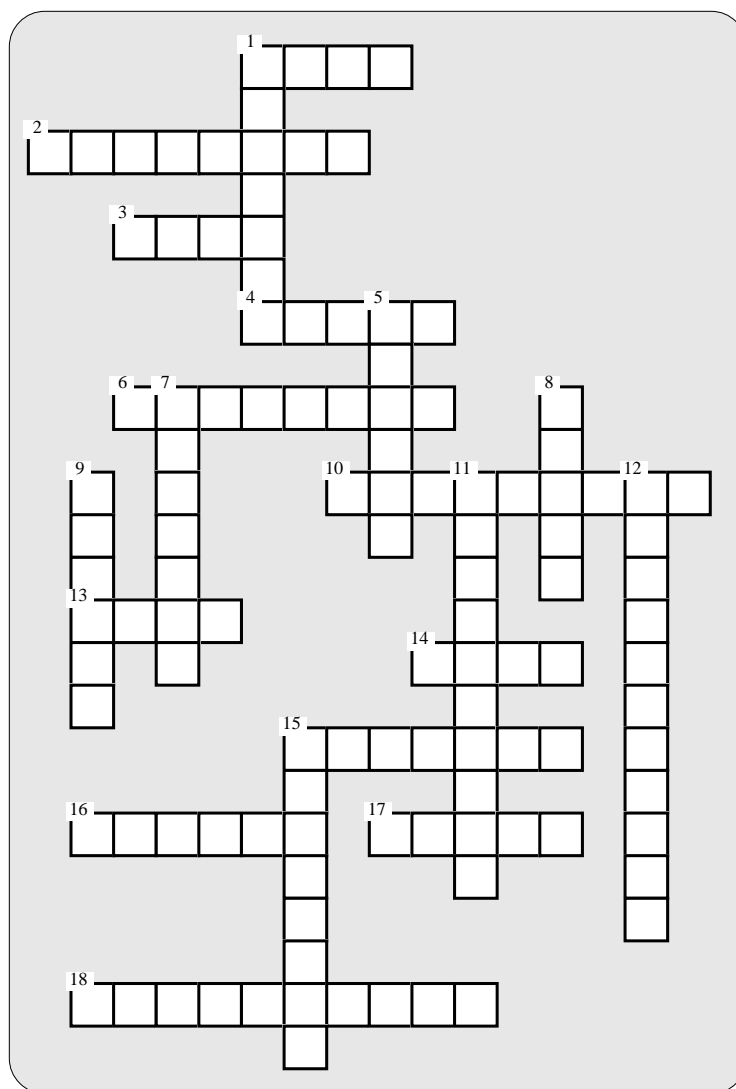
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

1. He is the holder on the Goodrich football team
2. Hill has to kick the ball between them
3. They had to break up a fight on the field
4. Hill knew there was a big crowd at the game because of this
6. Because of this, Hill's coach had no trouble accepting her on the team
10. The defender was _____ for roughing the kicker
13. Goodrich's placekicker is one
14. The placekicker is supposed to keep his head _____
15. The nickname of the Goodrich team
16. The Goodrich coach
17. Hill's mom was very concerned about them
18. Alward played for this professional football team

Down:

1. He was the one who convinced Hill to go out for the team
5. Hill had already proven herself in this sport and was selected to be on the all state team
7. According to her mom, Hill has come out of this zone
8. The way Hill thought she looked on the first day of practice
9. Hill's sister. She helped retrieve balls during practice
11. After the game the player who hit Hill did this
12. Hill didn't want to be _____ in front of the whole team
15. She's the placekicker for the Goodrich football team



Olympic gymnast shadowed by bitter family fight

HOUSTON (AP) - For months, Dominique Moceanu argued with her parents, trying to find out where all her money was going. She never got any answers.

Now the Olympic gymnast has split from her parents. She is hiding out from them and hired a lawyer. She is 17 years old and wants to be declared an adult so she can claim her earnings.



“I kill myself training and going to school, and what is he doing with my money?” Moceanu said in the Houston Chronicle recently, referring to her father. “They haven’t been working since 1996. Where does their income come from? Me.”

Her father threatened to have her Roma-

nian coach deported. That was enough to send her to the office of lawyer Roy Moore who asked a court to declare the gymnast an adult.

Moore said neither he nor his client knows how much money she has earned or how much has been lost. But Moore said a trust that had been set up for her is all but gone.

Moore suspects that trust bankrolled a \$4-million gym and other ventures, including a clothing outlet, under the Moceanu Gymnastics Inc. business title.

If she is declared an adult, Moceanu would be entitled to the earnings from the businesses. A temporary restraining order was issued to keep the gymnast’s parents from her at least until a hearing.

Moceanu, born in Los Angeles in 1981, moved to the Houston area with her parents in 1990 so she could train with Bela Karolyi, the famed coach of Nadia Comaneci, Mary Lou Retton and Kerri Strug.

For the five years leading to the 1996 Olympics, Moceanu trained in Karolyi’s gym. After Atlanta, Karolyi sold his gym and said he was retiring from elite coaching.

So Moceanu’s father, a used-car salesman,

poured more than \$4 million into a new gym and his daughter went from coach to coach before settling on Luminita Miscenco, now credited with reviving Moceanu's floundering career.

At 14, Moceanu was the youngest member of the 1996 Olympic team at the Atlanta Games and is the only member of that team still competing in all gymnastics events. She expects to compete in the world championships next year and possibly the 2000 Sydney Games.



Later, she became the first non-Russian to win the all-around competition at the Goodwill Games.

After months of arguing, Moceanu's father threatened to fire Miscenco and have her deported. With Miscenco by her side, a fearful but determined Moceanu made a second call to Moore from a shopping mall and asked to meet with him. She's been living with friends since.

In her interview with the Chronicle,

Moceanu revealed a darker side to the pixie persona shown at the Atlanta Games.

"Things have been getting rough for a while, a lot of people don't know," she told the newspaper. "We've been trying to keep things hidden."

Moceanu said her life and her relationship with her parents was far different from that of the typical teenager.

"It always had to be about the gym," she said. "I would think, 'Don't you guys know anything besides gymnastics? Can't we go out for ice cream? Can't you be my mom and dad instead of me being your business?'"

The gymnast also told the newspaper her father has hit her a "couple of times."

Despite the legal fight ahead, Moceanu hopes to mend her family life.

"I love my parents," she said. "I hope that after all this is over, we'll be closer than ever. That would be my dream."



Sports Crossword

name _____

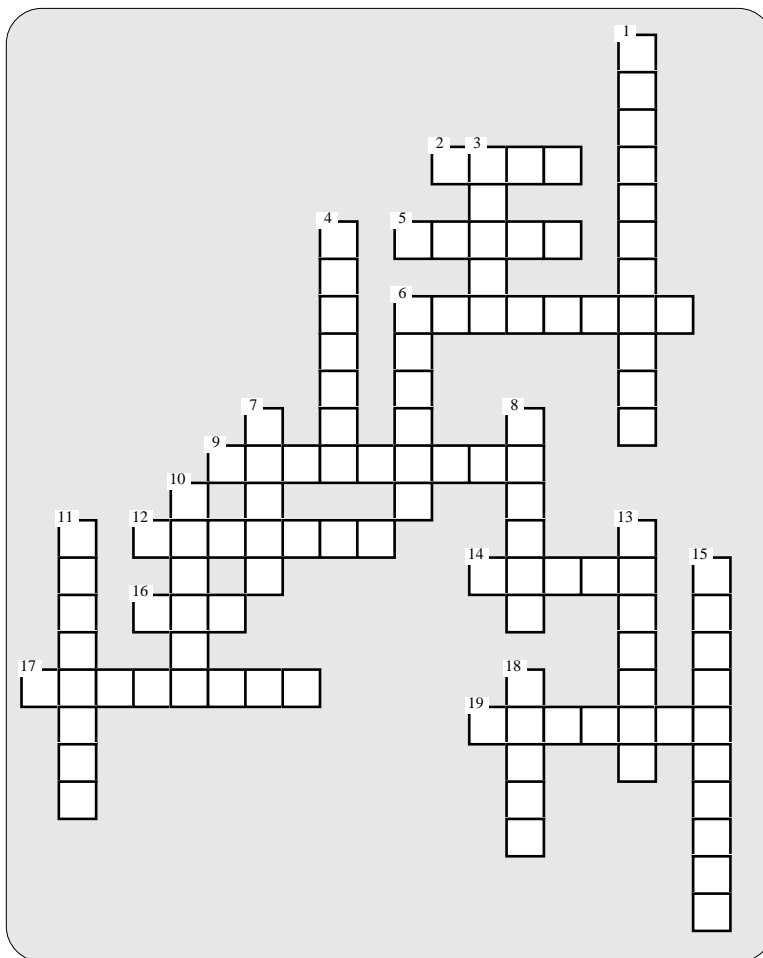
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

2. Moceanu's father used to sell these
5. Moore said a _____ that had been set up for Dominique is all but gone
6. After the 1996 Olympics Karolyi said he was doing this
9. She argued with her parents
12. Dominique is having problems with them
14. He is Dominique's attorney
16. Dominique thinks her parents used her money to build one of these for \$4 million
17. Dominique's father threatened to have this done to her coach
19. The 1996 Olympic games were held here

Down:

1. A temporary _____ was issued
3. Dominique wants to be declared one
4. The Moceanu's moved to the Houston area so Dominique could train with him
6. Dominique became the first woman non-_____ to win the all-around competition at the Goodwill Games
7. This is one of the problems between Dominique and her parents
8. Another famous gymnast who trained with Dominique's coach
10. Moceanu hired one
11. Moceanu's new coach
13. Dominique and her parents must remain separated until there is a _____
15. Moceanu's sport
18. She is a famous gymnast named Kerri

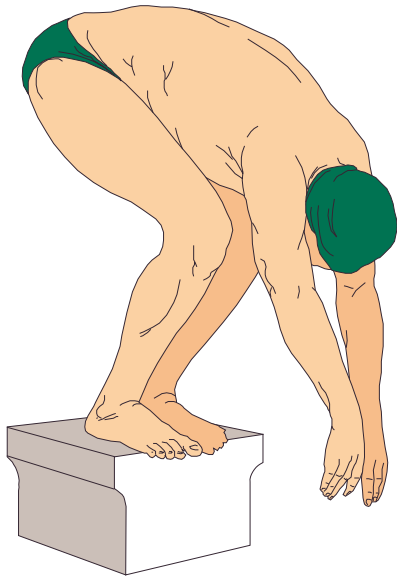


Freestyler joins Web's fast lane

11

The Arizona Republic

At 14, he was rated No. 1 in the nation in his age group in four swimming events. At 16, he was ranked 45th in the world for any age in the 800-meter freestyle.



But those feats are not what landed Thunderbird senior Jamie Richardson in The Los Angeles Times. It was his Web page on the history of the letterman's jacket.

"I wondered why letterman's jackets are worn," he said.

Richardson wears his, although he is modest about the five individual state titles and two relay championships he's collected over the years. He is expected to capture a few more, and possibly set a state record

in the 500-yard freestyle, in the state meet at Arizona State.

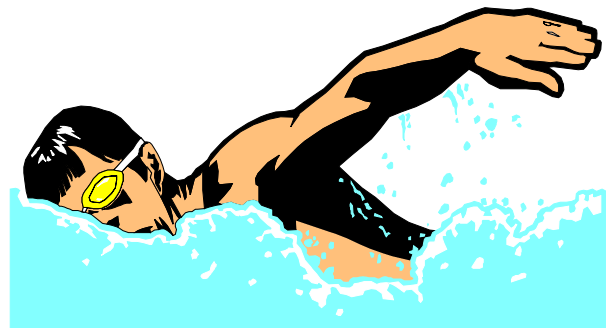
He's already covered that distance in four minutes, 28 seconds, a second faster than the record, set last year by Brophy's Richard Hall — the brother of Olympic gold medalist Gary Hall Jr. But the record can be broken only in the state meet.

Richardson has a bright future in swimming. And maybe an even brighter one in the computer world.

His high school coach, Steve Burke, says he usually has lunch with Richardson in the school's computer lab.

Their conversations tend to drift more toward megabytes than strokes. Richardson has put together hardware and software programs, he fixes computers, he does diagnostics.

"I'm the computer coordinator here, and he knows a lot more about it than I do," Burke said. "He's brilliant on the computer."



So much that Richardson, who is rated 15th in his class and takes mostly college-level courses, created an advanced-placement computer-science course that Thunderbird added to the curriculum this year.

“I talked to some administrators about it, and they said to see what kind of interest there was,” Richardson said. “I got some kids to sign up and we started our own class. It’s hard stuff, but I know it will help me.”

Jim Richardson, Jamie’s father, said his family was still part of the “lead pencil society” when Jamie, at age 12, was given his uncle’s computer, an ancient 1980 model, to play with.



Jamie has upgraded and now has his own Web page and maintains a Web page for the Thunderbird boys and girls swimming and diving program.

“Without offending him, I’d say he’s a techno nerd,” Jim said of his son.

Jamie laughs at the tag.

“It’s like I have the knowledge of a computer nerd,” he said. “I’m pretty social. I guess you could say - computer jock.”

When he’s not swimming or studying, Jamie usually is at his computer, perhaps playing computer chess. And winning.

“I can beat the computer, except for the last two levels,” he said. “I still can’t take it at the grand master level.”

Burke knows better than to challenge Richardson in chess.

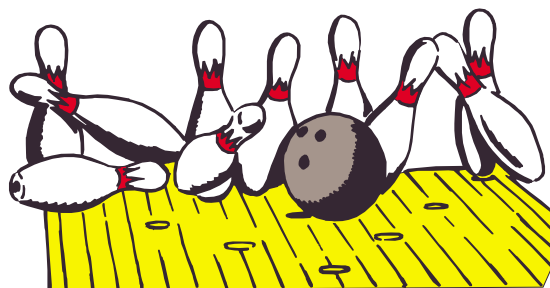
It’s bad enough that a student takes a teacher to school at the bowling alley, but Richardson routinely beats everyone he plays rolling 200-plus games.

“He’s actually the only swimmer I ever met who can bowl,” Burke said. “Swimmers generally are the worst bowlers in the world.”

“They say he loves to dance, too.”

Is there anything Richardson can’t do?

Soon, he will tour Harvard on one of his five official college visits.



It was the Ivy League that started the letter jacket tradition in the 1930s, Richardson said he discovered through his research.

Not many Thunderbird teachers are aware of Richardson's world-class swimming status because he'd rather talk computers with them than swimming.

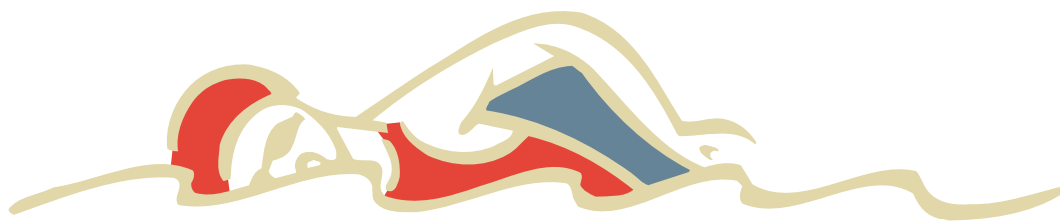
But he still gets up at 5 in the morning three days a week to swim under the tutelage of renowned coach Bob Gillett at the Arizona Desert Fox Swim Club. He swims again in the afternoons.

"My coach always has seen the potential in me," Richardson said. "I've not (physically) matured like he wanted me to. But he always tells me about the great swimmers and what they need to do. He really sees potential."

Who would Richardson rather emulate, though? Mark Spitz or Bill Gates?

His father believes he knows the answer.

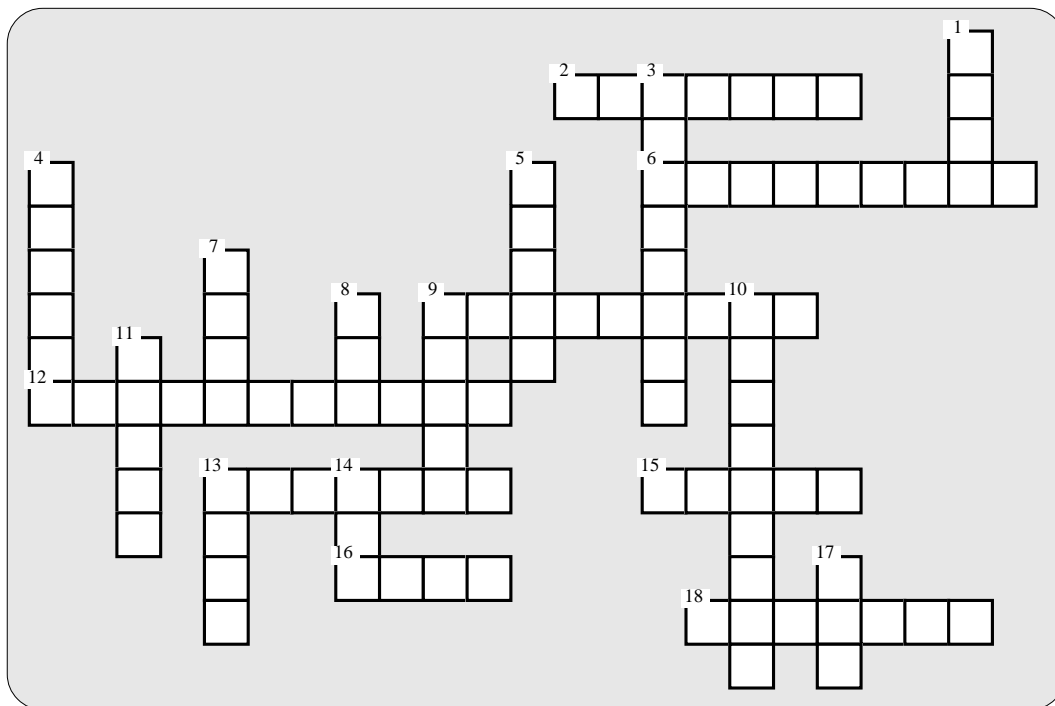
"I think if he had his choice, he'd rather be Bill Gates," Jim said. "But maybe with a medal."



