

Dynasty Building

Elementary athletes change the game for PHS sports – raise concerns

The sports world has recently been rocked with the scary thought that Peyton Manning might soon be retiring, and the Indianapolis Colts will be picking up a protégé to follow in his footsteps.

This concept is also coming into play with athletics at PHS. Many high school teams have been allowing junior high and Elementary level students to participate in conditioning activities in many different sports.

The idea of allowing students as young as the age of 10 to participate in high school sports may be frightening, but can also be very helpful to the younger athlete.

Sports that allow younger students to participate include: off-season football weights, tennis, baseball and track. Most junior high and elementary level students are allowed to condition, as long as they are under the watchful eye of a coach.

"You have to take extra time to explain to them," said Coach Adam Stroud. "It is not about who can lift the most weight, it's about learning the correct form."

In Indiana, junior high and elementary students are not permitted to participate in varsity events. In Kentucky on the other hand, these sorts of activities are allowed.

Even though the cons seem endless, the pros are very persuasive.

"[The players] get to have more practice, which makes them better," said Stroud. "The more practice a player can get at a younger age, will make them better at the high school level."

Coach Brian Balsmeyer also has the same outlook in the way that junior high and elementary athletes are trained.

"You do not want to get the kids turned away from the sport," said Balsmeyer. "You also want to let him know that he is not going to be as successful as some of the other, bigger kids."

Cross country coach Luke Haworth says that there are powerful advantages in allowing younger athletes to train with the older athletes.

"The advantages that I have seen are primarily in the attitudes of the elementary athletes," said Haworth. "Practicing with the older kids gives them a feeling of connection with the high school athletes and makes them want to one day be able to do what

the older kids can do."

Haworth also believes that it benefits the older athlete as well.

"It's also a benefit to the high school athletes to interact with the younger kids, said Haworth. "It puts them in a leadership role, gives them some responsibility and reminds them that at the end of the day sports are supposed to be fun."

Girls' tennis coach Tyla Whitfield also says there are advantages for the younger athletes.

"They learn what is expected and how to complete training activities at an earlier age," said Whitfield, "The older players set a good example for the younger athletes."

The cons on the other hand, may be a

concerning factor when allowing a young athlete to train with the high school students. The concept of allowing younger kids to train with the high school athletes can be a major fright to parents for many reasons, because the risk of getting an injury increases.

"You have to make sure that the players can handle it," said Balsmeyer, "You don't want them to get down because they got beat up."

Coach Haworth believes that the downfall of this training can be the attitudes which are shown.

"The issues that could occur would be elementary athletes being left behind or feeling discouraged because they are not as good as

the high school athletes," said Haworth, "Another possible issue would be if the high school athletes had bad attitudes then that might rub off on the younger kids."

Haworth believes that both of these scenarios can be hurtful to the elementary students.

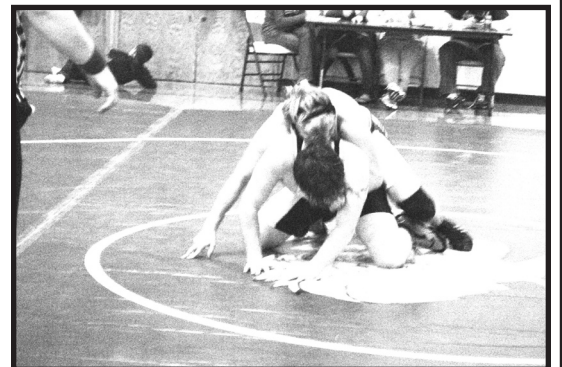
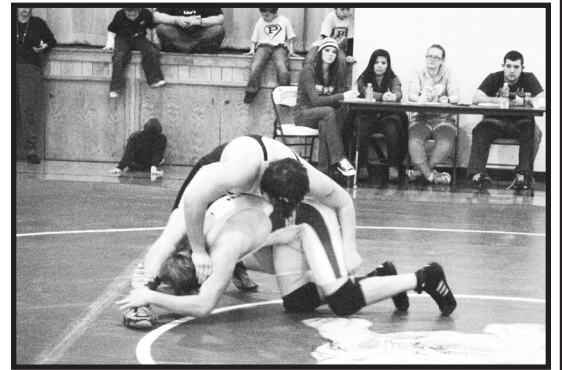
"In both of these situations, hopefully the coach would not put the elementary kids in a situation to feel discouraged, and hopefully the coach would know not to allow the younger kids to interact with athletes that might be bad influences on them," said Haworth.

The future of PHS is the younger generations that are coming from Throop. From the classroom to the court, the younger kids are the future. Training them now might seem like a good idea, but in the long run it could be harmful. No matter how they are trained, the experience that they are receiving now will be beneficial in the scheme of life.

Story by Ian Bostock

FEATURED

Senior Joe Tuell



What weight class do you wrestle in?
182 lbs.

How often do you practice?
Every day after school and over Christmas Break.

Who was your toughest match against this year?
Providence's 182 pound wrestler was my toughest.

How long is your season?
The season starts at the beginning of December and goes all the way to the end of February.

What is your biggest strength this year?
My biggest strength is wrestling in the top position.

