



What I love most about prep sports is they are still pure, yet to be watered down by paychecks and enigmatic egos.

WHEN I HEARD OUR PREP SPORTS ISSUE WAS ON DECK FOR AUGUST, I felt a little added responsibility to try and knock it out of the park.

To put it lightly, sports, especially played at the high school level, always have intrigued me. Though I was never on a varsity team in my time at Maple Grove Senior High, I rarely missed my friends' games. I loved to watch them, and soon I loved writing about them for the school newspaper. High school sports inspired me to become a journalist, a career I began as a sports writer and continued for five years prior to arriving at *Maple Grove Magazine*. So when I found out I'd get to dig back into some prep sports stories in the same area I developed my passion, I was pumped.

Bobby Hart, *editor*
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RECOGNIZING RESIDENTS

We are searching for Maple Grove residents with fun and interesting stories to tell. If you have a neighbor, family member or friend you think belongs on the pages of *Maple Grove Magazine*, send your recommendations to maplegrovemag@tigeroak.com.

THANKS, OSSEO!

I'd like to thank Osseo Senior High students, staff and, especially, athletic director Ray Kirch for allowing us to use their school for our prep sports photo shoots. One thing not seen in the photo, above, is there were members of both the Maple Grove and Osseo varsity football teams helping to push that sled into position. Some Orioles took a time-out from a football camp nearby to volunteer their help. Two heated rivals working together for your community magazine: You have to love it!

What I love most about prep sports is they are still pure, yet to be watered down by paychecks and enigmatic egos. As talented as our featured group of area athletes is (page 18), the students are still developing and learning how to become adults (though, I must say, they usually fit the part better than many full-grown pros we see on ESPN). What impresses me most is these kids find a way to juggle, in many cases, multiple sports, other extracurricular activities and a social life, all while still finding time to maintain incredible grades.

I urge you to watch and support these outstanding student-athletes as they compete this coming school year. Take it from me: They never fail to inspire.

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**MAPLE GROVE
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Jenna Brady
Providence Academy

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BY BOBBY HART PHOTOS BY MARSHALL FRANKLIN LONG

LIVING UP TO THE HYPE

MAPLE GROVE'S PREP
ALL-STARS EXCEL
ATHLETICALLY AND
ACADEMICALLY.

◀ JOSEPH BORCHARDT

SPORTS: Wrestling, football
ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 3.3 GPA,
second at 2009 state wrestling
tournament in 215-pound
weight class, 2009 Team Most
Outstanding Varsity Wrestler
and Most Improved Varsity
Wrestler