Sports Crossword

name _____

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across:

2. This Hall holds an Arizona state swimming record
6. Lunch conversations between swimmer and coach often drift more toward _____ than strokes
9. Richardson was ranked in the world in the 800-meter _____
12. Richardson's high school
13. Richardson gets up at 5 in the morning to swim with him
15. Jamie likes to play this game on his computer
16. According to Burke, Jamie is the only swimmer he knows who can also do this sport
18. One of the college's that Richardson is thinking about going to

Down:

1. The number of state titles Richardson has won
3. Richardson has a bright future in both the swimming and the _____ world
4. The Arizona _____ Fox Swim Club
5. Jamie's father thinks his son would like to emulate him
7. Jamie's father calls him this
8. Jamie has made a _____ page for the swim team
9. At 14 Jamie was ranked _____ in the nation in his age group in four swimming events
10. Jamie wondered why this jacket was worn
11. He is Richardson's swim coach
13. This Hall was a gold medal winner in the Olympics
14. Jamie often has lunch in the computer _____
17. The _____ League started the letter jacket tradition

Former players get thrills as coaches now

Detroit Free Press

In August 1987, Birmingham Marian coach Mary Lillie Cicerone took her girls basketball team to Western Michigan's team camp.



Thirty-six teams were present, and 33 were coached by men.

In a newspaper story kicking off the girls season that year, Cicerone asked the question: "Where are all the women?"

Well, 11 years later we finally have the answer: They were still in school.

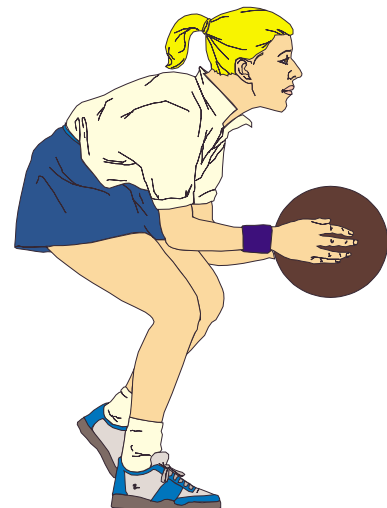
In a 1985-86 survey, the Michigan High School Athletic Association found that women coached only 151 of the 699 girls basketball teams. Today, 152 of the 700 teams have female head coaches. Although the numbers haven't grown, this season might begin to change that. A new breed of women who were outstanding

high school players in the 1980s has turned to coaching.

First-year Okemos coach Christine Pendergast was entering her junior year at Lansing Catholic Central when she attended the Western team camp in '87. A high school teammate, Marcy Gillespie, is the first-year coach at Mason.

Two other former teammates — Kristen Francis-Taylor and Rhoda Esler, who played together at Harper Woods Regina — are also beginning their varsity coaching careers this week, Francis-Taylor at Midland and Esler at Utica Ford. In '87 they were in the eighth grade.

Colleen Lamoreaux, who has turned around the program at East Grand Rapids, was a freshman in college in '87; Wendy Jamula, who coached Utica Eisenhower to an 18-2 record in her third



season as coach, was a sophomore in high school back then.

They have different stories about how they turned to coaching, but all found it a rewarding alternative as their chances to play diminished.

Pendergast and Lamoreaux started early, while still playing at Aquinas College. Pendergast, a guard, and Kim Zydbel, a post player, got together to coach at Grand Rapids Catholic Central. Lamoreaux coached the freshmen at her alma mater, Grand Rapids West Catholic, during her last two years as a player at Aquinas.

“One day my sister, Bridget, said they needed a freshman coach and asked me to coach,” said Lamoreaux, 29. “I didn’t know I knew anything. She said: ‘All you need to do is be there from 3:30 to 5:30.’”

“I remember driving to my first practice thinking: ‘What am I going to do for two hours?’ I mimicked everything we did at college.”

Pendergast, 26, learned quickly that coaching filled a void when she finished her playing career.

“Once you’re a competitor you get to a point where you hunger to be around the sport,” she said. “You get a high you can’t

explain.”

Esler — whose father, Greg, is the boys basketball coach at Warren De La Salle — said she never expected to enter coaching.

“I never thought about coaching until six months after I stopped playing and I knew I couldn’t go back playing,” said Esler, 24, who played at Michigan-Dearborn for three years. “I always thought basketball would be in my life some way. I missed playing — I still miss playing.”

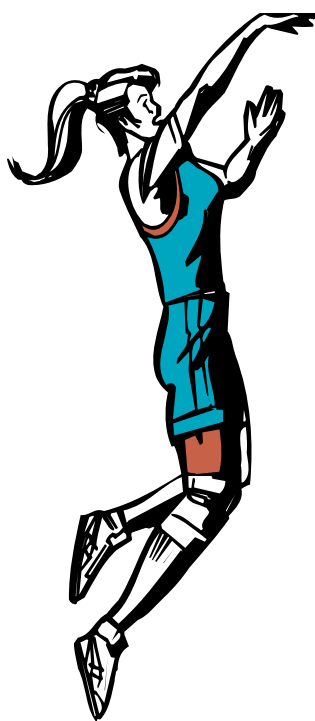
Lamoreaux said coaching beats playing. In her three seasons, East Grand Rapids has finished 6-16, 9-12 and 22-2 with a district championship last fall. The school never won more than six games in a season or a district title until she arrived.

“Now, it takes the place of playing,” Lamoreaux said. “It’s triple better than playing. Seeing what you’re teaching is great. To take

12 girls and make them better is a great feeling.

“You’re a mother, a psychiatrist, a friend. These girls are like your family. Coaching is it. I don’t care if I ever play again.”

Francis-Taylor’s inspiration for coaching began as she played for Regina’s Diane Laffey, who has the most victories of any girls basketball coach in state history.



“She was so nice to her players and the girls liked her so much,” Francis-Taylor said. “Coach Laffey was always having fun in her job. I thought if I could have fun in my job it would be great. And she was more than just a coach. She was a mother figure for us. She would always listen to you.”

“I always try to look back to when I was 15 and 16. I remember how much I looked up to Coach Laffey. If my players look up to me half as much as I looked up to her it would be great.”

Francis-Taylor continued her playing career at Oakland University for Bob Taylor, whom she married last fall.

“I think I became serious about coaching when I got to college,” she said. “At Oakland we did a lot of summer camps. By

the time I got to my senior year I had learned more about the game and really thought about coaching.”

As Francis-Taylor discussed basketball with her future husband, Esler picked up some of the intricacies by attending her father’s games.

“I’ve always been able to look at the game and see what’s going on,” she said. “It’s something natural that came to me.”

Francis-Taylor and Esler inherited struggling programs. Midland did not win a game last season; Utica Ford won three. Despite that, Esler knows she has found her niche.

“Now that I have the bug, I don’t ever want to quit,” she said. “I sit there and analyze practice for an hour and make up my practice plans and change things.”

The new breed has an advantage in that it played the same game it coaches. Some of the women’s predecessors played six-on-six basketball in the early 1970s, in which only two players on each team were permitted to cross halfcourt. An earlier version limited the number of times a girl could dribble before she had to pass the ball.

Lillie Cicerone, an all-stater from Coopersville, and Waterford Our Lady of the Lakes’ Anne Rexford, an all-stater from Pontiac Catholic, were among the first to coach in Michigan after having played five-on-five basketball. They were also two of the few female role models



for players back then, and the new breed of coaches wants to make sure today's girls have more of them.

"I remember a girl in college who played for Mary Lillie at Marian and how much she respected her,"

Pendergast said. "I remember going to a camp and playing for Kathy McGee (of Flint Powers). She was such a great motivator and I only had her for a week.

"I remember she drove this yellow sports car. I wanted to be just like her. I still have the letter she wrote me after camp was over. She really made an impression on me."

Jamula, 26, was an all-stater at Taylor Center, where she scored 2,077 career points, 10th best in state history. Coaching was always an ambition for her.

"I remember playing school when I was little and making my friends do all the work. Maybe that's why they never came over again," she said with a laugh. "I think I became a teacher to become a coach. I've grown up in sports. Sports has been my life. I don't know what I would do

without it."

Although Jamula was an outstanding player in high school and at Northern Michigan, she understands now she could have been even better. Her players benefit — sort of — from that.

"I make my players do things I wouldn't do as a player," she said with a laugh. "I think I focus on my weaknesses as a player — obviously defense. I make my players run all summer. We lift weights. These were things I wish I learned earlier. I realize how much better I could have been if I worked harder."

But Jamula also has found a way to make basketball enjoyable for her youngsters, and they seem to enjoy playing for her.

"The best thing about coaching is I try to give these girls some of the experiences I had," she said. "I liked going to camp when I was a player, so now I took them to camp and they loved it."

"It's like passing something along. Maybe some day they'll be coaches and they'll take their players to camp."

Sports Questions

name _____

12

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. Why might this season begin to change the number of female coaches?

2. Why have women found coaching to be a rewarding alternative to playing?

3. Why does Lamoreaux think that coaching beats playing?

4. In what way does the new breed of coaches have an advantage?

5. How has Jamula found a way to make basketball enjoyable for her players?

Sports Crossword

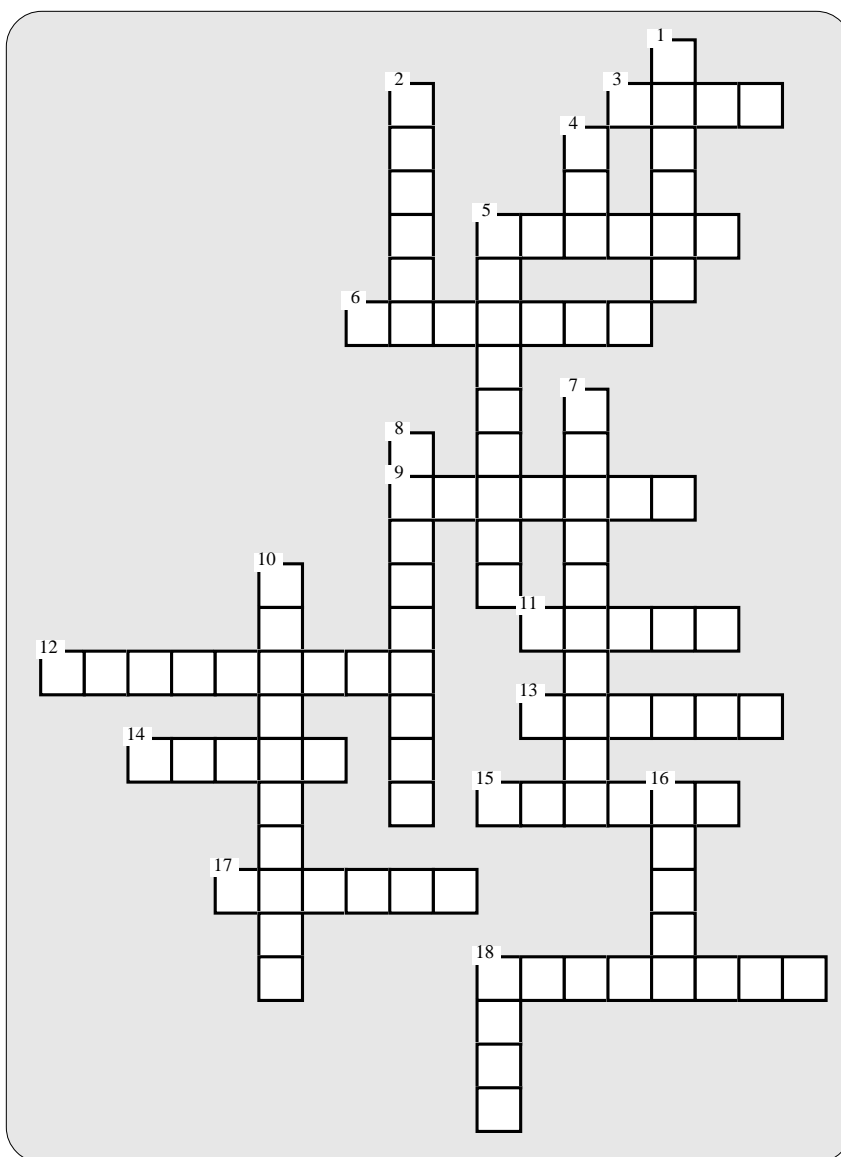
name _____

12

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

3. For some women, coaching filled this after they finished their playing career
5. Pendergast said "you get to a point where you _____ to be around the sport"
6. Francis-Taylor played college basketball here
9. Pendergast and Lamoreaux played at this college
11. A new _____ of women who were outstanding high school athletes has now turned to coaching
12. She is a first year coach at Mason
13. She has the most victories of any girls basketball coach in Michigan history
14. In 1987 newspaper story Cicerone asked "Where are all the _____?"
15. To some, coaching is being a _____, a psychiatrist, and a friend
17. One coach said the girls on the team are like your _____



18. She is an all-state basketball player from Coopersville

Down:

1. Francis-Taylor said Coach Laffey was more than just a coach - she was a _____ figure
2. She scored 2,077 career points
4. Jamula makes her players do this all summer
5. In the early seventies, girls basketball rules would let only two players cross this line
7. She is a first year coach at Okemos
8. She is credited with turning the program around at East Grand Rapids
10. Esler's sport
16. She is going to begin a varsity coaching career at Utica Ford
18. Jamula said she took her girls there and they loved it

Heartwarming story of how Athens star found saving grace in goal

Detroit Free Press

It was only a 25-minute drive, but it seemed like 25 hours.

Mike Robinson and his father, Phil, were returning from their doctor's office almost four years ago with some very bad news.

Mike, an eighth-grader at the time, had gone in for a physical so he could play basketball. It was just one of the sports Robinson played, and he played them all well.

His favorite was soccer. "My parents tell me I used to walk around the house kicking a ball when I was two," he said.

Robinson began playing on organized teams when he was 6, advanced through the Vardar club teams and became something of a hotshot defender after starting out as a forward.



He had progressed so well on defense that he hoped to make Troy Athens' varsity as a freshman — no small feat considering Athens has one of the state's elite programs.

But everything changed the day Robinson heard the doctor's report.

"The doctor noticed I had a heart murmur," Robinson recalled. "He said I had a slight leak in a heart valve. He said it could be a problem later in life and I should cut out sports completely."

Robinson could have lived with cutting out baseball, basketball or hockey, but not soccer. Not for some slight leak.

"It was an aortic valve," said his father. "The doctor said that over time the conditioning would cause stress on the heart and it could hasten the day the valve would wear out."

"The doctor said it was the daily conditioning that was the problem. He said as long as he wasn't doing the daily conditioning he could play the sport."

Of course, playing soccer without the daily conditioning would be like expecting someone who hasn't run in years to complete a marathon. No chance.

On the ride from the doctor's office in Bloomfield Hills to his home in Troy, Robinson thought his soccer days were history.

"It was a blow for him," Phil said. "Quite honestly, it wasn't pleasant for me, either. I thought it would be a shame if he gave up a sport he liked so much."

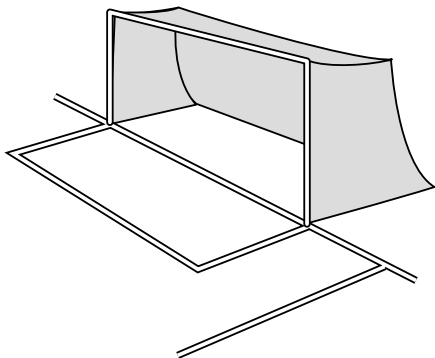
The two didn't say much in the car until Phil had an idea: "What about goalie?"

Mike didn't reply. He was too distraught to entertain such a ridiculous notion. Besides, his youth team already had a goalie.

But over time Mike came to embrace the idea, and with the new high school season under way, he is the top-rated goalkeeper in the state. He led Athens to a state championship last season and could become the first goalie to receive the Mr. Soccer award.

"I felt I couldn't ever play again," Robinson recalled of that day in the car. "I enjoyed playing all of the sports and then I couldn't. So I pretty much felt I didn't have much left. I had lost hope."

But he kept remembering his father's idea.



One day, Robinson attended his youth team's indoor game and the goalie wasn't there. He gave it a shot.

"I was wearing regular pants and my tennis shoes," Robinson recalled. "I don't think I did much."



But he did something. He played again, and then he realized that maybe his father was right.

From that moment on, Robinson thought of himself as a goalie.

He switched to goalie on his club team, but didn't go out for the Athens team as a freshman, choosing to remain with his youth team and work with goalie coach Mark Hamilton.

Robinson didn't want to set foot on the Athens field until he was ready, and he figured a year of training with Hamilton would better prepare him for high school soccer.

"You can't just jump in and dive for everything," Robinson said. "You have to learn technique."

