

Sports

Sachem gridiron standouts are also leaders in classroom

By ROGER AMSDEN
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Laconia High School football coach and athletic director Craig Kozens says that having three football players top the list of academic achievers in the LHS class of 2018 is something he takes great pride in.

“It’s really unique. There’s probably not another high school in the country that has the same situation as we do. They’re great kids who are well-grounded and serve as an example for their classmates, both in the classroom and on the football field,” said Kozens.

The three seniors, Ben Beliveau, Drew Muzzey and Thomas Bastis, have the highest cumulative grade-point averages in their class, a rarity in an era in which girls dominate the top 10 student rankings in high schools by a 2-1 margin.

Kozens said it’s the first time in his 17 years at the school that he’s seen three football players at the top of the grade-point chart.

“It’s like living a dream to see these kids showing the same effort and dedication that they do on the football field in their classes. Their desire to excel is something that makes all the effort that coaches and teachers put into their jobs worthwhile. They end up inspiring us,” said Kozens.

Bastis, third-ranked, has been accepted at Cornell University and he says he’s a little bit surprised that he’ll be attending an elite Ivy League college.

“I’m the first in my family to be accepted at a four-year college. I was hoping to get into Cornell, but wasn’t sure that I’d get there,” said Bastis.

He’s a math and science kind of person who scored 1,440 on his SAT tests, nearly acing the math part, and is looking to a future as a computer software engineer.

He lives with his mother and sister, who is attending New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord. He says that his mother has worked at New Hampshire Ball Bearing in Laconia for about 20 years and has always encouraged him to do his best in school.

Bastis says he’s grown up with a desire to succeed and knows that he needs to be patient and stick with a task in order to achieve his goals.

Beliveau, top ranked in the class, played linebacker and defensive end for the Sachems and last summer attended the Advanced Studies Program at Saint Paul’s School in Concord, where he studied ecology.

He grew up in Germany, where his father was stationed when he was in the military, and came to Laconia with his family in late 2007.

He says that his mother is a nurse and that both his parents always stressed to him the importance of doing his best and persevering in order for him to be able to be in charge of his own future.

Beliveau enjoys math and science and won the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Medal, which is presented to promising secondary school students who have distinguished themselves in mathematics and science.

He was selected to the Division II All-State team as a defensive end.

He sees a future for himself as an environmental engineer and is looking to attend either RPI, Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts, or the University of Michigan.

Muzzey, who is second-ranked in the class, was the lead rushing back and punt and kickoff returner for the Sachems. He was also named to the Division II All-State team as offensive back.

He enjoys history and English classes and also enjoys software programming in computer science



Laconia High School’s top scholars, Drew Muzzey, Ben Beliveau (standing) and Thomas Bastis, are all members of the football team. (Roger Amsden/Laconia Daily Sun)

classes.

His father, Dustin, is a University of New Hampshire graduate who is facilities manager for Belknap County and both his father and mother have always encouraged him to study hard so he could attend college.

Muzzey has been accepted at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, where he plans to play football and lacrosse. He’s not sure now whether he’ll pursue a career in the computer field or some other interesting and challenging field. But he is determined to succeed.

“I know that, when I’m older, I’ll be able to do something that I love rather than working at a dead-end job with no future,” said Muzzey.

He’s strongly considering joining the ROTC program at Bowdoin, which will help set him up for a

military career that would be in line with the traditions of his mother’s family, the Bolducs. He said his mother is the daughter of Laconia City Councilman and former mayor Armand Bolduc and that her brothers had long careers in the military.

“It’s something I’m taking a good look at. I know the military is looking for people with computer skills and that would really be interesting,” says Muzzey.

Kozens says that football players take part in a study hall before their daily two-and-a-half-hour practices, which wrap up with a half hour in the weight room.

“They’re always there every day at the study hall and set a great example by helping out other kids who are having trouble with their homework,” says Kozens.

Kids urged to sign up for free lacrosse league

LACONIA — If registered by Feb. 28, kids can play with the Laconia Lacrosse Club for free! The club is affiliated with the New Hampshire Youth Lacrosse Association, the governing body of youth lacrosse in New Hampshire. Uniforms are provided by the league. Kids from the following towns are eligible: Alton, Canterbury, Center Harbor, Franklin, Gilmanton, Belmont, Meredith, Moultonborough, Northfield, Sanbornton, and Tilton.

Laconia Lacrosse fields teams for players of all skill levels, both boys and girls, from grades 1-8. Practices start the week of March 18 and games will be played on Sundays beginning April 8. The season will wrap up with the annual NHYLA State festival the weekend of June 9-10. Lac-

nia Lacrosse plays at the beautiful Bank of New Hampshire turf stadium at Laconia High School, and hosts the state’s North/South Games over Memorial Day weekend, which brings players from all over the state in friendly competition.

There will be a substantial late fee assessed March 1, so parents are encouraged to register their kids by Feb. 28. Player must join US Lacrosse by visiting www.uslacrosse.org/membership and should open an account on the Laconia Lacrosse Club website in order to be placed on a roster, by visiting leagueathletics.com/Registration/Default.asp?org=LACLAX. For more information, email the club at LaconiaLacrosse-Club@gmail.com.