**Sport Specialization vs. Multiple Sports**

**Even coaches can’t agree on which is best**

*By Paige Judson*

*Page Editor*

When it comes to playing sports, most people go one of two ways. They put all of their energy and focus into one sport so that they can work their hardest to be the best that they can be. Others decide that they have many interests and don’t want to be tied down to one sport.

The big thing that athletes face these days is they think that the only way they will make it is if they specialize in just one sport, and that is not what most college coaches think.

Dan Fishel, the Muskegon Community College track and field and cross country coach does not feel this way.

“After coaching cross country for 16 years and track & field for 10 years, I prefer athletes who compete in multiple sports,” he said. “Many studies have shown that athletes that compete in multiple sports have a lower rate of repetitive injuries.”

Knowing that it will help him to be his best junior Conner Vallie specializes in baseball. Vallie said that he focuses on baseball in order to give him the advantage over those who play multiple sports. (Courtesy Photo)

**Junior specializes in baseball year-round**

*By Paige Judson*

*Page Editor*

Sometimes to be the best you can be at something, you have to put all of your focus into that one thing.

Junior Conner Vallie, whose passion is baseball, gets that better than most.

“You can’t be the best you can be if you are playing other sports,” Vallie said.

Whether it is playing or training, Vallie said his schedule is always full of baseball. In addition to playing on a summer team and the high school team, Vallie said he lifts 6-7 times a week and has velocity training 5-6 times a week.

He said he believes that putting all of his focus into one sport will help him be the best he can be.

Vallie added that he believes in the 10,000-hour rule, which was coined by popular psychology writer Malcolm Gladwell. The principle holds that 10,000 hours of deliberate practice are needed to be world-class in any field.

While some people discount the 10,000-hour rule, Vallie has used his focus on baseball to make the Team USA national team, which is strict about recruiting one-sport athletes who put their whole heart into the sport.

“I was on Team USA for our region, and that team focuses on one-sport athletes because they want you to be the best you can be,” Vallie said. “I think that focusing on one sport is the best thing to do if you want to be the best you can be.”

**Multiple Sports**

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Senior female excels in three varsity sports

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Though playing three sports definitely helps physically, there are some challenges.

“Sometimes it is hard to always have a sport after school, especially during exam week when practices run long,” Wehler said.

Though Wehler said she does see playing three sports as difficult, she has also gotten feedback telling her that it is probably the best thing for her.

“The Aquinas basketball coach told me that he thought it was super cool that I was able to be on varsity for three years of my high school career and excel at all three of them,” she said. “He told me that it makes me a better athlete and less likely to get injured.”

While many specialize in one, sport senior Ryleigh Wehler excels at three sports, including volleyball, basketball, and softball. (Softball photo by Isaac Varela, basketball by Christian Fletcher and volleyball by Isaac Varela)