Tim Storch, who has coached Athens to

four boys state championships and three girls state titles in his 18 years as coach, had been aware of Robinson since the seventh grade. But he was aware of Robinson the defender, not Robinson the goalie.



“As a field player, he had a real strong reputation,” Storch said. “But when he had to completely change gears like that I didn’t know what would happen. It would be like a real good right wing hockey player saying he was going to play goalie. You kind of hold your breath.”

When Robinson went out for the Athens varsity as a sophomore, Storch already had two quality goalies — junior Luke Spreitzer and sophomore Jared Tietz. But he decided to keep three that season.

Robinson played in a few games as a sophomore, and at the end of the season Storch called in Robinson and Tietz and told them their fine play had forced him into a major lineup switch. He was moving Spreitzer to a field position.

Last season Robinson and Tietz alternated through the regular season, but the Red

Hawks seemed to play better with Robinson in goal. When the state playoffs began, Robinson became the No. 1 goalie.

Early in the Division I tournament, Athens and Birmingham Brother Rice were tied after regulation and two overtime periods. The game went to a shoot-out, but remained tied after five shooters from each team had kicked. Then it went to a sudden-death shoot-out, and Robinson finally made a diving save to give Athens the victory.

“I dived to my left and got both my hands on the ball,” Robinson recalled. “I looked up at the side ref and he said it was a good save. Everybody rushed the field.”

A few weeks later he repeated his shoot-out heroics when Athens beat Warren De La Salle in the semifinals, and then delivered championship No. 4 as Athens upset top-ranked and previously unbeaten Plymouth Salem.



Athens was an unlikely champion. The Red Hawks began the tournament unranked and with a 10-4-4 record. But Robinson’s play in goal inspired his teammates and coaches.

“Early in the season Mike had a standout

game against Troy, and that is when the team believed in him,” Storch said. “But it wasn’t until the other coaches and the media saw his performance against Brother Rice that they realized he was an outstanding goalie. Then he repeated that feat against De La Salle!”

Proving that his play in the state tournament was no fluke, Robinson led Vardar III to the under-16 national championship this summer. He was voted the tournament’s most valuable goalie.

It is quite a stretch for a guy who, almost four years ago, thought his playing days were over.

“Every once in a while when I see someone make a bad play I get frustrated and say to myself: ‘I could have done that better,’” he said.

But, just for the sake of argument, let’s say that at Robinson’s next physical the doctor says his leaky valve isn’t leaky anymore. Let’s pretend the doctor says he can go back to daily conditioning and do anything he wants.

Would he go back to playing defense?

“No, I don’t think so,” he said with a laugh. “I’d still stay a goalie. I like it. It’s fun back there.”



Sports Questions

name _____

13

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. What bad news did Mike Robinson get from his doctor's office nearly four years ago?

2. Why did the doctor tell Mike that he would have to cut out sports completely?

3. What was his father's idea in order to keep Mike involved in hockey?

4. When Mike decided to switch to goalie why didn't he go out for his high school team?

5. Would Mike go back to playing defense ever, even if he got a clean bill of health?

Sports Crossword

name _____

13

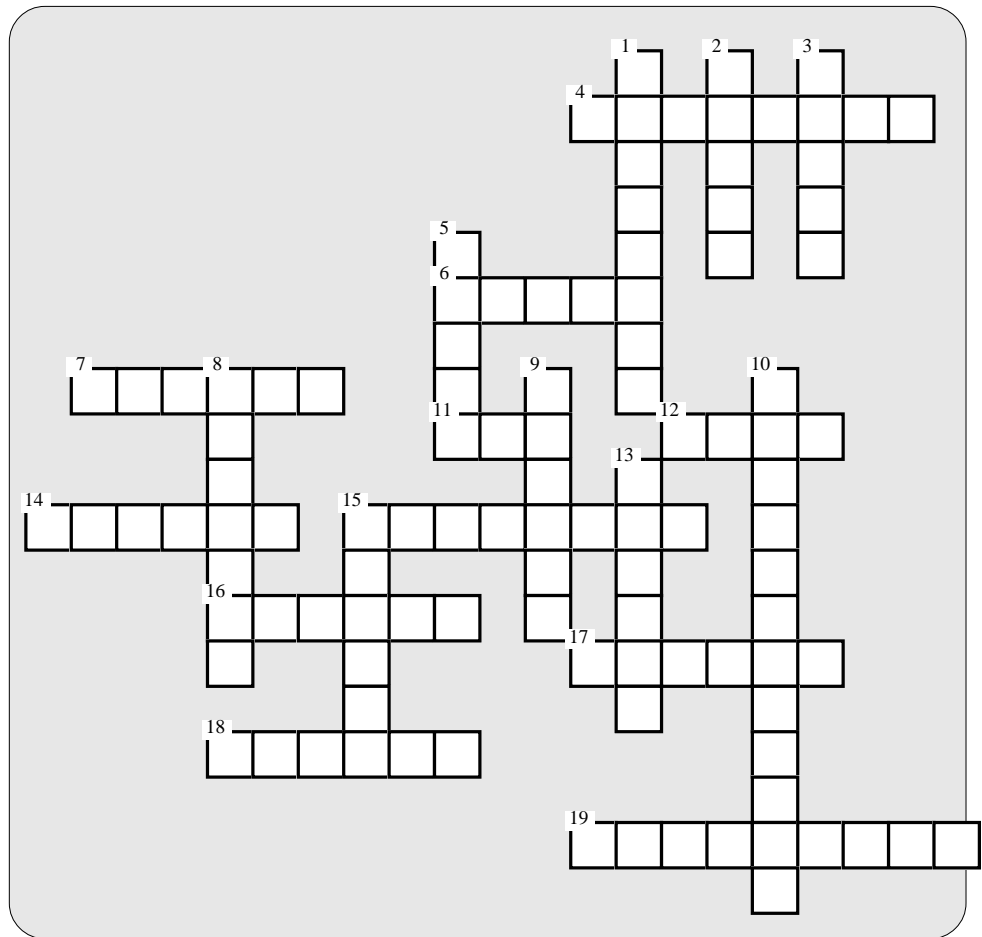
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

4. Robinson could have lived with cutting out this sport
6. This is the organ in Mike's body that is causing him a problem
7. Mike advanced through the _____ club teams
11. Robinson used to walk around his house kicking a ball when he was this age
12. Mike's hometown
14. Mike's favorite sport
15. There would be no chance for someone to run in one of these if he or she hasn't run in years
16. The Athens soccer coach
17. Robinson's new position
18. When he was in eighth grade Mike was told he should cut out all of these completely
19. Robinson did not go out for the high school team his freshman year because he wanted to learn this

Down:

1. Mike's coach on his youth team
2. Between both boys and girls teams, Coach Storch has this many state titles
3. The nickname of Mike's soccer team is Red _____
5. Robinson made a save in a sudden-death _____-out
8. Mike's position before his heart problem
9. The doctor said this valve might wear out
10. The doctor told Mike that daily _____ was the problem
13. Everything changed for Robinson the day he heard the report from him
15. The doctor noticed that Robinson had a heart _____

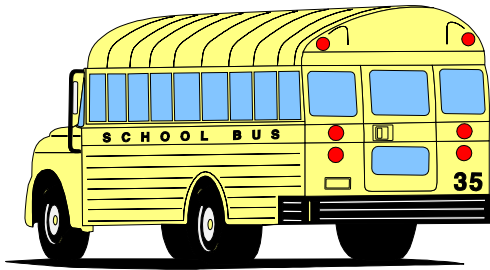


Team tennis, anyone?

Torrey star excels in individual sport, but covets schoolmates

San Diego UNION-TRIBUNE

Anne Meigs sits at the front of the bus when her Torrey Pines High tennis team travels to away matches. Despite her distance, the longtime coach can't help but hear and feel the dynamics that describe her team.



Sometimes it's the rhythm of an old sixth-grade camp song that shakes the silence or a trendy joke which evokes bolts of laughter. Every once in a while the girls will peer out the windows, pointing out potential dates.

For Kari Olsen, those days were vivid in her mind. As a freshman and sophomore she experienced that camaraderie, but last year Olsen took a season off from high school tennis. Her game improved working out daily with her teaching pro while traveling to highly touted tournaments. But she couldn't replace the adventures aboard the big yellow bus.

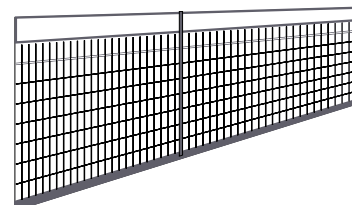
"I missed that most," said Olsen. "That's

where you get to know your teammates."

It's common for top-notch teen-age players to quit high school tennis after a year or two — a lack of consistent competition being their primary reason. In fact, the latest trend is for athletes to home school, giving them more time to devote to tennis. This season alone, five of the county's best players have chosen that option.

Olsen, on the other hand, is a rarity. She's already won one CIF-San Diego Section title when she and sister Kirsten captured the doubles title in 1996. Individually, Olsen is ranked 12th in Southern California Girls 18s. Yet, those accomplishments weren't enough for the senior. She was seeking a support system, a stress reliever.

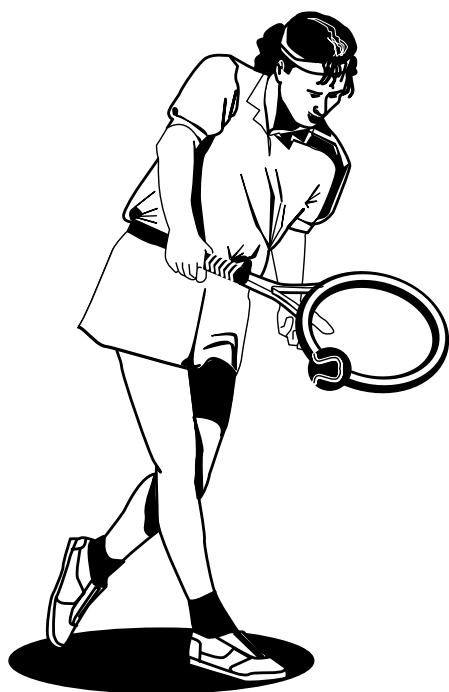
"I missed having so many people behind you, cheering for you," said Olsen. "When you're playing individual tournaments everyone's against each other. Being on a team takes a lot of pressure off. They don't care if you win or lose. It helps psychologically more than anything. You know you're not alone in this sport."



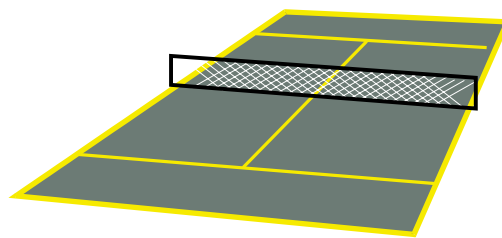
Even though she wasn't competing on the Falcons squad last fall, Olsen's heart was still attached to the group. She would constantly ask her former teammates: "How are we doing? Did we win?"

The Torrey Pines girls continued to win even without Olsen, claiming their seventh straight team title last season. Olsen continued to succeed, too.

She played in four big events, including the National Indoor Championships, which is attended by several college coaches. In addition, her four-hour-a-day, six-day-a-week workout helped elevate her ranking.



Her teaching pro, Andy Volkert, spent much of the time drilling her and keeping her in condition. He witnessed her all-around advancement, but still encouraged



the decision to return to the high school ranks.

According to Volkert, winning the CIF singles title is one motivation, but maintaining a school tie through sport is equally important.

"There's a benefit to being with teammates, and she can help them out through her actions," said Volkert. "Tennis is very, very important to Kari, but she's found a balance."

Coach Meigs runs a flexible program that fosters individual improvement. With the approval of team members, Meigs schedules one mandatory practice a week. On the other days, players have the option of going to their private coaches for lessons or attending outside clinics.

Because not all the players attend every match, Meigs carries 17 athletes on the varsity. Only nine girls compete in a match, but last year 21 players saw action and lettered for Torrey Pines.

When Olsen approached Meigs about returning this season, Meigs not only was excited to have her No. 1 player back on the campus courts, but she missed Olsen's pleasant personality, too. While she never held any hard feelings, Meigs felt it was a

team decision, so she held a meeting with the seven returning varsity players.

According to Meigs, there wasn't much discussion. Without any dispute, all responded with a resounding 'yes,' welcoming Olsen back with open arms.

"Kari's an admirable person," said team co-captain Heather Shelby, who ranks 67th in SoCal 18s. "She's helped me a lot with tennis and she's fun to have around . . . She's gone through all the big tournaments and it's something to look up to."

Olsen relishes the prominent position, yet still maintains a humble spirit. She remembers how her first two years at Torrey Pines were influenced by the upperclassmen on the team.

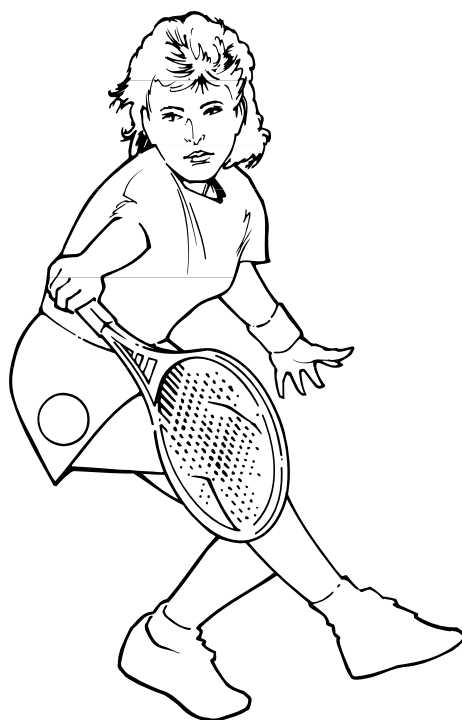
"All the seniors were great role models,

really responsible," said Olsen. "They really showed the younger people how to act. That was real important."

"Now I'm one of the older people so it's kind of nice to have people look up to you and not be the little runt on the team anymore."

Olsen is a giant in the eyes of college coaches. Her 4.2 GPA is a fine complement to her powerful forehand and swift serve. William & Mary, which finished last season ranked eighth in the nation, No. 9 BYU, No. 16 Arkansas and Washington will entertain her on recruiting trips.

"Physically, she hits the ball as well as anybody, and she has an all-court game," said Volkert. "She's a late bloomer. When you've got as many weapons as she's got it takes time to learn to use everything. Her best years are ahead of her."



name_____

14

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. Why did Kari Olsen take a year off from high school tennis?
2. What did she miss the most about being part of the high school team?
3. Why do top-notch teen-age players quit high school tennis after a year or two?
4. Why was Coach Meigs excited about the return of Kari to the team?
5. What makes Kari such a good catch for college recruiters?

Sports Crossword

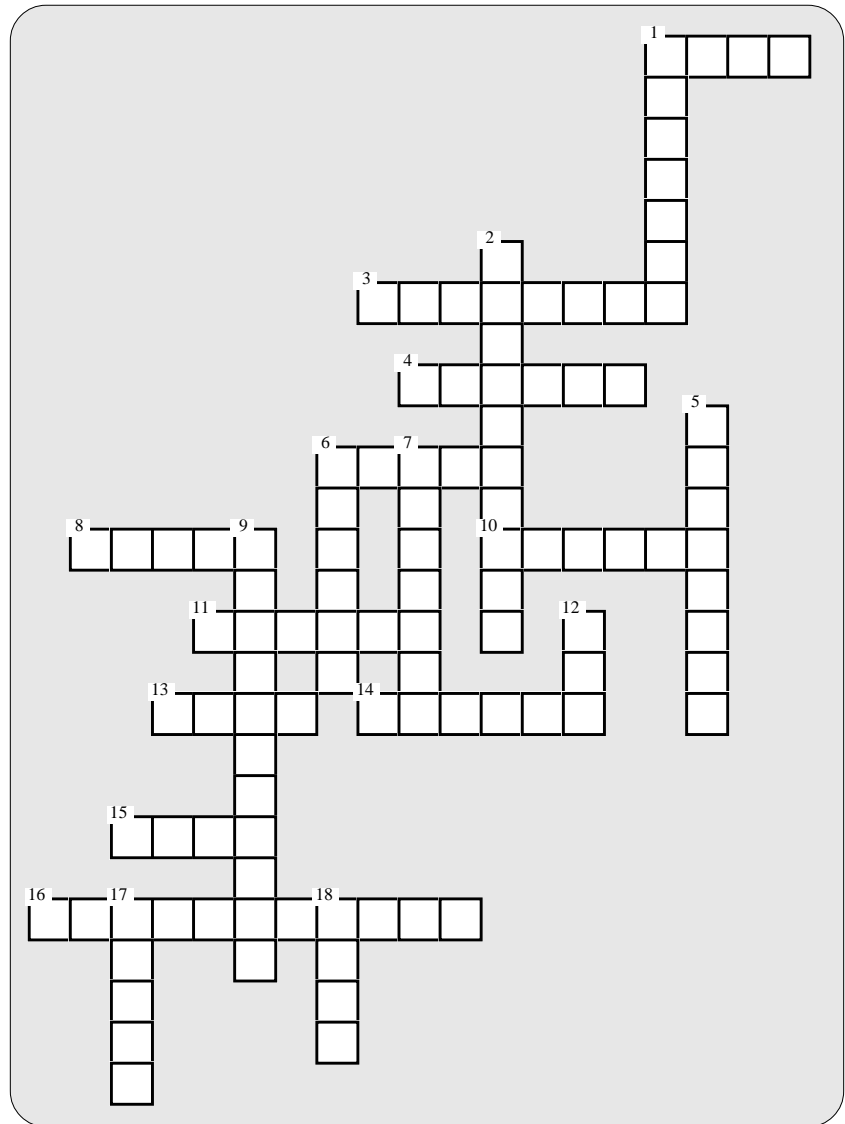
name _____

14

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

1. This number of top players have taken off the school year so they could devote more time to their tennis
3. Coach Meigs can't help but feel the _____ that describe her team
4. According to her coach, maintaining a _____ tie is very important
6. The number of straight team tennis titles for the Torrey Pines girls
8. Where Meigs sits on the bus
10. Anne Meigs coaches this sport
11. Olsen relishes the prominent position on the high school team, but remains _____
13. Kari said it was nice not to be the little _____ on the team
14. Olsen was seeking a _____ reliever
15. Olsen remembers how the seniors were great _____ models
16. A lack of this often causes top-notch players to quit their team after a year or two



Down:

1. The nickname of Olsen's high school team
2. This is one school interested in Kari
5. According to Kari, being on a team takes a lot of this off
6. She is a co-captain of the tennis team
7. Kari's teaching pro
9. Kari took a year off from high school so she could travel to these
12. What Olsen missed the most during her year off
17. Olsen's high school coach
18. Meigs felt letting Kari back on the high school team was a _____ decision

THE SOLITARY RIDERS

EQUESTRIAN: Despite high costs and a lack of recognition these athletes remain devoted to their sport.

