

Former students find difference in college athletics

MYKAEEL SMITH

Writer

Former students Kristin Petrinec and Nichelle Harrison both played a sport at Bloomington High School, and are now playing for their college.

Petrinec, a sophomore at University of Illinois in Chicago believes that there is a huge difference between high school and college basketball.

“Not only is there a huge difference in the pace and physicality of the game, but also everyone on my college team was one of the stars of their high school team and we have to come together and learn how to play as a team,” said Petrinec.

Harrison graduated from BHS last year. She now attends Illinois State where she plays softball. Like Petrinec, Harrison feels that there is a difference between playing softball in high school than in college.

“It’s a lot bigger of a time commitment, you’ve really got to love it to make it in college. Softball definitely influences a lot more of my time than it did in high school. The game is a lot different but at the same time it’s still the game I’ve been playing since I was six,” said Harrison. “And the women in college softball

are stronger, faster, and all around better than high school girls.

Workouts and conditioning have gotten more intense for both Petrinec and Harrison. Both of them feel that working out is a very good thing for them, because it makes them a better player.

“Workouts are way harder than in high school. For one, we work out pretty much year round, so our bodies never really get a break. We lift throughout the year and focus on gaining a lot of strength and muscle during pre- postseason and in the summer, and then lift to maintain during season,” said Petrinec. “We condition all the time too and the runs we do I could never imagine in high school.

According to Harrison, the Illinois State softball team has done about any workout you can imagine.

“From lifting to running, we work our butts off every day,” said Harrison.

Even with all the hard work that they are putting into college, they both still miss playing for BHS very much.

“The thing I miss the most about high school softball is playing with my friends. I’d played with those girls since I was in fifth grade, there is nothing like playing with them. I’d give anything to play with them again. Even if it was just for a couple of days,” said Harrison.

Student athletes work out to stay fit during off season

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For some athletes, the season does not end after the last game or match. They train during the offseason to stay in shape, improve individual skills, and prevent injury. At Bloomington High School, the weight room is open after school for athletes to lift, while some turn to personal trainers for guidance.

“The offseason is the time to focus on yourself and work on parts of your game that you are lacking,” said Nate Henry, Director of Sports Performance at the Sports Enhancement Center.

Henry said that during the regular season it is difficult to work on individual skills, such as speed for a football player or ball handling for a basketball player, because most athletes are working on team related activities.

“I do off season workouts to improve the team as well as improve my own performance,” said junior Luke McAvoy. “It also helps me achieve my own goals of playing college football.”

Some coaches require their athletes to train during the offseason, while some athletes choose to work out on their own.

“I’m staying in shape for soccer by going to a personal trainer twice a week,” said junior Kiki Anderson. “I’m also playing for the indoor soccer team



Junior Irvin Hooker works out in the weight room after school.

Mykael Smith

at Game Time Gym.”

Anderson said that most of the upperclassmen and previous players are participating in the indoor soccer program. This is way for the Lady Raiders soccer team to stay in shape despite the cold weather.

There are benefits to working out during the offseason, other than “staying in shape”.

“The most obvious benefit of training in the off season is to gain a competitive advantage over the field of play,” said Henry. “Often, the most improved athletes are the individuals who come into their sport in top physical condition. Other benefits include improved speed and agility, overall strength, reduced risk of injury, and an elevated self-esteem.”

For those athletes that play a sport dependent on the warm weather, they must find alternative methods to play their sport during the winter months.

“Playing indoor will benefit me because it will give me a chance to keep my foot on the ball, even enough there is snow on the ground,” said Anderson. “It keeps us in awesome shape and well conditioned before [Coach] Bauman even considers torturing us.”

Whether athletes are training with their team or individually, they find ways to stay active and improve. McAvoy said he will be working out with the rest of the football team as well as going to camps during the summer. Creative methods of working out can help him improve for the upcoming season.