What is your biggest weakness?
Shooting on other wrestlers is my biggest weakness.

What are your goals for this season?
I want to place high in Conference, and make it out of Sectional.

What is your favorite part about wrestling?
My favorite part of wrestling is being with my teammates and just hanging out.

THE SHOT

Let's Get Fired Up!

SPORTS RECAP



Photo by Breanna Daugherty



Photo by Breanna Daugherty

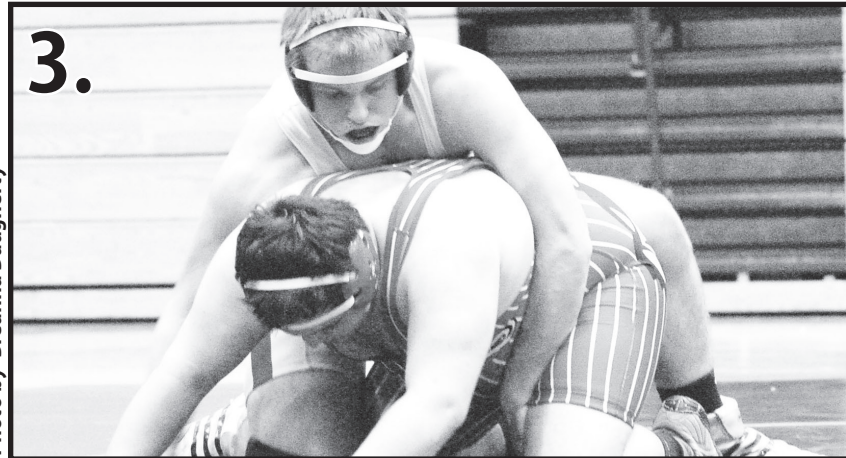


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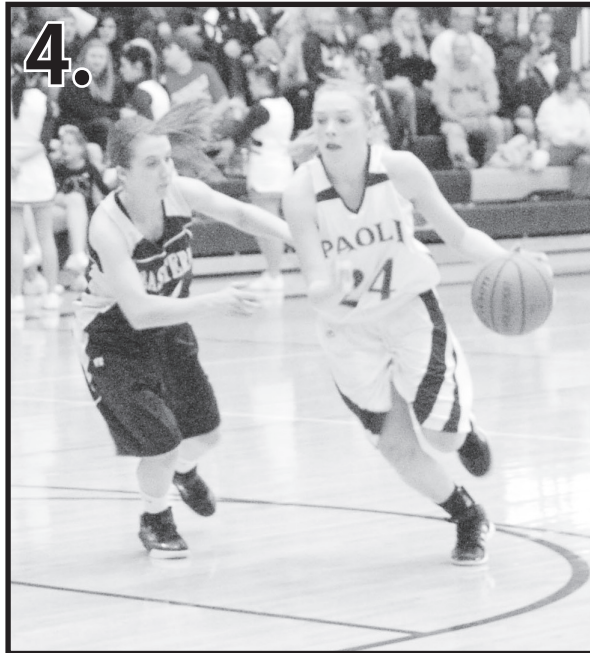


Photo by Breanna Daugherty

Wrestling:

The varsity wrestling team finished the season with a record of 14-10. They placed 4th at Sectional, and advanced five people to Regional. Junior C.J. Andry, freshman Nate Burton and senior Garrett Shepard will be competing at Semi-State tomorrow in Evansville.

Basketball:

The **Girls Varsity** basketball team finished the regular season 16-6, and the JV finished 18-0. After earning the by, the girls compete in Sectional play tonight at Eastern Pekin.

The **Boys Varsity** basketball team is currently 7-8, and the JV is 10-5. The boys are in action tomorrow at home against Salem.

Info by Ian Bostock

1. Senior Rachel Manship "Our team is the type that always pulls together to work as a team," said Manship. **2. Senior Trevor Axsom** "Everybody finally listens to me. Everybody does (the roller coaster) and it looks really cool and really fun," said Axsom. **3. Junior C.J. Andry** "I am going to be a team captain, and tell them the best choices to make [to help his team win in Sectional]," said Andry. **4. Freshman Olivia Brewster** "Spending time with team mates and winning games with them [is what she likes most about basketball]," said Brewster.

Info by Hannah Walker

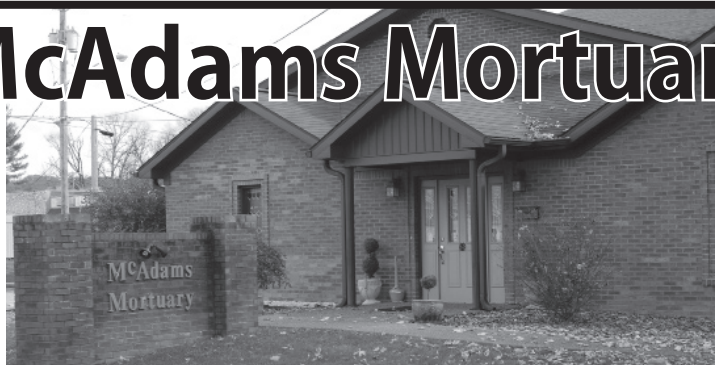
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