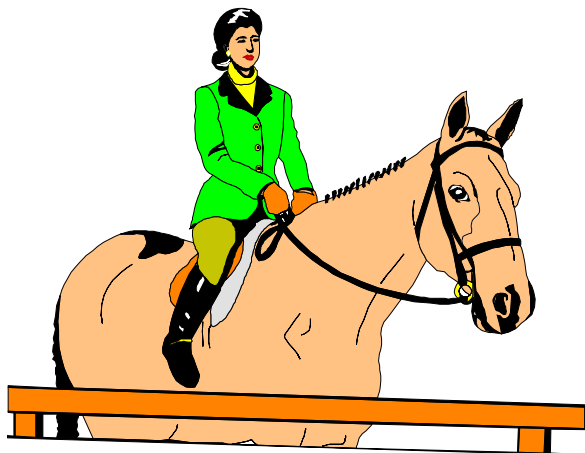
The Orange County Register

Newport Harbor's Crystal Bridgman spends her afternoons on the athletic field of her choice.

Unlike many of her high school friends, Bridgman doesn't head for tennis courts, football fields or gymnasiums.

The 17-year-old senior's field of dreams has stables and corrals, jumping fences and horse rings, necessary items as she pursues her passion for equestrian horse riding.

Bridgman isn't alone. Rosary senior Sarah McDonald and St. Margaret's freshman Krystalle Glosser are among a growing number of high school-age athletes making both the time and financial commitment to become a success at equestrian riding.



"We have been getting more riders involved every year," says Diana Ramsey, who helped found the Interscholastic Equestrian League in 1993. The IEL holds seven shows a year for junior and senior high school-age riders in Orange County.

The IEL's first shows of the season recently at the Orange County Fairgrounds attracted 110 riders from an estimated 40 schools for the two days of competition.

Ramsey hopes for even more riders and more schools soon when the IEL holds its third of eight shows at the Orange County Fairgrounds. Then IEL has scheduled shows for later in the school year.

WANTING RECOGNITION

For many of the riders, their connection to their school's athletic program ends when the name of the school is announced.

Ramsey says only 12 county schools recognize equestrian even as a club sport. Santa Margarita and St. Margaret's, two private schools in South Orange County, recognize it as a sport, giving students physical education credit and offering athletic letters for successful riders.

Other schools such as Marina, Newport Harbor and Corona del Mar offer a form of athletic letter (different from those of-

ferred to CIF sports) for equestrian riders, but treat it as a club, rather than an athletic team.

Others don't go even that far.

"I'd like to earn a letter but it's not recognized at school," said McDonald, who was the leading scorer at the two most recent IEL shows. "I mention it at school a lot but no one takes it seriously, except my boyfriend."

Ramsey and the IEL have tried to persuade other schools to accept the sport, but understand why many are hesitant.

"We've never asked schools to spend a dime on the sport, just give their students a chance to gain some recognition and maybe earn a letter," Ramsey said. "At first I was surprised at how many people still said no, but they worry about precedent and are probably are concerned about the potential for costs as well."

COSTLY TO COMPETE

No one can deny the demands, both in time and finances, the sport makes on its adherents.

One of the biggest costs is the horse. A young rider might get a horse for \$1,500, but most go for between \$5,000 and \$10,000. And as the athlete improves,

better trained horses also must be found and the price continues to rise.

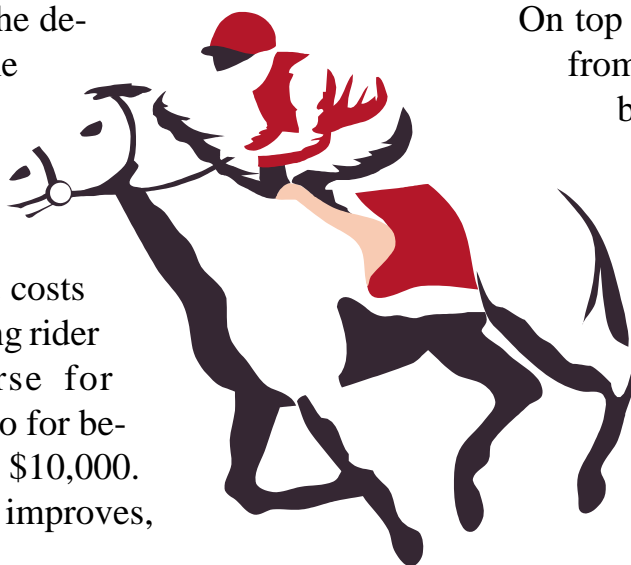
"A good high school horse can cost up to \$30,000," says Vickie Bridgman, who has bought two horses for Crystal and is considering buying her third.

Many riders avoid the cost of buying the horse by leasing instead, but it can still mean \$400 to \$600 a month.

"Buying the horse is really the cheapest part of equestrian," says Carolyn Glosser, who has bought three horses for 14-year-old Krystalle over the past nine years.

The horse must be stabled and fed, which can cost between \$300 and \$450 a month, a cost that continues even if the horse or rider are injured or there are no competitions. Veterinarian bills can mount quickly if the horse gets ill or is injured.

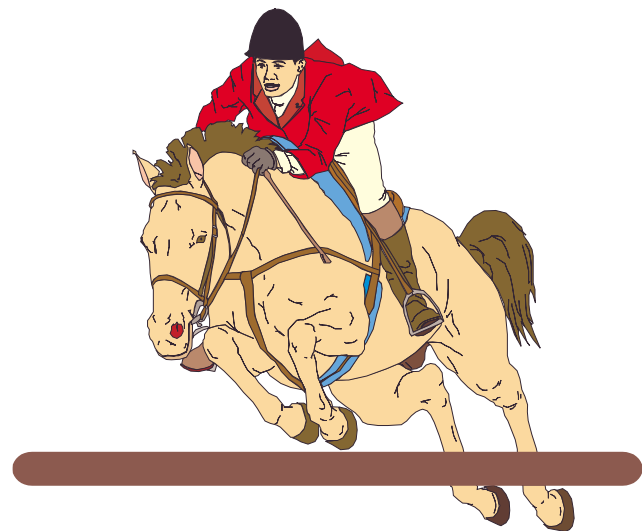
Other costs include proper riding gear (\$400), boots (\$200 to \$400), helmet (\$100), gloves and belt (\$50).



On top of those costs are lessons from trainers, who work with both horse and rider to create a winning team for both IEL meets and the numerous other equestrian shows offered throughout the year. Those costs can range from \$15 to \$50 and riders can take as many as six lessons a week.

TRY TO LIMIT COSTS

Actual competition can hit the pocket book as well. Transportation for the horse to shows can cost between \$50 and \$100 depending on distance, and the horse must be stabled at the site for a two-day meet. That means another \$20 to \$30.



All shows also have entry fees for each class that range from \$25 to \$250 depending on the complexity of the jumping barriers and whether prize money is awarded.

Ramsey says IEL tries to limit these costs, charging only \$15 per class and using volunteers to run their shows.

“We have some of the younger riders who compete only in IEL as a cost-saving move,” said Ramsey.

All those bills do add up.

“I had a daughter who was into ice skating, with three coaches and everything ice skating entails,” says Vickie Bridgman.

“People have an idea on what a sport like that costs, but it has absolutely nothing on equestrian.”

LOVE FOR THE SPORT

There are advantages as well, however, including the love the riders have for both the sport and the horses they ride.

“I don’t know where it comes from but I’m massively obsessed with horses,” Newport Harbor’s Nicole Hoyt said.

The high school freshman has been riding horses since she was 3 and an equestrian competitor since she was 6.

She was impressive at last week’s IEL show, winning six blue ribbons in jumping.

“I like the bigger horse shows (that are open to all age groups) because I get more competition,” Hoyt says. “IEL gives me a lot of practice, though, and I like the idea of getting points and support my school in something I really love to do.”

Hoyt, who also plays on Newport’s fresh-



man tennis team, works with the Edgar Pagan Show Jumping Stable in San Juan Capistrano. She visits her horse, Eternal Luck, every day after school and tennis practice, spending two to three hours grooming or riding her horse.

“My days consist of school, riding, and then back home to sleep,” Nicole said. “It’s tough not having much of a life, but its worth it because I want to be really good at this, I want to go to the Olympics and I want to be a grand prix rider (the highest rung of equestrian competition).”

IT’S IN THE BLOOD

McDonald knows where her interest in horses comes from.

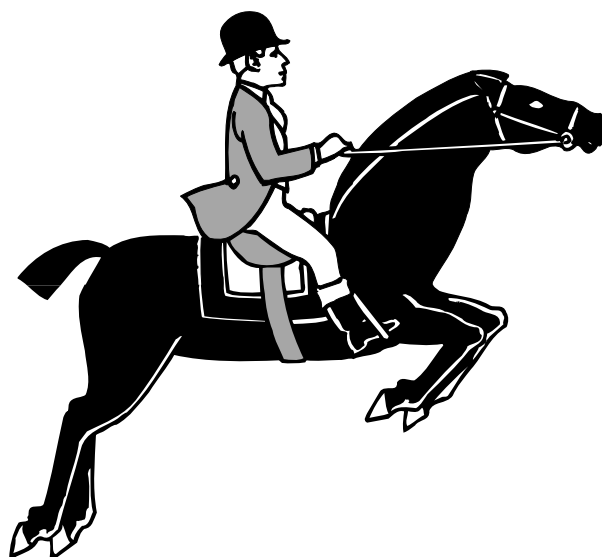
“I guess I’m following in the steps of my uncle and mother,” McDonald said. Her uncle ran To and Fro Farms in Hunting-

ton Beach before he died and her mother, Janet, took over the business. Janet now helps run First Field Barns in Cerritos, where she also trains equestrian riders, including her daughter.

McDonald estimates she spends 30 hours a week at her stables, working with her horse and others.

McDonald, who swept the flat course events and the Medal class (a combination of flat course and jumping) at last week’s IEL meet, says her goal this year is to win American Horse Show regionals and qualify for the national finals next spring.

“My ultimate goal is to be a vet, concentrating on horses,” McDonald said. “This (equestrian) is a long-term help toward reaching that goal.”



Sports Questions

name _____

15

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. Why are Crystal's interests different than most of her friends?

2. How do some schools recognize equestrian as a sport?

3. What reasons do some schools give for not recognizing equestrian as a sport?

4. Why is equestrian such an expensive sport?

5. What is Crystal's long term goal?

Sports Crossword

name _____

15

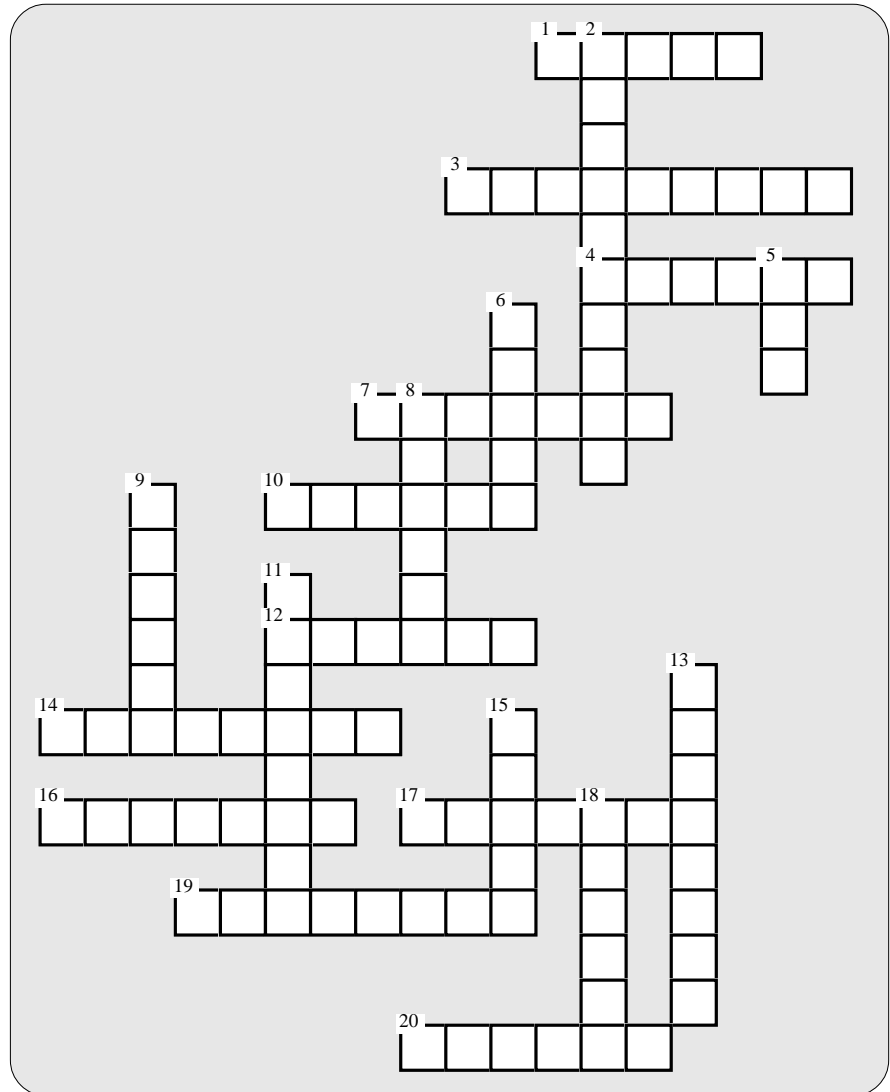
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

1. This class is a combination of flat course and jumping
3. No one takes McDonald's sport _____ except her boyfriend
4. The number of schools that recognize the equestrian sport
7. The name of Hoyt's horse is _____ Luck
10. The _____ County Fairgrounds attracted riders from about 40 schools
12. She helped found the Interscholastic Equestrian League
14. One of Nicole's goals is to compete at this level
16. She wants St. Margaret's to start up an equestrian sport
17. The price of the horse is only part of the total cost because it needs to be _____ and fed
19. Hoyt said she is massively _____ with horses
20. This is one item a participant must have and it costs about \$100

Down:

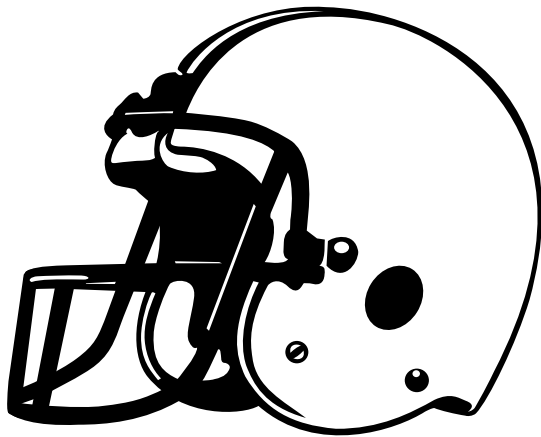
2. The name of the sport that involves jumping horses
5. McDonald's ultimate goal is to be one
6. You have to have one of these to be a success at equestrian riding
8. This is Hoyt's other sport
9. McDonald's school
11. Riders get lessons from them
13. Crystal _____
15. The highest rung of equestrian competition is to be a _____ prix rider
18. The "L" in IEL



Robbed of football by leukemia senior inspires Adams as coach

Detroit Free Press

It was the summer of '96, and sophomore Jerry Dixon was ready to make an impact on the varsity football team at Rochester Adams.



As a freshman he had started at linebacker on the junior varsity and played so well he was motivated to lift weights and run four or five days a week that winter and spring.

He then worked out all summer in hopes of making a good impression on the coaches during preseason practices.

“Football was my life,” he recalled with a wistful smile.

Football is still his life, but it has taken a different form than he ever imagined. In-

stead of playing the sport he loves, Dixon coaches it. And he is only a senior in high school.

This is a story about a remarkable young man who looked leukemia in the eye and didn’t blink. It also is a story about a high school football coach and his players who rallied around one of their own and gave him a sense of belonging.

It began in 1996, when Dixon wore down as the practices wore on.

“Jerry was such a good athlete, he could run all day long,” Adams coach Jim DeJaeger said. “But all of a sudden, during our running drills he was bringing up the rear.”