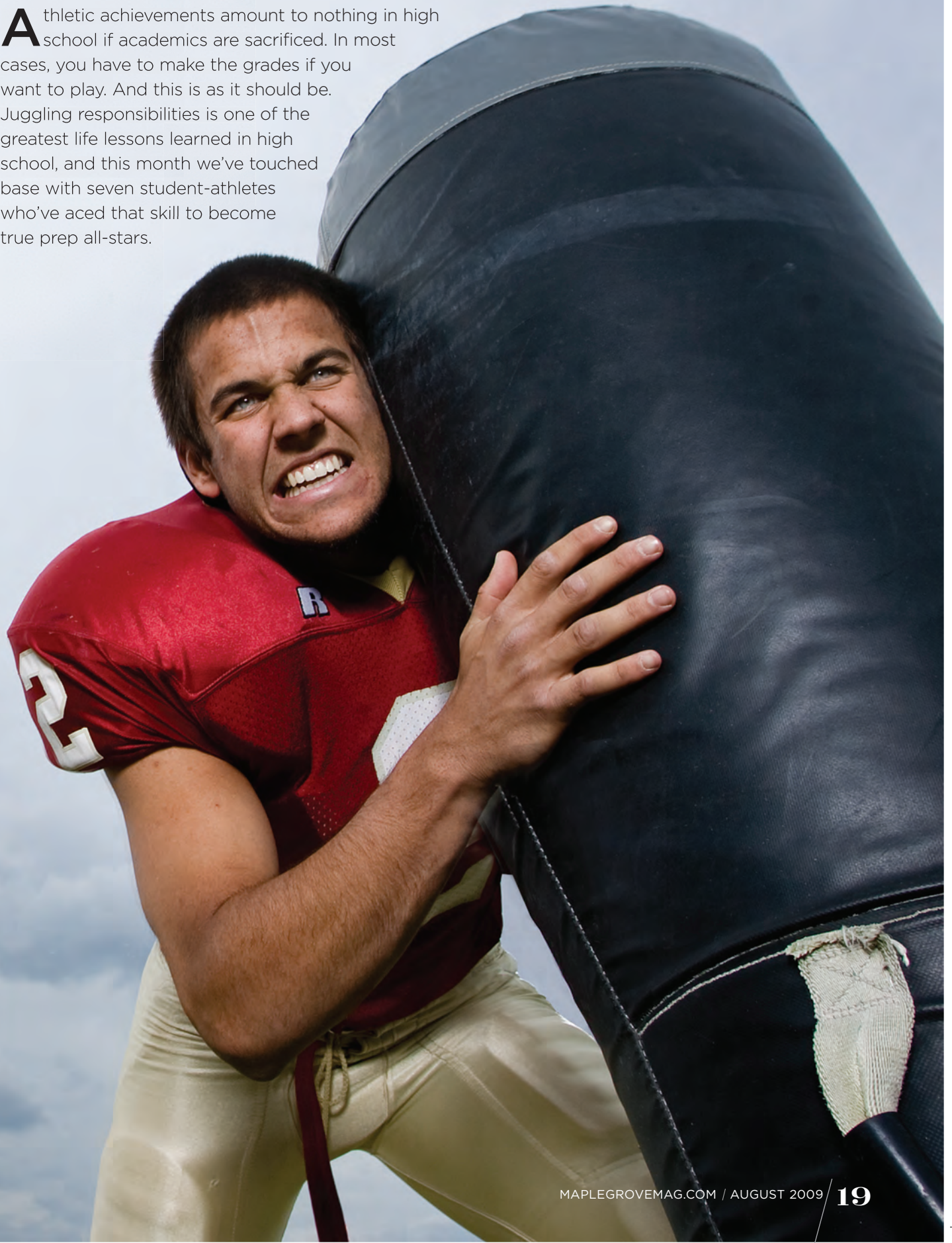
ROLE MODEL: Former
Crimson wrestler Jackson
Mboma, who is currently
a wrestler at Augsburg
College. "His work ethic is just
incredible," Borchardt says.

ALEC HORTON ▶

SPORTS: Hockey, football,
baseball
ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 3.8 GPA,
2008-09 All-Conference
hockey player, 2007 Team
Rookie of the Year in hockey

ROLE MODEL: Older sister and
former Crimson girls hockey
player Jamie Horton, who is
an upcoming senior for the
Gophers. "She basically got me
into sports," Alec says.

Athletic achievements amount to nothing in high school if academics are sacrificed. In most cases, you have to make the grades if you want to play. And this is as it should be. Juggling responsibilities is one of the greatest life lessons learned in high school, and this month we've touched base with seven student-athletes who've aced that skill to become true prep all-stars.



◀ TOUGH GUYS

Alec Horton and Joseph Borchardt never shy away from physical contact.

If a ball-carrier is unfortunate enough to meet them on the football field, a loud pop and a dead stop is usually the result. The raw strength of Borchardt, a 5-foot-10, 215-pound defensive tackle for the Maple Grove Senior High football team, fuels him in the trenches, while Horton, a 5-foot-11, 175-pound linebacker, relies a little more on his feistiness.

