

sports |

Jonathan Lin: The Sword Master

by OLIVIA POWELL

Jonathan Lin is not your typical Chadwick athlete. A product of a relatively unusual sport, the sophomore recently competed in the 2015 Junior Olympic Fencing Championships in Richmond, Va., participating as one of the top 239 fencers in the United States.

Lin has been fencing for a little more than two years, practicing every day after school for two to three hours. This year was the third year he attempted to qualify for Junior Olympics, but his first time securing a spot in the competition—a source of pride for the Chadwick community. Lin even received a shout-out from Athletic Director Tom Goodspeed in the weekly athletics update.

The fencing Junior Olympics is a series of national tournaments separated by age division: cadets, juniors and regular Division I, II and III athletes. The tournaments are further separated by the type of fencing each athlete participates in—foil, sabre and epee.

Lin explains that one can only qualify for the event by accumulating “cadet points,” which come from winning regular tournaments, or by placing in the top three of a division’s Junior Olympic Qualifier. Lin has tried to qualify for the Junior Olympics for as long as he has competed, but he had a rough start his first year.

“My first time qualifying for Junior Olympics, I was really new to the sport,” he says. “I didn’t really know what was going on. I



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JONATHAN LIN

Sophomore Jonathan Lin, right, competes during a fencing event at UCLA.

didn’t even know what I was qualifying for!”

But Lin persisted, and returned the next year with a better idea of what he needed to do. “I much better understood the game, but I was not good enough to secure one of the top three spots in the competition,” he said.

This year, Lin went into the cadet foil competition determined to qualify in any way he could. “I got fourth in the qualifying tournament, one point away from getting third and securing a bid,” he said.

Lin continued to persevere, and qualified via divisional auto-qualifiers, which remain a separate event.

As he headed into the huge national event in mid-February, Lin was very excited. “It felt great to be going to Junior Olympics!” he said.

Lin did not hold high expectations for himself. Initially, there

were 239 competitors, though some were disqualified before the final results were announced.

Of these qualifiers, Lin considered 60 to be “top tier” fencers, meaning that they often attend both national and international tournaments and place highly.

“I knew my chances of getting a high ranking were not very likely,” Lin said.

“That being said, I was not nervous. I just wondered what place I would get.”

During his first appearance at Junior Olympics, Lin competed hard but still came out behind many other great fencers. He tied for 213th out of 232 entrants.

But Lin has a positive outlook on his experience, and high hopes for his next attempt in the Junior Olympics in 2016.

“Considering that I was slaughtered by some of the nation’s best, I do not really feel too bad about my result. I only wish that I had done a little bit better,” Lin said.

“Next year, I hope that I can improve on my skills and place higher.”



by MARY DAWSON

When the final score is not about the score

In sports, there are winners and losers. Scoreboards and record books, however, don’t always reflect who *really* wins. Someone may lose according to the scoreboard, but in reality, they still could win so much more.

Sports allow people to lose, yet still win...such as the chance to discover a newfound hope, and most important, the chance to change perceptions. The story of the McFarland High School cross country team fully captures all of the intangibles that sports can give to people, more than just in the sense of victories and trophies.

The story of how a small California high school, located in a Central Valley farming community between Bakersfield and Visalia, that had never before fielded a cross country team, could qualify for the state CIF championships in its first year of competition is not new. It actually happened in 1987, 28 years ago.

Thanks to Hollywood, however, people are now learning about this inspirational story. If you haven’t seen the movie *McFarland, USA*, starring Kevin Costner as the coach, you need to go to a movie theater and see it ASAP.

This column is not a movie review, though. I want to talk about the story behind the movie...a story that proves a sport can help people “win” at something more than just a game.

On an individual level, cross country gave the McFarland team members a new hope for their futures. It gave them hope that they could have a better life than

their parents had. All six runners went on to college, something that wouldn’t have been possible if cross country hadn’t been in their lives.

On a grander scale, cross country gave a small town a boost of big hope. When the six-member team traveled to compete in the state finals, they were not just representing themselves; they were representing the town of McFarland. The team gave the McFarland community a great reason to rally together.