“I knew I was in better condition than I was my freshman year,” Dixon said. “But I was breathing heavy and I was gasping for air. I could never get enough air.”

Dixon’s doctor thought the youngster might have exercise-induced asthma and prescribed an inhaler, but Dixon then became dizzy and lightheaded after running.

Dixon next underwent blood tests, and the initial diagnosis was anemia. The doctor suggested he take a week off from football and sent his blood work to a hematologist (blood specialist) at Crittenton

Hospital.

“The doctor said it could be a ton of things,” Dixon said. “I could have had a viral infection or anemia or leukemia.”

Doctors did bone marrow tests, just to be safe. The night before Labor Day, Dixon had a high fever and his parents spoke to the doctor.



“My mom just listened and kept saying: ‘Yeah ...yeah ...yeah,’ Dixon said. “She had a bad look on her face. I knew something was up.”

After speaking to the doctor, Dixon’s mother, Kitty, tried to speak to her son, but burst into tears. His father, Brad, had to be the one to deliver the news about the leukemia.

“Of course I was shocked,” Dixon said. “You know people are out there with cancer, but you never think it will be you.”

The doctors wanted Dixon hospitalized that night, so he went up to his room to pack. Maybe he was naive about leukemia and the number of lives it claims each year, but Dixon decided then and there that he was going to beat cancer.

“I didn’t know what was ahead, that was the scary part,” he said. “But I knew there was a challenge ahead and I was ready to start at square one.”

As Dixon lay in bed a few days later it dawned on him how difficult the fight could be.

“One night in the hospital I lost it,” Dixon said. “I was crying. It sunk in that I had cancer and things were going to be different.”

“There was maybe one day he was distraught,” his mother said. “He realized: ‘I could die from this.’”

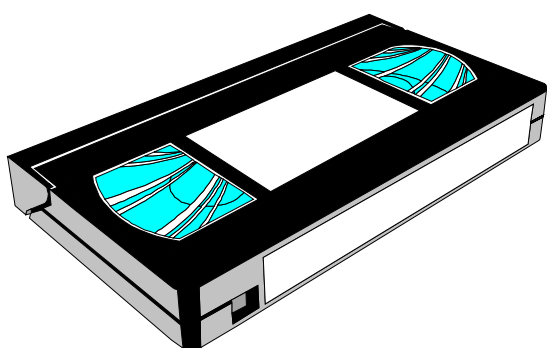
But Dixon’s resolve deepened, and a mediport inserted in his chest made it easier for him to receive chemotherapy. He was home in 10 days.

“That’s a record,” he said. “Normally, you’re in four to six weeks. One 5-year-old kid was going to break my record, but he was in for two weeks.”

Although he was at home, Dixon was unable to return to school until months later, after spring break. But the football team didn’t forget about him as it played the

1996 season.

“When Jerry was in the hospital, the whole team came to visit him,” Kitty said. “Every week the coach would come to see him and bring him the game film. There was a time he couldn’t come in contact with many people because his immune system was bad. But the coach arranged for us to park our truck up on a hill so Jerry could see the games.”



“They announced Jerry’s name when he was at the games and the football parents sent him cards. We are so appreciative of Coach DeJaeger. He’s been very important to our family.”

Dixon improved his grade-point average to a cumulative 3.81 while he was home. He was enthused as he returned to school, but then he received the toughest setback of all. He learned he could no longer play football.

“My doctors said I could play football, but they meant flag football,” Dixon said. “When I told them what kind I wanted to play they said no way. If I got hit near the mediport I could bleed internally and die.”

Dixon returned to the team last fall but felt more like a water boy than anything else. Then DeJaeger and assistant Frank Buford had an idea.

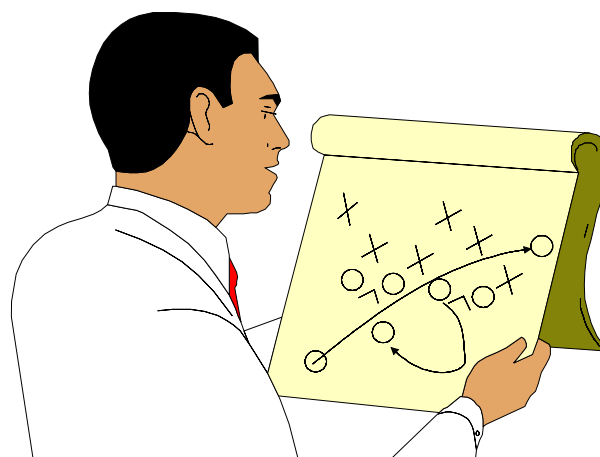
“We were looking for a way to keep him involved, keep him meshed with the kids,” DeJaeger said. “Frank suggested letting Jerry run the demo team’s defense. Frank came up with the title demo defensive coordinator.”

The demo team practices against the offense, mimicking the defense that the coaches expect the opponent to play in the next game.

It was a far cry from being a starting linebacker, but Dixon attacked the assignment with his usual passion and proved this was not a scheme cooked up just to keep him happy. He really does coach.

“I looked at it as an opportunity to do something,” he said. “After a while I started to take some pride in it.”

DeJaeger noticed.



“Frank and I and Jack Beall, our other assistant, stand on one side with the offense and Jerry’s all by himself with the demo kids,” DeJaeger said. “Jerry’s got a neat personality. He can direct and lead his peers without being a bully or yelling at them.”

One of Dixon’s prize pupils last season was Joe Krajewski, a reserve offensive guard whom Dixon turned into a star on the demo defense. He now is a starting defensive tackle on a team that is 3-0 and ranked No. 5 in Class AA.

“I was second- or third-string last year,” Krajewski said. “Playing on the demo team is not one of the highlight jobs on the team. But Jerry makes you enjoy it and feel good about it.”

“He inspired me to practice hard and give my best every day.”

Krajewski remembers Dixon as a standout player who suddenly became ill. Now Dixon is a coach.

“We look at Jerry more as a coach than a classmate,” Krajewski said. “We know he is our classmate, but we respect him as a coach.”

As he coaches, Dixon still has checkups and treatments twice a month. He is not out of the woods.

Anthony Mileski, a teenager from Rochester who also had leukemia, passed away.

“It came so close to home, it just as easily could have been Jerry,” Kitty Dixon said. “It was such a sad, sad thing. The boys had a lot of things in common. The doctors thought they would hit it off and they did. It was a very, very difficult thing to deal with.”

Dixon struggled to accept Mileski’s death as he battled to get well.

“It was scary, but I couldn’t take it personally,” he said. “I had to keep a wall between me and it. I was sorry for his family, but I couldn’t let it get to me.”

If all goes well, Dixon can stop his chemotherapy treatments in soon. Until then doctors must keep a careful watch on his blood count.

“I try to act as normal as I can,” Dixon said. “I like it when people forget I have something wrong with me. When the doctors tell me something has to be done, I do it because I just want to get well.”

And, in his own way, help Adams make the state playoffs.



Sports Questions

name _____

16

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. How did coach Jim DeJaeger know that something was wrong with Jerry Dixon?

2. What did the team do to show that they cared about Jerry when he was in the hospital?

3. After Jerry got home from the hospital what was his toughest setback?

4. How did Jerry's coaches keep him involved in football after he could no longer play?

5. What event was scary to Jerry?

Sports Crossword

name _____

16

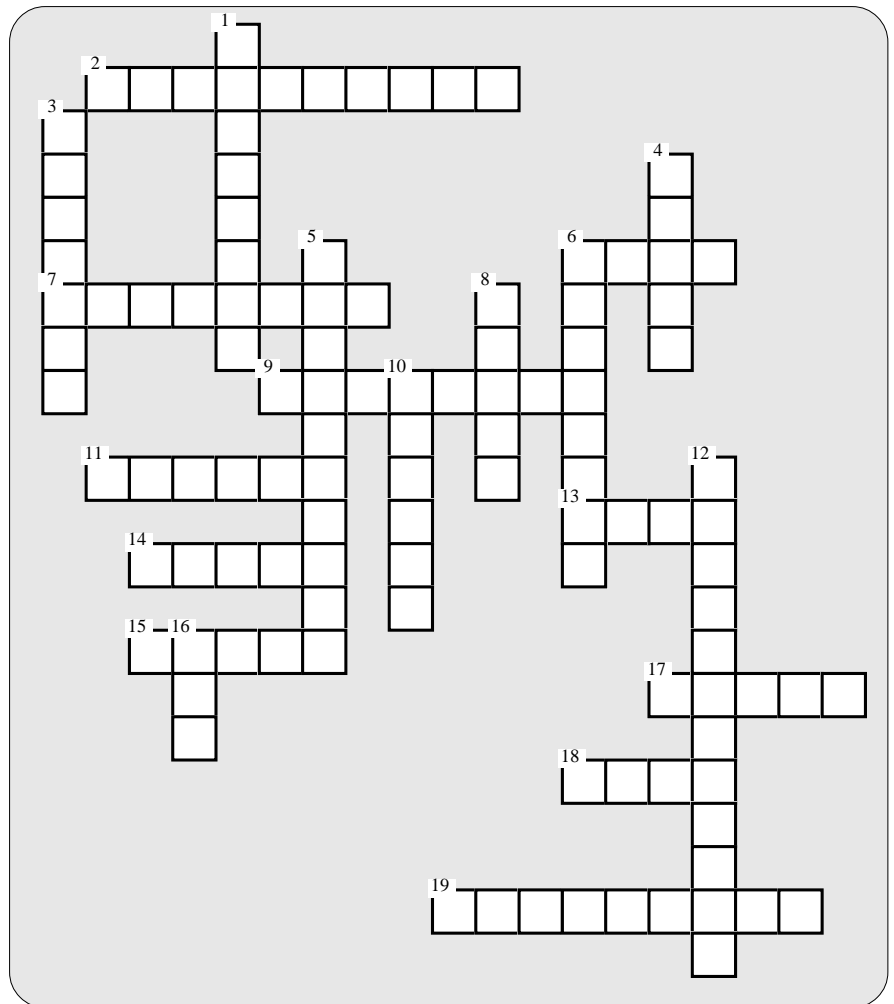
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

2. Jerry's doctors told him if he got hit near his mediport he could bleed _____ and die
6. Every week while Jerry was out of school his coach brought him the game _____
7. The doctors discovered Dixon had this disease
9. Doctors put one in Dixon's chest so he could receive chemotherapy
11. At first doctor's thought Jerry might have this medical problem
13. Dixon said football was his _____
14. When Jerry was sick he would watch the football games from a _____
15. When Dixon first returned to the team he felt more like a _____ boy
17. Dixon's current role on the team
18. This team practices against the offense
19. He was one of Jerry's prize pupils

Down:

1. He is the Adams football coach
3. This was first prescribed by a doctor who thought it might help Dixon
4. DeJaeger said Jerry can direct his peers without being one
5. When Dixon played football this was his position
6. Dixon's sport
8. Dixon underwent _____ tests, and the first diagnosis was anemia
10. Jerry could not come in contact with people because this system was bad
12. A specialist who studies blood
16. Dixon said he could never get enough of this



The Arizona Republic

The motorhome sits near a barn on a Cottonwood property, not far from Mingus Union High School. There is no television or phone. Just a microwave and a refrigerator.

That's all Mike Epperson, the school's athletic director and head football coach, says he needs. That and the stars.

Sometimes, after leading his team on the field, Epperson will climb on top of the home, which was lent to him by a player's father, kick back in a chair, watch the heavens and wonder how his son, Travis, is doing in football some 100 miles away at Gilbert Highland.

"We've nicknamed him 'Gonzo,' for the doctor on the TV show who lived out of a motorhome in a parking lot," said Ronda Epperson, Mike's wife. "He's making the best of it. He really enjoys the community over there."



But, as Mike says, it's a long way from Highland High, where he was the head football coach the past five years and where his son now plays quarterback. And it's tough on those nights after losses and there is nobody to come home to.

Mike Epperson has won for most of his 20 years in the business, including the last two playoff seasons at Highland. But this year at Mingus, which is rebuilding after going undefeated and capturing its first 4A state football crown last year, there have been just two wins and four losses so far.

Meanwhile, Travis, a senior, is part of a quarterback rotation and the kicker on a 5-0 Highland team that will try to end Mesa Mountain View's 33-game winning streak soon.

"I don't look for him on the sideline, but sometimes I wonder how he's doing," Travis said of his father. "I wonder what's going on with him. I can't dwell on it, because I'll get away from what I need to do on the field. Mostly, when I mess up, I wonder what my dad is doing."

Travis brings home tape of his games for Dad to see when he returns to his Gilbert home on weekends. One of the tapes includes him being crowned homecoming king.

"Like any dad, like any parent, you love seeing your kids participate," Mike said.

“You miss out on those things.”

“When I’m there, I just try to enjoy my family. I sit down and watch his game tape. I get a charge out of watching him. It’s great being with the family at that time.”

In time, family will be reunited in one home. Ronda said the plan is to sell their house and move to Cottonwood this summer, after Travis graduates.



For now, Travis has become the man of the house, getting up in the wee hours to check on noises for his mother and 12-year-old sister, Tess.

“He’s getting good at that,” Ronda said.

Mike and Ronda gave Travis the choice to stay in Gilbert and finish at Highland or move to Cottonwood after Mike was hired.

Travis said it’s difficult not playing for his father, but his decision had little to do with football. He is well-rooted in the school, where he is senior class president and has a strong network of friends.

“I don’t think I could find better friends,” he said. “They’re great examples for me.”

Mixing colors

While a hundred miles of desert and rolling hills separate the Eppersons, there are families across the Valley mixing school colors in spin cycles.

A Panther lives with a Mustang and a Coyote. A Matador eats at the same dinner table with a Husky. There are boasts and claims and promises.

While Jeff Krohn completes passes at a 67 percent clip for Horizon’s third-ranked football team, his sister, Jana, chases Misty Hyman’s butterfly records in the swimming pool at Paradise Valley district rival Shadow Mountain.

With Shadow Mountain’s sudden football resurgence, Jana can trade barbs with her brother. Jeff played his freshman and sophomore years at Shadow Mountain before he transferred last year.

“We joke around,” said Jeff, a senior. “Now that Shadow is 5-0, she says, “They’re going to beat you.””

Jana, a junior and one of the nation’s top young swimmers, said her classmates still talk about how Jeff shouldn’t have left. She said it was no big deal to her.

“I’m the one who got the harassment from my Shadow friends,” Jeff said.

At the Strack home in Peoria, Dave goes off to Peoria High, where he teaches and coaches the boys basketball team; his wife,

Andrea, goes to Sunrise Mountain High, where she works as assistant principal; and son Mike goes to yet another Peoria district school, Centennial, where he is the football team's star quarterback and basketball team's starting guard.



"It's funny," Andrea said. "Mike will say, 'Dad, I'm going to light it up against you.'"

He did last year in a basketball game. After being held to two points in the first half, Mike scored 19 points after the break to lead the Coyotes to a comeback victory over his father's team.

"It's nice to beat him and have bragging rights around the house," said Mike, a heavily recruited quarterback who set a state record for passing yardage in a game last year.

"We have some good conversations around the dinner table," Dave said. "It's all in good fun."

Mike said he wanted to play for his father but didn't feel like leaving his friends at Centennial after Dave got the head coaching position at Peoria after Mike's freshman year.

It's safe to say that Andrea Strack has been in Mike's camp all these years. She often is asked where her allegiance goes on game nights.

"My answer is, 'Hopefully, my husband will coach longer than my son will be in high school,'" she said.

Recently, when Centennial's football team played Sunrise, Andrea traded her Sunrise purple and white for Centennial red, white and blue and watched from the Coyotes' side as her son passed his team to victory and she was teased good-naturedly.

"All week, I got razzed from the athletes," she said. "They'd say, 'We're really going to get your son, Mrs. Strack.' I'd say, 'He's used to being a target.'"

"It's fun."

All in the family

In the end, blood is thicker than school loyalty.

Ronda Epperson surprised her husband when she showed up for Mingus' homecoming.

It was the first time she missed one of her son's games. And it was the first of her

husband's games she's seen this season.

"It's been an adjustment," Ronda said. "We look at it as an adventure. And it's temporary."

Mike Epperson said he's just grateful his team doesn't have to play Highland, where his son splits time at quarterback with Brandon Fitzpatrick.

If they did meet, Mike said, "I'd probably call off all of our blitzes, because I don't want my boy getting hurt."

After she competes in the state swimming preliminaries, Jana Krohn said, she'll go to her brother's game at Horizon when the Huskies meet Shadow Mountain.

Jeff said he thinks his sister probably will be sitting on the Shadow Mountain side, screaming her head off. But for whom?

"If it came down to it, I'd cheer for Horizon, for my brother," Jana said. "That's family."



Sports Questions

name _____

17

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. Why have the nicknamed Mike Epperson, “Gonzo”?