Horton, a varsity football player since his junior year, also has played varsity baseball and hockey since his sophomore year. The upcoming senior hockey captain is the Crimson's top returning goal-scorer after racking up 22 goals and 39 points on a team that finished 20-4-3 last regular season. Juggling three sports and a 3.8 GPA isn't always easy, as Horton finds himself getting home some nights at around 9:30 p.m. in the spring after baseball games and hockey commitments. But he always makes it work. "He's one of the top kids I've ever had as far as accountability," Crimson hockey coach Gary Stefano says. "There are no excuses with him. When you tell him to do something, he looks you in the eyes."

Dedication to various responsibilities is also something Borchardt thrives on. A football player for most of his life, he was encouraged to take up wrestling as a freshman to build lower-body strength. Two years later, Borchardt became the second Crimson wrestler ever to reach the state finals after finishing with a 34-11 record in 2009.

A tedious training regime has been a major factor in propelling Borchardt to the top in such a short period of time. "Joseph's biggest asset is he has put in the time in the weight room and is as strong as anybody he wrestles," Crimson wrestling coach Troy Seubert says. "He's also a student of the sport."

Borchardt, who led his wrestling team with 56 takedowns and 157 team points in 2009, is aiming to build on his successful junior campaign as a senior captain this winter. "We're kind of expecting a lot," he says. "I want to make sure I meet those expectations."

A sense of comfort covers teammates and coaches like a blanket when a softball is gripped by **Jenna Brady** and **Becca Girvan**. That's because, for Brady and Girvan, the pitching mound might as well be a driver's seat, and everyone knows they hold the keys for their respective softball teams at Providence Academy and Osseo High School.

Girvan has played on the Orioles varsity team since ninth grade, but her name spread throughout the softball landscape like wildfire last year after finishing 18-1 in the regular season with 276 strikeouts, leading her team to a fourth-place finish at the state tournament and earning all-state honors. In 2009, she went 12-3 with 183 strikeouts in the regular season with a miniscule 0.58 earned run average. Along with those numbers come expectations, but none are higher than those Girvan has

"[Becca] simply doesn't accept anything but the best from herself."

—ERIC RUSKA, OSSEO SOFTBALL COACH,
ON BECCA GIRVAN

STRAIGHT ACES ▶

for herself. "I like to go after girls," she says. "I like to get them out. And if I don't, I'm really hard on myself."

Osseo softball coach Eric Ruska sees his star's determination on a daily basis on and off the field, with a near-perfect 3.9 GPA. "She simply doesn't accept anything but the best from herself," Ruska says.

Much like Osseo and Girvan, the Providence Academy softball program developed around Brady, who has been a varsity pitcher since seventh grade. This past season, as a captain, Brady racked up 92 strikeouts in 69 innings with a 2.13 earned run average. While tricking batters with an arsenal of junk pitches, including a dropball and a curve, she also paced her team at the plate, hitting 0.559, with 25 stolen bases and an on-base percentage of 0.605.

But Brady's talents aren't justified with numbers. "Jenna thinks the game better than any player I've ever been around," says Providence Academy Athletic Director Kurt Jaeger, also Brady's ex-varsity basketball coach. "She's not the biggest kid on the team or the fastest kid on the team, but she understands the game better than anyone else on the team."





Osseo's Becca Girvan puts the tag on Providence Academy's renowned base-stealer, Jenna Brady. Both girls are known as aces on the pitching mound and in the classroom.

◀ BECCA GIRVAN

SPORT: Softball

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

3.9 GPA, 2009 All-State, 2009 All-Metro, 2009 All-Conference, 2009 All-Section, 2009 Conference and Section Champions, 2008 All-State, 2008 All-Conference, 2007 All-Conference Honorable Mention, 2008 All-Metro, 2008 Team Defensive MVP, 2008 All-Section

ROLE MODEL: Parents, Dan and Gwen.

▲ JENNA BRADY

SPORTS: Softball, basketball

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 3.99

GPA, 2009 All-Conference basketball player, 2006-2009 All-Conference softball player, 2005 All-Conference Honorable Mention softball player, 2007 All-Area Softball Team Honorable Mention

ROLE MODEL: Mother, Sue.