It was a chance to change perceptions. Many of the kids from McFarland could often be found helping their parents earn income by picking in the fields.

Most other high schools never saw the McFarland kids in any light other than as a person from a small town, working in the fields.

When the boys started running and beating big-name schools, they shattered the perceptions that they couldn’t be more than just field pickers.

They showed how the discipline gained from hard work picking in the fields became the foundation for the mental toughness that cross country requires for success.

The McFarland High cross country team proved to people that their small town should be known as more than just a place for farm laborers to toil. They proved that it is actually a place filled with hard-working people who have hopes and dreams of accomplishments of their own.

Chadwick triple-threat athletes learn time management

by ARIANNA MENZELOS

At Chadwick, students constantly struggle to stay afloat. Most of us feel as if we are drowning; our schedules are completely packed, and we don’t get enough sleep. Yet there are some students who decide to play as many as *three* different sports in the same year...even though the requirement is only two. So why take on the added burden?

Sophomore Allison Westley wants a break from her schoolwork. Junior David Figel knows that he wouldn’t be active if he wasn’t playing a sport.

Senior Elizabeth Haile just really enjoys it.

Westley chooses to play three sports because she enjoys the activity and the social aspect of the teams. Still, she works a lot on time management.

“Usually on the weekends, I look ahead at my week and try to get ahead,” Westley said. “By the time I start my homework on a weeknight, it is usually pretty

late.

“What I normally do is I focus on one subject, take a little break, focus really hard on another subject, and take a little break. That usually helps me to get through it all effectively, but everything still takes a long time. I am usually working until at least midnight.”

Westley struggles with the sacrifices she has to make in order

outweigh the costs,” she said.

Figel feels pressure from his parents to play three sports each year, but he understands his parents’ reasoning and realizes that these sports help him maximize his time rather than waste it.

“My parents make me [play three sports],” Figel says. “They are such a huge time commitment. But my parents do know

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I’ve noticed that playing sports helps me be more efficient with my time.”

to play three sports.

“We all know

what it is like to play a sport at Chadwick: It is fun, but it can also be very time-consuming.

“I play three sports because I love exercising and spending time with friends, but I have had to deal with the work time I lose by sacrificing sleep. But that is a sacrifice I am willing to take because I feel as though the benefits

Elizabeth Haile
Senior

and I completely agree that if I didn’t play a third sport during that time after school, I wouldn’t do anything athletic on my own. I think if I didn’t do a sport, I would waste an equal amount of time on Netflix or on social media.”

Figel also struggles with commitment to his teams. He believes that since he has played

these sports for three years, he is almost obligated to play them as a senior. He encourages others to feel like they have the right to try out new sports and not feel too tied to sports that they don’t enjoy.

“I’m kind of questioning whether I want to try new sports or figure out something else to do outside of school, but I feel like I have a sense of commitment now that I’ve gone through the sports for three years,” he says.

“As for advice, I think it’s worth trying any sport. But if you don’t enjoy the sport and you aren’t necessarily adding very much to the team, I think it’s OK if you drop it.”

Haile highlights the benefits of playing three sports. She values the social aspect of the teams and the unlikely friendships she has made.

“I think the athletic program here is one of the best ways to meet people,” Haile says.

“I really enjoy getting to know the younger students now. Even

though it’s my senior year and I don’t necessarily have to play three sports, I want to because I get to know a lot of people that I wouldn’t otherwise.”

Haile also believes that athletics are the reason for her being able to focus on her schoolwork.

Unlike many students who blame their history readings at 2 a.m. on a basketball game in Pasadena, Haile considers her participation and commitment to sports an aid to her overall efficiency.

“I’ve noticed that playing sports helps me be more efficient with my time because when I’m not playing sports, I tend to assume I have a lot of time...which I then waste on social media,” she says.

“So when I’m playing sports, I understand that I am more limited for time, and I tend to be more effective with my time.

“Also, being active and having those two hours of fun socializing helps me when I get down to my homework. I can focus a lot more.”