2. How does Travis keep his dad up-to-date on his games?

3. On what basis did Travis make his decision not to move with his father to Cottonwood?

4. Why is the Strack’s considered a family with divided school loyalties?

5. In the end, why is blood thicker than school loyalty for Jana Krohn?

Sports Crossword

name _____

17

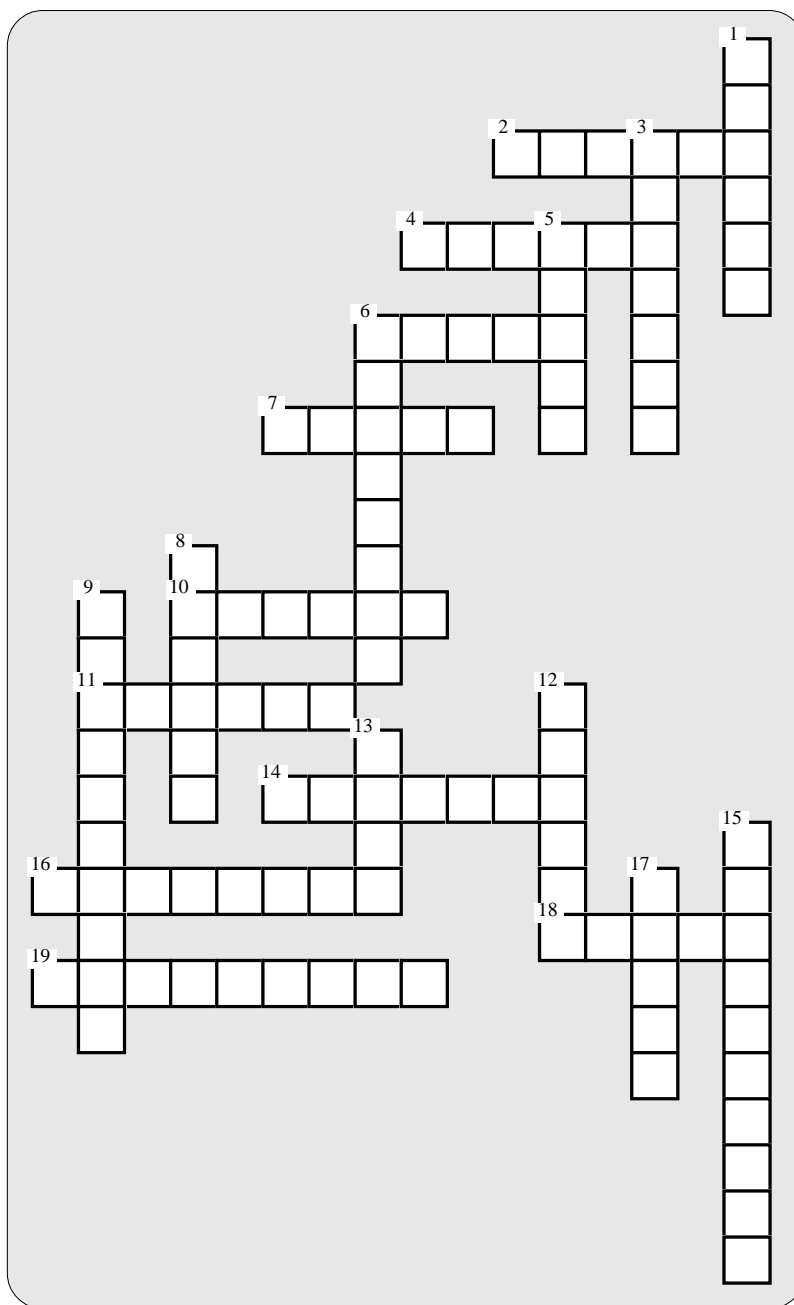
Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.

Across:

2. Mike said he wanted to play for him but did not want to leave his friends
4. One of the duties of Epperson's son when he is on the football field
6. Epperson's nickname
7. Mike Epperson's job
10. The number of years Epperson has "been in the business"
11. Epperson's son
14. Mike Epperson said he would probably call these off if he played his son's team
16. Jana's sport
18. Epperson says all he needs are these, a microwave and a refrigerator
19. Mike Epperson lives in one

Down:

1. Andrea Strack says her son is used to being one
3. The team Jana said she would probably cheer for
5. Jeff _____ goes to one high school while his sister Jana goes to another
6. Before the family can move Travis must do this first
8. At this home, mom, dad and son all go to different high schools
9. Ronda says they will move there soon
12. Epperson says it is especially tough living away from family on nights after these
13. Travis was crowned when he became _____ one weekend
15. Mike Strack's sport
17. Mike brings these home for his dad to see on weekends



It's no mystery for Drew why she plays baseball 18

Cleveland Dispatch

While DaShaunta Drew was trying out for the freshman baseball team at Independence High School, she grew weary of the same old question posed by men and women, boys and girls alike.

“They always asked, ‘Why don’t you play softball instead?’” Drew said. “And I always gave them the same answer: ‘Because I don’t like softball.’ They just don’t seem to get it.”

For the most part, Drew is now regarded by her teammates as one of the guys. She is starting part-time at second base for the freshman team and also has seen time on the junior varsity.

“We don’t cut, but DaShaunta hasn’t been

given any kind of free ride,” freshman/junior varsity coach Tom Cripe said. “She’s proven that she knows the game and she’s held her own.”

Drew, who grew up playing youth baseball on the East Side, knew two years ago she wanted to try out for the high school team.

“During tryouts, I asked the coach if she could play and he said he wasn’t really sure because he hadn’t come across a situation like this before,” said Angela Drew, DaShaunta’s mother.

“Another grown-up piped in and said that since they offer softball, she had to play that. I checked with the athletic director and she didn’t know, so I went to the Board of Education office to find out for sure.

“Mike Rotonda, the Activities director checked with some people and they said since baseball and softball aren’t the same sport, she was free to try out.”

Independence athletic director Regina Crenshaw said while many considered Drew’s interest in baseball unusual, no one complained.

“I was a little leery at first because I think of girls as being more delicate and baseball is a tougher, more dangerous kind of game than softball,” Crenshaw said.



“But the more I thought about it, I supported her. I actually sort of admire what she’s doing. She says she likes baseball. Why shouldn’t she be allowed to play?”

Team members warmed to Drew, who is batting a little better than .200.



“Anything hit to her, she’ll make the play,” Cripe said. “She knows the game inside-out and has an excellent attitude.

“I’d have to say her biggest weakness is throwing, but we can hide that deficiency with her at second because it’s not a very long throw.”

Angela Drew isn’t worried in the least about DaShaunta or any of her other three daughters getting injured in sports.

“Catcher has been her natural position growing up, and she’s gotten cleated in the legs a bunch of times,” she said. “She’s played all kinds of sports all her life, and

getting hurt now and then is just part of the game.”

It also can be part of the game in softball. But DaShaunta, 5 feet 7, 165 pounds, wanted nothing to do with it.

“It’s boring to me,” she said. “Baseball has a lot more action and it’s much more lively.”

Like others, Cripe couldn’t help but wonder why Drew wouldn’t play softball.

“A lot of people were telling her that if she played softball she’d start right away for sure and she’d probably be one of their star players,” he said.

“To tell you the truth, I’ve never really talked much about it with her. I want to treat her just like everybody else on the team. It’s really no big deal to me. The guys on the team have been open-minded about it, too.”

Drew may be planting a seed for her sister, Amanda, an eighth-grader who also loves sports.

“I’m going to play football for the 76ers next year,” Amanda said while her sister was being interviewed. “I’m a running back.”

Amanda is 5 feet 5 and 92 pounds, “but she’s a very fast runner,” Angela Drew said.

Told of her school’s next football prospect, a sighing Crenshaw said, “Oh, boy.”

Sports Questions

name _____

18

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. What is the answer that DaShaunta gives people when they ask why she doesn't play softball?

2. What did the coach say when DaShaunta asked if she could play baseball?

3. Why was DaShaunta free to tryout for baseball?

4. Why was the athletic director leery at first when DaShaunta wanted to play baseball?

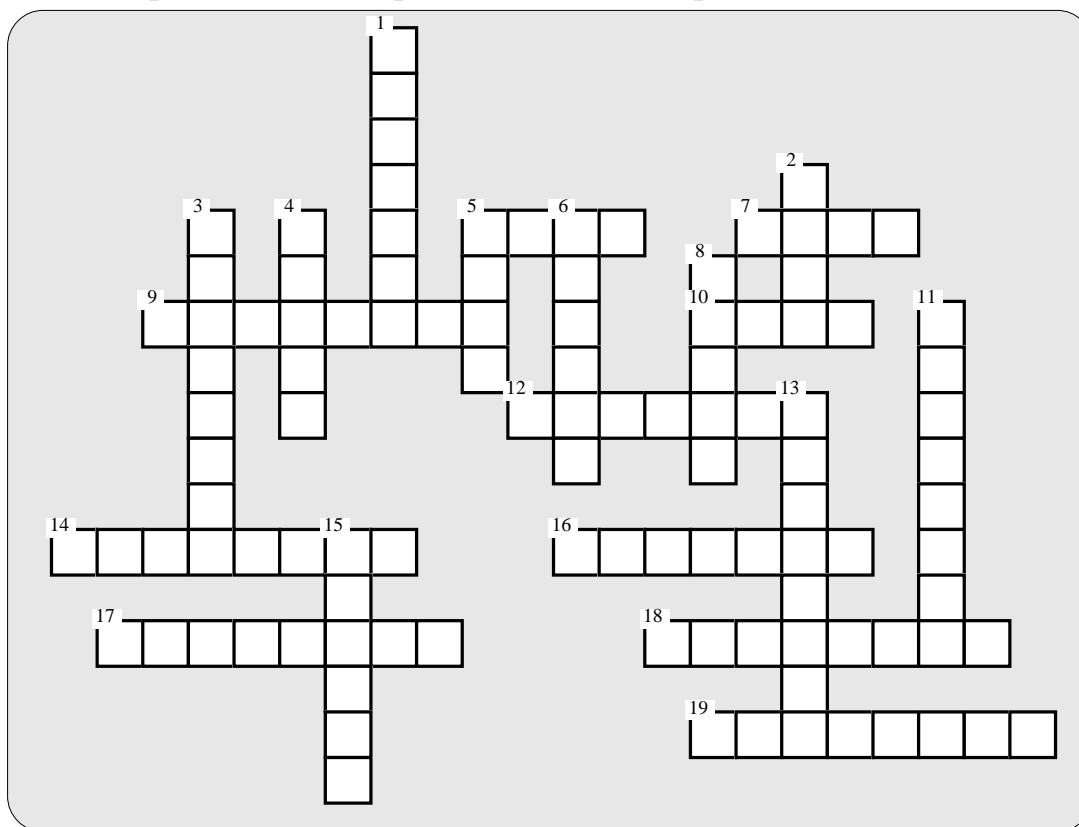
5. What is DaShaunta's biggest weakness as a baseball player?

Sports Crossword

name _____

18

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across:

5. This is one term DaShaunta used to describe her sister
7. According to Rotonda, baseball and softball are not the _____ sport
9. Crenshaw was leery at first because he thinks of girls as being more _____
10. According to the coach, the guys on the team have been _____-minded
12. Angela is not worried about her daughter getting _____
14. She is the athletic director
16. Some say that baseball is _____ than softball
17. DaShaunta's sport
18. Many people kept asking Drew why she didn't play this sport
19. This is Drew's biggest weakness

Down:

1. He is the Activities director
2. According to her coach, Drew has proven that she knows the _____
3. DaShaunta usually plays on the _____ team
4. DaShaunta's coach
5. Drew did not get a _____ ride
6. DeShaunta usually plays this position
8. Angela went to the _____ of Education office to see if her daughter could play
11. DaShaunta's sister plans on playing this sport in high school
13. Drew's mother checked with the athletic _____ but could not get an answer
15. She is DaShaunta's sister

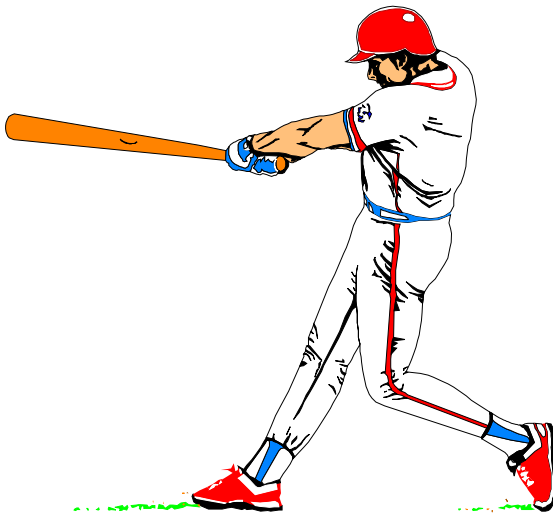
Home run derby

High school players developing a lot of clout

Cleveland Dispatch

Joe Palazzo, the veteran baseball coach at Ready High School, remembers when the last line of defense against a home run typically wasn't de-fence.

Time was, an outfielder's glove usually was there to stop the baseball well short of its destination.



“We put a snow fence up in 1975 and we hit one home run and our opponents hit three,” Palazzo said. “That was it for the year.”

Nearly 25 years later, it's not shocking for two high-school teams to combine for that many home runs in one game. It's readily apparent Mark McGwire and the other bash-full boppers in the major leagues aren't alone in turning fences into yard waste.

The increase in home runs at the high-school level can't match what's happening in the big leagues — where drag bunts seem to leave the park — but no doubt the number of dingers is up.

Watterson coach Scott Manahan has seen a steady increase in his team, from seven home runs in 1994 to 16 in '95, 18 in '96 and 23 last season. Palazzo witnessed similar results since 1990. The Ready team that won the Central Catholic League title in 1990 hit seven homers in 21 games. Last year, the Silver Knights smacked 17 in 28 games.

“It seems the ball travels farther and quicker than it used to,” Palazzo said. “I think it's a combination of the bat and better conditioned, stronger athletes.”

Unlike in the majors, the power surge in high school cannot be explained by a juiced-ball theory, pitching thinned by expansion or stadiums being downsized to accommodate the long ball.

The similarity between the two games, though, is players at both levels, and every one in between, have become more muscular through weight training.

“I ask my kids to lift, and they're getting bigger and are able to drive the ball farther,” Manahan said.

“Where I really notice it is in the uniforms,” Palazzo said. “The ones I ordered when I first started, these kids today can’t fit into them. Kids come in here and you try to give them a large T-shirt and they won’t hear of it. They say they need extra large.”

Bob Haegele, who has been coach at Westerville North for 20 years, said baseball used to be played mainly by smaller athletes.

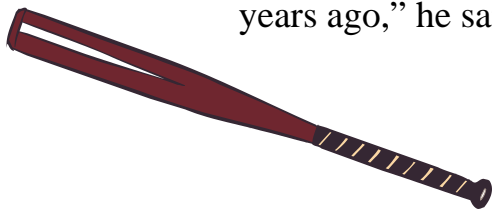
“Now it’s rare to see little guys. They’re big, strong athletes,” he said. “I’ve had to order all new uniforms, too.”

While uniforms stretched, aluminum bats thinned into weapons of destruction against pitchers, turning fly balls into handshakes at home plate. Today’s alloy bats are a vast improvement over the clunky sticks players used when metal became the standard in 1975.

“The early metal bats were like fence posts,” Palazzo said.

Manahan explained the C-1 alloy model by Louisville Slugger houses a balloon-like pad that launches the ball off the bat.

“The bats they have now are a lot different even than what was out five years ago,” he said.



Fences, too, are a lot different — namely that many exist where 20 years ago they didn’t. Places in which 350-foot shots once were tracked down in an endless outfield installed fences that turn triples into homers.



Sometimes, the opposite is true.

Homer binges aren’t a trend only in high school and the major leagues. College players crank them out, too. At Ohio State, though, home runs are down the last two seasons, in part because the Buckeyes left cozy Trautman Field — where the wind always seemed to blow out — for spacious Bill Davis Stadium.

“Since we’ve moved to the new facility, it seems the wind always blows in from left or center,” Ohio State University coach Bob Todd said.

The Buckeyes belted 64 homers last season after hitting 79 in their final season in Trautman. The decline, however, can’t be blamed totally on field dimensions.



After starting the decade with 51 homers, the Buckeyes jumped to 79 in '91, but fell back to 53 the next season.

The record high of 94 came in '94, and homer output decreased each of the last three seasons — 85, 79, 64 — which supports Todd's thinking that home runs have more to do with talent than bats and brawn.

"Everything runs in cycles. When we played in '93, '94 and '95, we had some very talented players," he said.

All the talk about home runs gets on Todd's nerves. He discounts most high-school homer statistics because so many variables are involved — condition of the field, use of fences — and bristles when discussing the weightlifting issue.

"The person who lifts a lot may end up being stronger and able to hit more home runs, but it doesn't necessarily mean it's going to make him a better hitter or

player," Todd said.

Indeed, there's no question home runs don't automatically win championships.

When Ready went to the state tournament in 1984, it did so by hitting just two homers. Haegele's teams that reached the regional and state in the '80s never hit more than a dozen homers in a season. This season, Westerville North has 14 homers in 13 games.

And what do pitchers say about all this? Fair is fair. If a hitter can lift weights to swing faster, a pitcher can pump iron to throw faster.

Dublin Scioto coach Phil Callaghan figures it all evens out.

"Guys are becoming more athletic, but that's happening with pitchers, too," said Callaghan, who hasn't noticed a drastic increase in home runs. "You look at guys on the hill and some are animals."

Maybe so, but for the moment many of those animals have their tails between their legs.

Home runs are embarrassing to watch when you have to turn your head.



Sports Questions

name _____

19

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. According to Coach Palazzo, how often would there be a home run in 1975?

