

Boys' and girls' lacrosse aim for Western Mass



By Keelin Berman

While boys' and girls' lacrosse are two very different sports, both teams share a common goal for this season of winning Western Mass. Although there is stiff competition up against the Hurricanes this season, they are prepared to win their way to the top. Jonah Bass, '10, says, "We're trying to run train on every team we play this year including all the big horses in the stable," which is lax lingo for beating their biggest opponents: South Had-

ley and Northampton.

South Hadley, the defending Western Mass champs, appear to be rivals for both the girls and boys lacrosse teams. Goalie and captain of the girls' lacrosse team Kate Goldstein, '10, said, "South Hadley is always a big game for us. After losing by one point in double overtime in 2008 we have always held a grudge. The game against South Hadley is always very close right until the end. This season, we are bringing it for South Hadley!"

The talent and skill that are

apparent on the team this year will only increase their chances of having a successful season. Captain Laura Bustamante, '10, said, "This year we're a really young team. We have five freshmen with a lot of raw skill but not much experience. So we're trying to develop a program as a whole."

"Last year the team was more separated between the skill levels. This year I think the intensity more than makes up for the discrepancies in those who see a lot of playing time and those who don't," said Goldstein. While the girls team is welcoming new talent and building a strong team, the boys are working on strengthening their team

bond. Cody Waterman, '11, said, "Last year we didn't have much team chemistry, but I can really feel it this year. Pretty much everyone on the starting varsity lineup is friends and most of us have been playing for a couple of years now."

Despite the season kicking off in March, the Amherst lacrosse teams have been working hard all year leading up to this spring. "It's all gonna come down to how hard we practice this season and we have an excellent coach and very teachable players. I expect to see a lot of growth," said Bustamante.

Both teams expect their off-season perseverance to show as

they dive into the season with confidence and determination. "Our goal for this season is to take it one game at a time and play to our full potential, while staying true to our lax bro roots," said Ben Brassord, '10. Nick Johnson, '13, may be a newcomer, but he's no rookie to the game. "We're pretty much a ballin' team with a lot of depth, so we're going to be a real hard team to beat," says Johnson. Overall the boys and girls lacrosse teams hold promise for the season ahead. Despite the challenges they will be faced with, both teams stand a chance for a successful season and a shot at Western Mass.

Softball plans comeback

By Erik LaMotte

The girls softball team is coming back this year with a little bit of a chip on their shoulders. Last year the team was undefeated and headed into the playoffs with their chins held high. "Maybe a little too much confidence," said Quianna Diaz-Patterson, '11, a power hitter with unique speed. "We just need to take this year game by game and forget about last year. It's in the past." Despite the teams' incredible display of skill last season, they lost to Pittsfield in the first round of last year's playoffs.

Emma Mendoker, '11, is coming back this year after a very impressive sophomore year. "This year I am going to just pitch each game batter by batter," said Mendoker. When asked about how to comeback from last year's loss, she replies, "don't think about it." In the off-season, Mendoker did not just sit around. She trained with two pitching coaches and she looks to increase her control and speed this year. Among Mendoker's accomplishments is

an Athlete of the Week award. This award goes to the person who performs the best in and out of the classroom. She is very grateful to have won the award but will not let it get to her head when she is on the mound. "I won't think about the past," said Mendoker. "I will just focus on the present."

The Hurricanes not only plan to shut down teams with their pitching, they also can't wait to step up to the plate. Diaz-Patterson is one of those girls. She is coming back this year after hitting .663 as a sophomore and stealing 37 bases on 37 attempts. This year she plans to do the same by, "getting on base as much as possible to help my team."

This year, the team is stacked with all kinds of versatile new players that look to bring new life to the team. "We all just need to get to know each other and recharge the chemistry from last year," said Diaz-Patterson. "If we do that, we should be just as successful, if not more successful, than last year."

Girls' Track and Field season promising

By Lisa Schrade

"A lot of people run a race to see who is fastest. I run to see who has the most guts." It might have been this quote by Steve Prefontaine that inspired the ARHS Girls' outdoor Track and Field team to brave the weather in their first meet and to start off a promising season. Their coach, Eric Nazar, writes up "Power-cards" with inspiring ideas like this one for each of the 45 girls on the team before a race. Though Amherst lost to Agawam in their first meet, it was successful. "We had a lot of qualifiers. That's not common for a first meet," said Coach Nazar. "The power-cards help inspire us and reflect what we would like to achieve with our performance that week and the whole season," said Ayodele Bond, '11.

This spring season promises to be a great one for the girls' team.

After the first meet, Coach Nazar said, "In every event we are light years ahead of what we did last season."

In order to achieve their goals of giving their best performance and qualifying for one of the big competitions, the track girls practice every day after school from 3-5p.m. "The big competitions are as always in the end of the season. First Divisions, then Western Mass, then States. You have to qualify for these individually. Usually that's a goal for people, to qualify for these meets," said Chloe Zimmerman, '10.

Sometimes the girls' track team works out in the weight room, but most days they are on the track. They start their practice everyday by warming up together. "We meet on the track and start by running two warm up laps together. Then we do dynamic warm ups, basically stretches.

Then Eric usually has announcements for us and we discuss the previous or the upcoming meet. Finally, he gives us our workout and we split up to practice for our different events. In the end of practice we come together again to stretch," said Zimmerman. Zimmerman also believes that "it's good that we start and end practice together as a team because in track there are so many different events, but stretching and warming up together helps us to bond as a team."

"One thing that is very different this year is that this season only the first two meets are at home, the rest are away," said Bond. Not only is the host team in charge of setting everything up, but away meets also have the advantage of "giving us experience of running on different tracks. It's a good practice for the big competitions," said Coach Nazar.