"She's a crazy mom; she does everything," Jenna says. "She comes to all my games and supports me, and it's just helped me so much. I want to be just like her."

JOHN ROWLAND ►

SPORT: Basketball

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 3.2 GPA, 2008-09 All-State Honorable Mention, 2008-09 All-Conference Honorable Mention, scored a career-high 17 points in the 2009 state title game.

ROLE MODEL: His parents, and Osseo alum Sam Dower, who now plays basketball at Gonzaga University. "He's also left-handed, and he can shoot as well as play in the post," Rowland says. "He accomplished a lot while still doing well in school and he's a pretty nice guy, too."

AARON ANDERSON ▼

SPORT: Basketball

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 3.4 GPA, 2008-09 All-Conference, 2008-09 All-State Honorable Mention, 2009 All-State Tournament team.

ROLE MODELS: Parents, Ernest and Norma, and New Orleans Hornets point guard Chris Paul. Osseo teammate John Rowland sees the similarities between Anderson and Paul's playing style. "He makes it look pretty," Rowland says of his teammate.



Osseo's John Rowland goes up for a dunk, while point guard Aaron Anderson looks on. They will try to lead the Orioles back to their second straight title game in 2010.

◀ HOT SHOTS ▶

When it comes to building a successful high school team, experience is valued like oil. Luckily for the Maple Grove and Osseo basketball programs, **Julie Kruse**, **John Rowland** and **Aaron Anderson** have a whole well of it. While Kruse has been a starter for the Crimson girls since ninth grade, Rowland and Anderson enriched their stock in the 2008-2009 season alone, when the Orioles took a storied journey all the way to the state title game.

Towering over opponents with an athletic 6-foot-1 frame, the sheer appearance of Kruse is enough to mark her home on the basketball court. However, it's her mental traits that allow her to also succeed in the classroom with a 3.99 GPA. "She does a tremendous job balancing her priorities," Crimson girls basketball coach Mark Cook says. "She truly represents what being a student-athlete is all about."

Kruse's lengthy career will be remembered in the Crimson record books, as she ranks fourth in school history in career points (848) and rebounds (418), and is second in blocks (60). Kruse, who is known to blend her low-post size with a dangerous mid-range jumper, still has a year left to add to those totals. And it's a good bet those accomplishments won't come at the cost of her grades. "I have really high expectations of myself. I'm a firm believer in 'student-athlete' and the fact that 'student' comes before 'athlete.' So [academics] are definitely more important to me than basketball," Kruse says. "Then again, basketball is still a huge part of my life. I'm proud of these girls and how far we've come. I'm excited to see it all come together this year."

Basketball is also a huge priority for Rowland and Anderson, who have experienced more change, success and heartbreak in two years than most prep athletes encounter in a career. Two years ago, Anderson was playing for Hopkins, while Rowland, as an Orioles junior varsity player, watched the nationally ranked Osseo varsity team go through an undefeated season only to fall short of the state tournament with a loss to Robbinsdale Cooper in the section finals. A year later, Anderson, a play-making point guard, transferred back to his hometown school, where he helped Rowland, a tall forward with a shooting touch, and the Osseo varsity team defeat Cooper in a section-finals rematch. Although the Orioles went on to lose in the state title game to Anderson's former Hopkins squad, Osseo surpassed many expectations. "Everyone doubted us because we weren't as big as the team before us," Rowland says. "But we kind of proved everyone wrong." //

▼ JULIE KRUSE

SPORT: Basketball

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 3.99 GPA, 2007-2008 Northwest Suburban All-Conference Honorable Mention, 2007-08 Team Most Improved Player, 2008-09 Northwest Suburban All Conference, 2008-09 Channel 12 All Area Team Honorable Mention, fourth leading scorer in school history

ROLE MODELS: Parents Dwight and Louise. "They're always pushing me to be better," Julie says.