2. What kind of increase in home runs has Coach Manahan from Watterson seen in recent years?

3. What does Coach Manahan think are the reasons for the increase in the number of home runs?

4. How have bats changed since 1975?

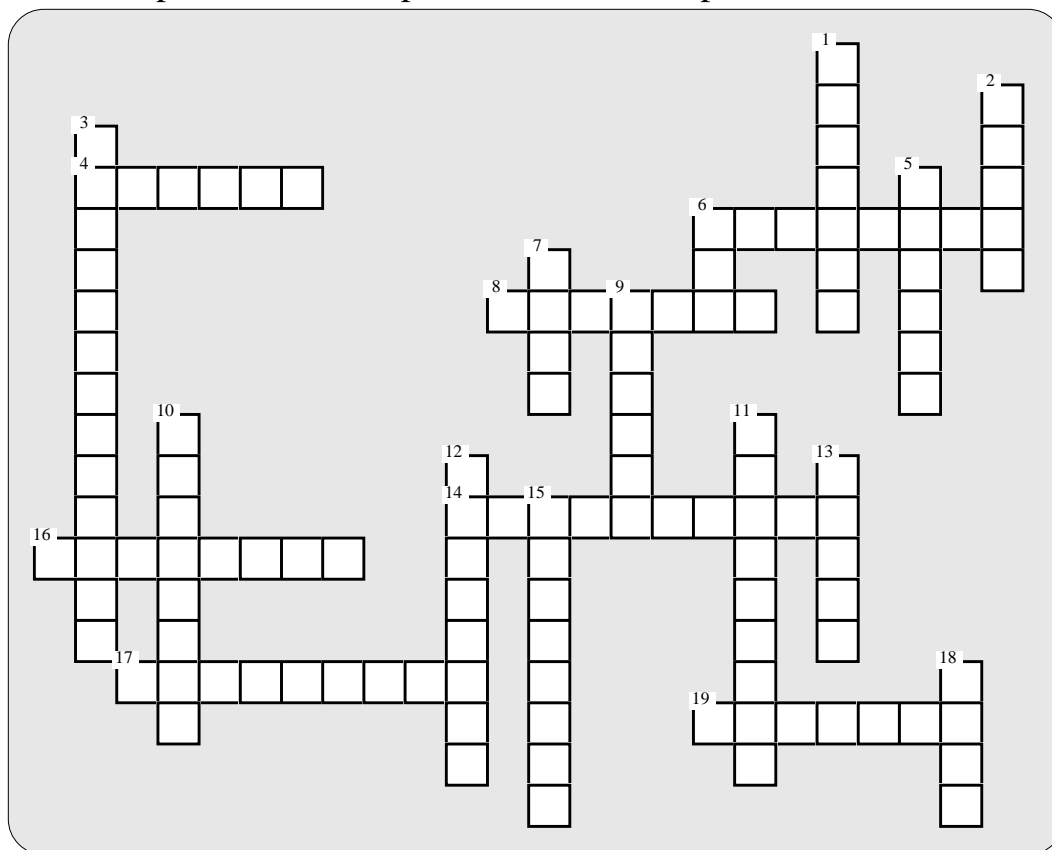
5. What do pitchers say about the increase in home runs?

Sports Crossword

name _____

19

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across:

4. The main topic of this article
6. Manahan's and Palazzo's sport
8. The Silver _____ is the nickname for the Ready team
14. _____ Slugger is a famous bat maker
16. "Thin _____" is one reason some see for more major league home runs
17. Manahan coaches here
19. He's the coach at Ready High School

Down:

1. A baseball word that means "home run"
2. A change in this may account in the change in home run count for Ohio State
3. Home runs don't win these
5. Todd thinks that home runs have more to do with this than bats and brawn
6. This is one reason for longer hit balls
7. Coach Palazzo said they put up a _____ fence in 1975
9. Baseball players wear them in the field
10. Recently, athletes have become more _____ through weight training
11. He's the coach at Dublin Scioto
12. The new bats in high school are made of this
13. Some say the early metal bats were like _____ posts
15. This is where Palazzo really notices the change in size of his athletes
18. He is the baseball coach at Ohio State

Athletes who are being courted need assistance from family

Columbus Dispatch

INDIANAPOLIS — A few minutes after the 16- and-under Dayton Lady Hoopstars defeated a team from South Carolina in the national AAU basketball tournament, DiDi Reynolds re-entered the gym wearing a bright red Ohio State T-shirt that proclaimed: "Defense Wins."

The senior-to-be at Hopewell-Loudon High School and the Division IV co-player of the year last season in Ohio may or may not have been sending a message to the dozens of college coaches who came to watch her play. All the players who attended the team camp run by the Buckeyes' coaching staff last month received an OSU shirt and water bottle as part of the package.

Still, the sight might have caused a concession stand hot dog or two to do a barrel roll in an opposing recruiter's stom-

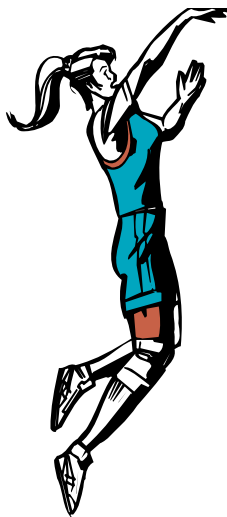
ach. Reynolds, a small forward with a marathoner's gas tank, is one of the most highly sought players in a tournament that has drawn more than 2,200 athletes.

She remains undecided about which college she will choose. Her mother, Deb Reynolds, said her daughter is being courted by North Carolina, North Carolina State, Clemson and OSU. The phone at home has rung to the tune of 40 to 50 suitors, and the 17-year-old continues to swim in an ocean of possibilities.

"Well, it's surprising," DiDi Reynolds said of the attention. "I wasn't ready for it. But I haven't been home for most of them. I've had camp and stuff so I haven't had time. My parents have dealt with most of them."

For most players, recruiting becomes a family affair. The Reynolds' busy household is no different. When the phone rings, someone answers. If DiDi isn't home, they take a message. Doug Reynolds, her father and high school coach, makes sure his daughter is polite and plays the game.

"It's a whole thing that kids had to know when they came into this that people are going to look at them," Doug Reynolds said. "They have to be ready and go out and play their games. What I tell my daughter is, 'Now that the phone calls have started, it's your responsibility to talk to them and get a feel for them. You owe



that.’ She knows it. She won’t turn anybody down on the phone, I mean to talk to them, because they’re doing their job. If they’re spending time to do that, she’ll take that time on the phone to talk.”

In 1998, parents are aware that girls basketball can lead an athlete in as many directions as boys basketball, football and baseball traditionally have. It can make some decisions hard. The 16-and-under Columbus Chill voted before the tournament started to guarantee everyone on the team equal playing time. The Hoopstars are good enough that everyone plays in blowouts. But in close games, Reynolds and Lebanon High School junior- to-be Lindsey Hicks are likely to be on the floor.



“I graduated from high school in 1974 and my dad was my coach,” Doug Reynolds said. “Girls basketball wasn’t anything. They got the gym pretty much when it was open and after the boys. Now there’s a lot of people who come to watch us instead of the boys team. It’s changed. It’s really done a 360.”

Jim and Shirley Shenk have been following their daughter on the AAU trail since the early 1990s. Lauren Shenk, an Ohio State University signee and Minster High School graduate, is a guard for the 17-and-under Dayton Lady Hoopstars who received her first college recruiting letter when she was in middle school.



“She was 12 at the time,” Shirley Shenk said. “We have three daughters in AAU. So this has been going on for six years now. We have to drive to Dayton for practice so that’s an hour on the road. That starts pretty much the middle of March, several times a week. We drive our kids back and forth. We share that. We’re lucky that way. But it seems like the practices are never at the same school at the same time.”

The hard work paid off when Lauren chose Ohio State over Wake Forest. A five-hour home visit by OSU coach Beth Burns turned her to the Big Ten school.

“Lauren seems really relaxed this year,” Jim Shenk said. “She’s having fun. But really, they’re used to playing in front of college coaches.”

During the tournament, DiDi Reynolds competed in front of coaches from Iowa, Michigan, Arizona State, Xavier, Cleveland State, Miami, Ohio State, Ohio Uni-

versity, North Carolina, Stanford and so on.

“She’s had quite a few offers already,” Doug Reynolds said.

DiDi knows who and what are out there. She wants to go college and major in accounting. She wants a good job when she graduates. She also wants to play basketball.

“The reason you want to come to nationals is to show the college coaches,” she said. “But our team has been here and we decided we wanted to win. But of course everybody wants to look good because this is our chance to show them what we have. I think it’s fun because they’re here. For most people, it does make them play harder. I think it ups the competition. It’s fun to beat good teams.”



Sports Questions

name _____

20

Use the space provided to write answers to each of the questions. Make certain your answers are in complete sentences.

1. What advice did Doug Reynolds give his daughter about talking with recruiters?

2. What was girls' basketball like when Doug Reynolds graduated from high school?

3. When did Shirley Shenk receive her first college recruiting letter?

4. Why did the hard work pay off for Lauren?

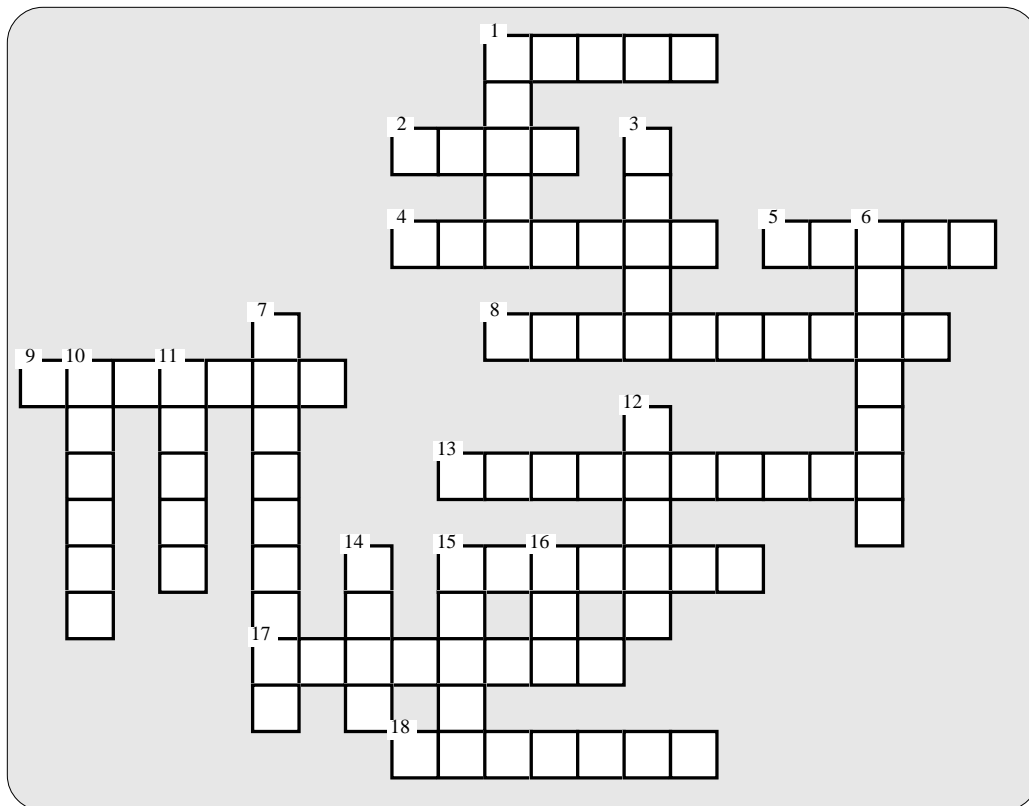
5. Why does DiDi think players want to play at the Nationals?

Sports Crossword

name _____

20

Use the clues provided to complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across:

1. DiDi's dad is one
2. DiDi was co-player of the year in this state
4. According to her dad, Lauren seems _____ this year
5. In close games, Reynolds and _____ will be on the floor
8. DiDi's sport
9. One of the colleges interested in Reynolds
13. Reynolds' wants to major in this when she gets to college
15. According to DiDi, they have dealt with most of the calls
17. She plays for Hopewell-Loudon High School
18. According to DiDi's new shirt, this wins

Down:

1. This team voted to guarantee all equal playing time
3. She's a basketball star from Minster HS going to Ohio State
6. Jim Shenk says the girls are getting used to playing in front of these coaches
7. Girls on this team all get a chance to play only when there's a blowout
10. She received her first college recruiting letter when she was in middle school
11. This college had recruiters watching the national AAU basketball tournament
12. She's the basketball coach at OSU
14. In 1974 the girls could only get the gym for practice after this group was through
15. Most colleges contact Reynolds using this
16. One of Ohio State's colors

Sports Answers

1

1. Coach Conradt has won over 700 basketball games at UTA, coached volleyball there, got the fans involved in the games, was undefeated in 1985-86 as a national championship basketball team, and has been at UTA for 23 years and is now the athletic director at UTA.
2. She ordered the hats to generate some enthusiasm and spirit but instead of being cowboy hats they were the stringy-edged, Huck Finn variety.
3. She thought of many ways to promote her sports but as a coach she would use the double low post, play a transition game and press full court—things that no women's coach did in the 70's and 80's.
4. Conradt invited fans to meet with the players after games, it's a tradition that continues today.
5. There was no budget for transporting the girls basketball team when she was at Sam Houston State in 1969 so she would have the girls drive and then reimburse them for their gas expenses, except she would pay the girls from her personal funds.

2

1. His classmates in first grades labeled him the worst reader. His reading disability has caused him to work twice as hard as his peers to maintain high grades.
2. His mother read to him and listened to him read until Jon was a freshman.
3. He beat ex-Bull B.J. Armstrong in a three point shoot-out tiebreaking session.
4. His father and grandfather were athletic standouts. His father played basketball for Augustana, and his grandfather was a talented baseball player whom the Cubs invited for a tryout.
5. Beutjer leads the team with compassion. He is kind to all the players on the team. He makes the last backup seem as important as the best player.

3

1. During the 1990's the Bobcats have not won very much and athletes have moved out of the school's boundaries. Now his two top linemen are going to a charter school and can't play on the team.
2. Moreno had family problems. He had to work to help his family. Santana ran with the wrong crowd before he got into football.
3. Moreno and Santana can no longer be part of the football program at Central.
4. Saving the souls of the players on his team.
5. He wants the school board to let Moreno and Santana finish the season.

Sports Answers

4

1. Hantla learned two Christmases ago that he needed open-heart surgery and couldn't play sports.
 2. He had been diagnosed with a subaortic membrane and he needed more blood flow through the left ventricle.
 3. His 1996 echocardiogram showed him in peril if he continued sports without the surgery.
 4. Several months after the surgery, Hantla had extreme chest pains and fluid build up around his heart. The problem was resolved with anti-inflammatory agents.
 5. Hantla likes to tell freshman football players that he was shot and stabbed while saving a woman from a purse snatcher.
-

5

1. He grew up in Iran, where his father was a gardener at a tennis club, but Bahrami was not allowed to play on the courts. He used his hand or a dustpan attached to a stick instead of a tennis racket early in his life.
 2. Bahrami and a friend were surrounded by guards, who beat Bahrami before breaking his racket.
 3. When the Shah of Iran was overthrown, everything considered capitalistic and excessive ceased to exist in Iran, including tennis clubs.
 4. His friend helped him find part-time work teaching at a tennis club near Paris.
 5. Bahrami can hold eight tennis balls in one hand and serve with the ninth. He hits shots between his legs and can undercut a ball with such spin that it can hit on the opponent's side and then bounce back over the net.
-

6

1. Creatine is a naturally occurring substance that helps molecules release energy. It is produced in the kidneys, liver and pancreas. People think it makes you have more energy and that it increases muscle mass.
2. They didn't know what long-term adverse effects there would be in using the supplement.
3. Creatine has been linked to muscle cramps and dehydration.
4. Androstenedione is a testosterone-producing supplement and it was used by home run king Mark McGwire.
5. Kulstad thinks that taking the supplement is psychological — "I'm taking it, therefore, I'm better."

Sports Answers

7

1. Chad's dad told him to control his temper by just trying harder.
 2. His father died of colon cancer.
 3. The team writes a letter "M" on their hands before each game. His father's first name was Michael.
 4. Family and friends would bring tapes to him at the hospice.
 5. The day after his dad died, Chad Morse got the winning goal in a victory over another state power.
-

8

1. A rare genetic condition called Stargardt's Disease was destroying Fischer's vision.
 2. He told his parents to stop being so depressed, that he can live his life as a blind person but not as a depressed person.
 3. For a child to be affected, both parents must carry the recessive gene for the disease.
 4. He plays soccer and hockey in the same way. Where there is a contrast between the ball or puck and the playing surface, Fischer can see enough to compete.
 5. The most serious concession for Joel is not being able to drive.
-

9

1. He thinks she is the most accurate kicker he's seen in high school.
2. Her mom was scared and her dad loves football so it really didn't matter.
3. Her first obstacle was figuring out the equipment. Because of her size she had to use some junior high equipment.
4. She looks up too quickly.
5. The coach so how determined and incensed his team was after the roughing penalty.

Sports Answers

10

1. She didn't get any answers to where all her money was going.
 2. She wants to be declared an adult so she can claim her earnings.
 3. Her father threatened to have her Romanian coach deported.
 4. She moved to the Houston area with her parents in 1990 so she could train with Bela Karolyi.
 5. She said with her parents everything had to be about the gym. She wanted her parents to be a mom and a dad instead of business managers of her affairs.
-

11

1. It was his web page on the history of the letterman's jacket.
 2. Steve Burke is his high school coach and the school's computer coordinator. He thinks Richardson knows a lot more about computers than he does.
 3. He talked them into offering an advanced-placement computer-science course that he created.
 4. He can beat the computer, except for the last two levels. He still can't take it at the grand master level.
 5. It was the Ivy League that started the letter jacket tradition in the 1930's.
-

12

1. A new breed of women who were outstanding high school players in the 1980s has turned to coaching.
2. All have found it a rewarding alternative as their own chances to play diminished.
3. Her team has been winning and she is seeing what she is teaching. The girls she is coaching is like her family.
4. The new breed has an advantage because they played the same game they coach.
5. She tries to give her girls some of the experiences she had, like going to camp.

Sports Answers

13

1. The doctor noticed Mike had a heart murmur, there was a leak in a heart valve.
 2. The doctor said daily conditioning would cause the heart valve to wear out.
 3. His father suggested to Mike that he become a goalie.
 4. He wanted to remain on his youth team and work with goalie coach Mark Hamilton.
 5. No, he'd still stay a goalie.
-

14

1. Kari took a year off to improve her tennis game by working out daily with a teaching pro. This also allowed her to travel to highly touted tournaments.
 2. She missed her adventures with her team mates on the yellow school bus.
 3. Top players quit high school tennis because of a lack of consistent competition.
 4. She was glad to have her No. 1 player back and also missed Kari's personality.
 5. Kari has a 4.2 Grade Point Average and has a powerful forehand and swift serve.
-

15

1. Crystal dreams are of stables and corrals, and horse rings and horses, not tennis courts, football fields or gymnasiums.
2. Some schools recognize equestrian as a sport, giving students physical education credit and offering athletic letters for successful riders.
3. Costs and setting a precedent are reasons they give for not recognizing equestrian.
4. The horse must be stabled and fed, veterinarian bills, riding gear, boots, lessons and the price of a horse and other expenses make this sport very costly.
5. Crystal's long term goal is to be a veterinarian, concentrating on horses.

Sports Answers

16

1. Jerry was starting to bring up the rear in their running drills.
 2. The whole team would come visit him in the hospital and his coach would bring him game film.
 3. He learned that he could no longer play football.
 4. His coaches let him run the demo team's defense.
 5. Someone he knew, a teenager from Rochester who also had leukemia, died.
-

17

1. Mike Epperson lives in a home with just a microwave, refrigerator, and a chair that he uses to place on top of the home to watch the heavens.
 2. Travis brings home tape of his games for his dad to see on weekends.
 3. Travis said his decision had little to do with football, instead it was because of his friends and being president of his senior class.
 4. At the Strack home Daves works at Peioria High, his wife Andrea works at Sunriese Mountain High and their son goes to Centennial High.
 5. Jana goes to one school and her brother another, but if it came down to it she would cheer for her brother. According to Jana, "That's family."
-

18

1. She always gives the same answer, "Because I don't like softball."
2. He said he really wasn't sure if she could play baseball because the situation never came up before.
3. She could tryout for baseball because baseball and softball aren't the same sport.
4. Crenshaw was leery at first because she thought girls were more delicate and that baseball is a tougher, more dangerous kind of game than softball.
5. Her biggest weakness is throwing.

Sports Answers

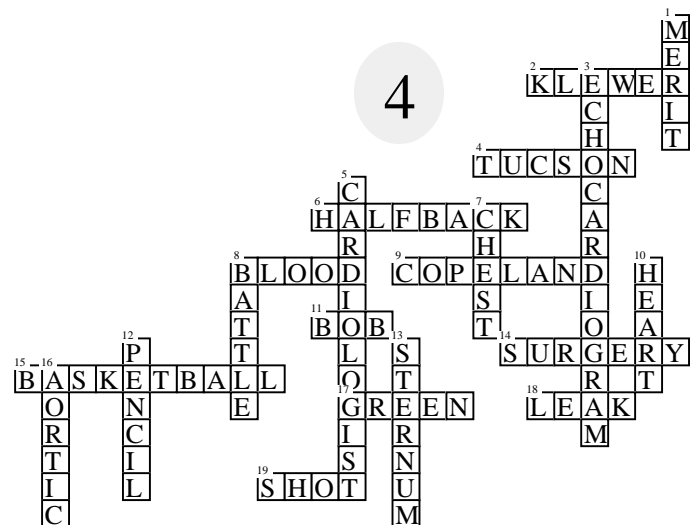
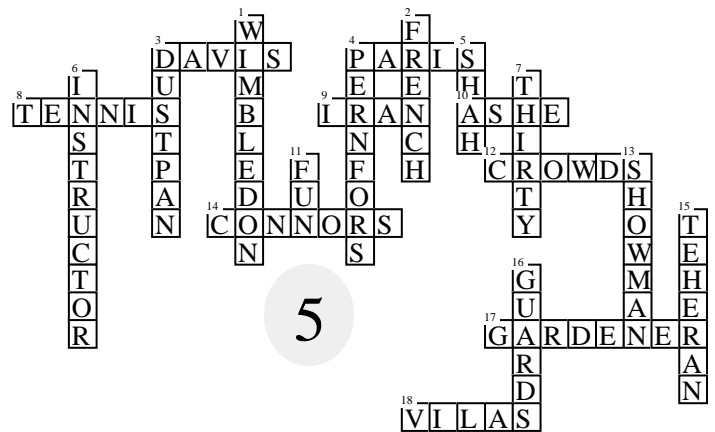
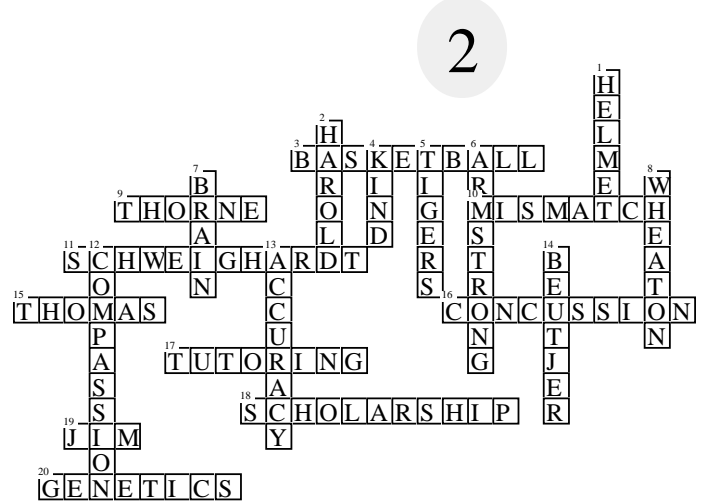
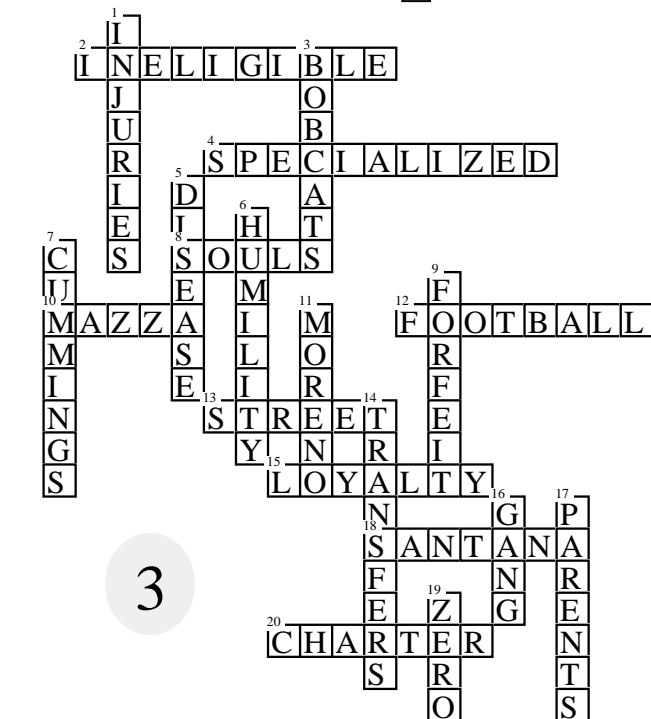
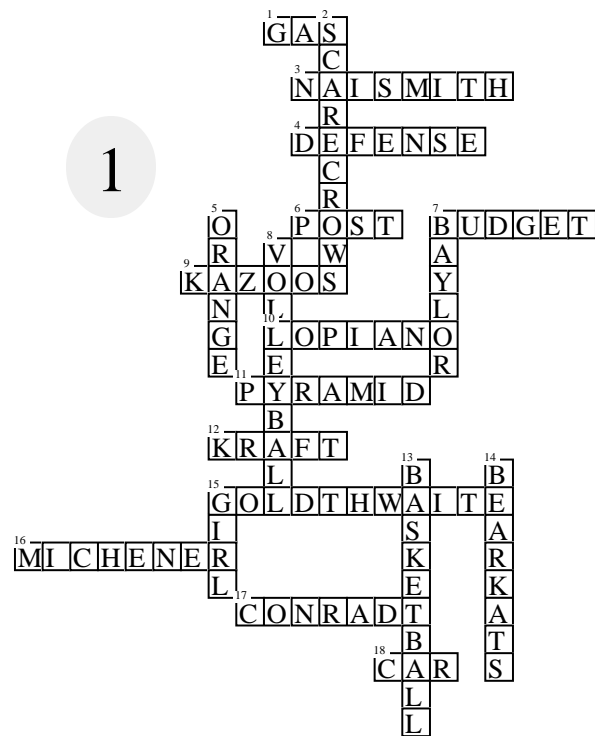
1. His team only hit one home run in 1975 and the opponets hit three.
2. Coach Manahan has seen a steady increase in his team's home runs, from seven in 1994 to 16 in 1995, 18 in 1996 and 23 last season.
3. He thinks the ball travels farther and quicker than it used to and there are better bats and better conditioned athletes.
4. Today's alloy bats are a vast improvement over the clunky sticks players used when metal became the standard in 1975.
5. Pitchers say, "Fair is fair, if a hitter can lift weights to swing faster, a pitcher can pump iron to throw faster."

19

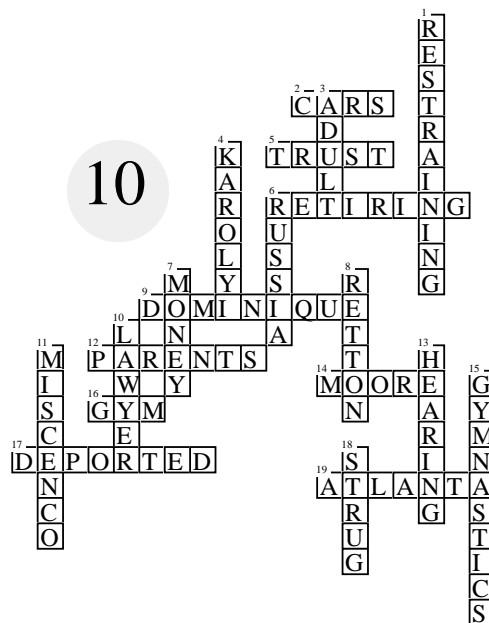
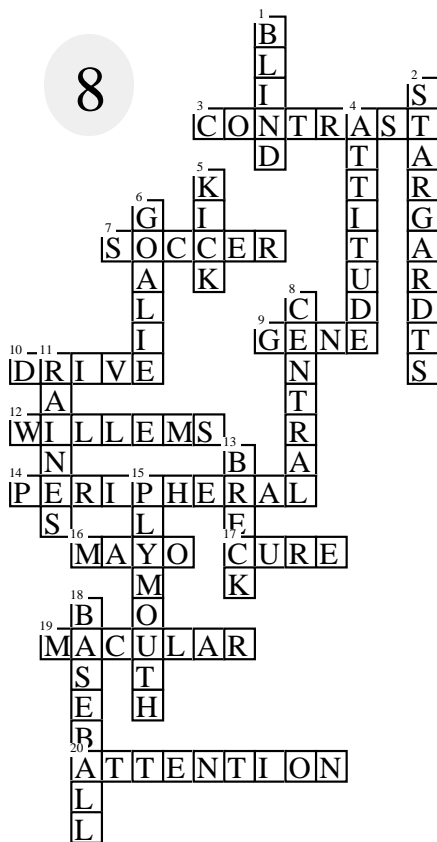
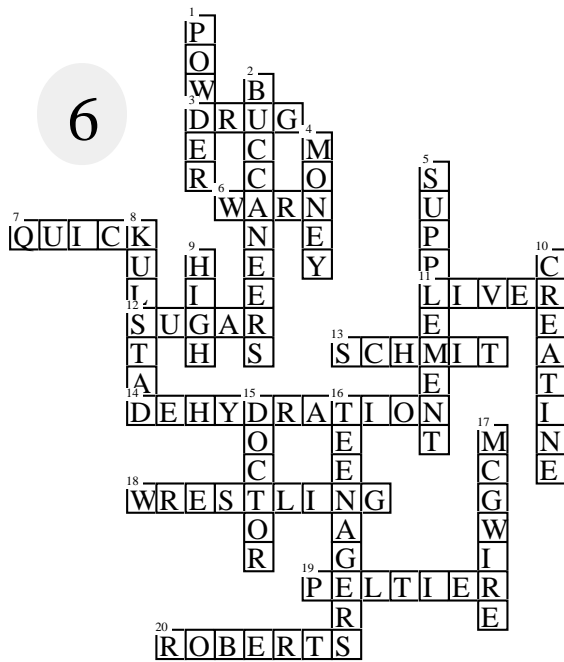
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1. That it was DiDi's responsibility to talk to the recruiters and get a feel for them. She won't turn anyone down on the phone.
 2. In 1974 girls basketball wasn't much, the girls got the gym after the boys.
 3. Lauren received her first college recruiting letter when she was in middle school at age 12.
 4. The hard work paid off for Lauren when she accepted the offer by Ohio State, a Big Ten school.
 5. They come to appear before the college coaches.

20

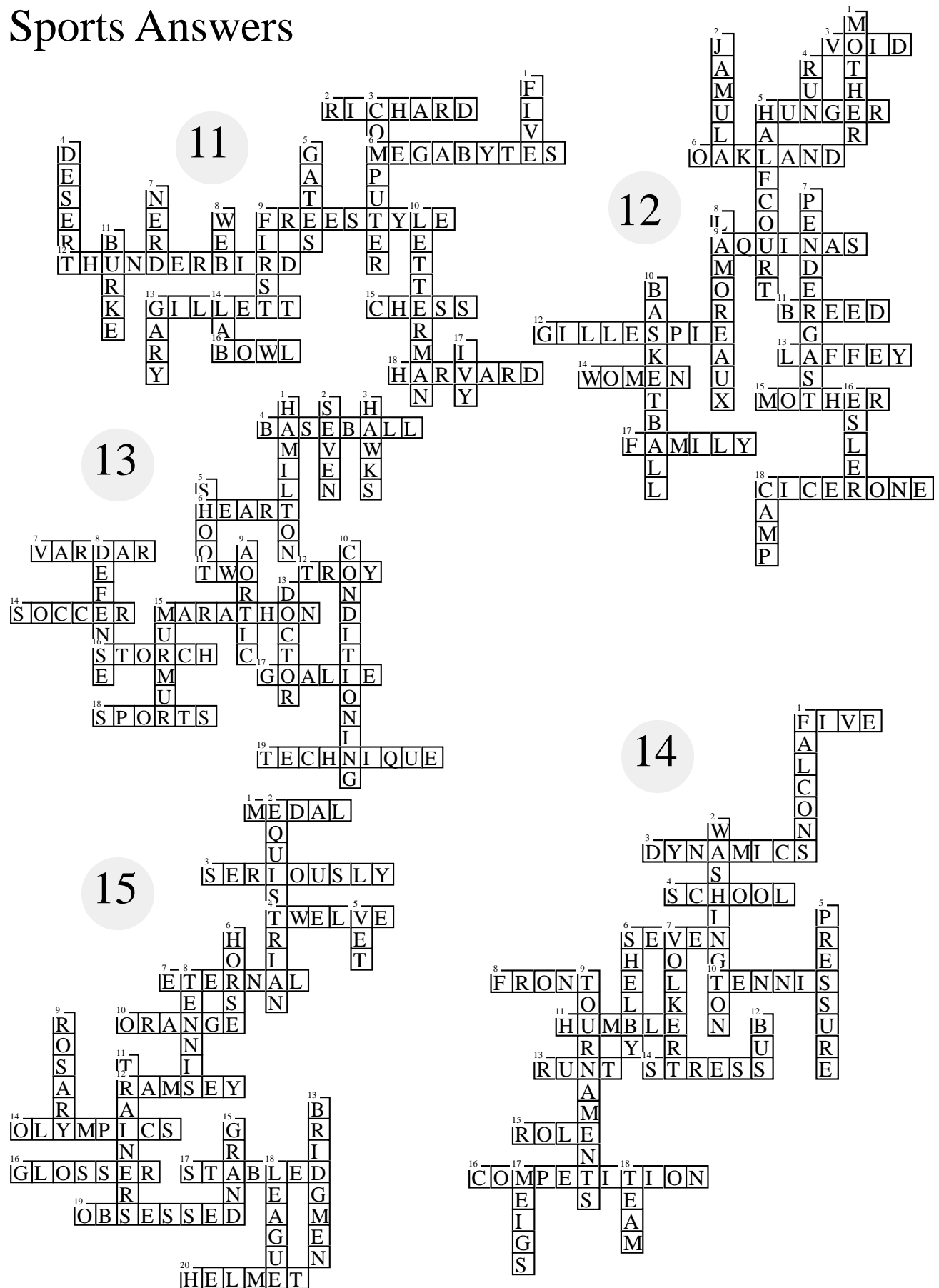
Sports Answers



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