

In a good 'state' for competition

by William Herbst
of *The Gleaner*

With sports and activities happening in the midst of COVID-19, restrictions have affected competition in one way or another. However, with many of the fall sports teams -at Wahlert travelling and playing in the state tournament for their respective sports, the road to state, alongside have COVID restrictions, has many "rules of the road" to navigate

For the football team, the IHSAA has made the playoffs a 64-team playoffs with six rounds for this year versus the traditional 16-team four-round playoffs. "I like the idea that everyone gets a shot in the playoffs," said Quarterback Bryce Rudiger, '23. "Despite there being lots of rounds, I'm glad that we get to prove who we are in the postseason."

Rudiger was confident about the Eagles' chances in the first round, where they faced Charles City at the Rock Bowl on Friday, Oct. 16. "I feel like we'll



'Stating' their dominance

The boys' varsity cross country runners warm up for the Marquette Invitational at Bellevue Golf Course. The boys finished first in the meet.

go out there and get a first round win and have some fun," said Rudiger, '23. And that they did, winning 24-7 before playing Decorah the next Friday at Decorah winning 10-0.

In terms of structure of the competition and restrictions, the Dance Team faces challenges, too. "We have to stay feet apart at all times except during transi-

tions, or else we are automatically disqualified," said Izzy Unga, '23. "In addition to that, it is a month earlier, and we've been putting in twice as many hours this year. Sadly, we don't get to stay overnight with the team this year."

The new state competition has virtual judges this year with no awards ceremony; rather the de-

terminations on who won will be posted online. "I have high hopes despite the new restrictions," said Unga, '23. "Even though there's virtual judges, I feel like our hard work will pay off."

The boys' and girls' cross country teams' road to state has also changed. The state meet for both boys and girls will be split into two days, meaning

that 1A and 2A runners will run on Saturday, Oct. 31, while the 3A and 4A runners run on Friday, Oct. 30 at Lakeside Golf Course in Fort Dodge.

"I don't mind the state meet being split into two days. The only difference is that it's a later time in the day," said Abe Simcox, '23. "I don't think this will affect our competition much, but it is still a shame I can't watch the 1A and 2A runners race."

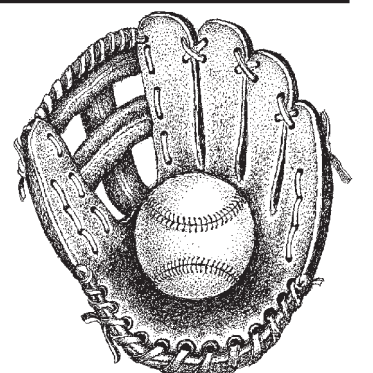
The boys' cross country team is taking extra precautionary measures to make sure that they stay safe and keep their season alive: "Many people on our team got contact-traced earlier this season, so we've all decided to go online for the rest of the season and play it safe," said Simcox.

Postseason is an exciting time for all Wahlert athletics. But as COVID-19 has come about and restrictions have been implemented, the state tournament has changed for those athletes to provide a safer environment for them and their spectators.



First steps toward the hall of fame

Ian Moller, '21, and Tommy Specht, '22, showcase their skills to scouts while playing travel baseball for Iowa Select and Perfect Game.



Making their MLB childhood dreams reality

by Michael Spahn
of *The Gleaner*

Wahlert has two of a kind baseball players.

One is Ian Moller, 21, who is the seventh ranked player in the 2021 MLB Draft rankings. The other, Tommy Specht, '22, recently committed to Kentucky.

From the start, Moller has always had someone pushing him to be great.

"I started playing when I was about 4 or 5 years

old. My biggest influence has always been my Dad. He always encouraged me to keep playing and he taught me how to play."

Moller has some big goals in mind for the future.

"Hopefully, I get drafted and win a lot of awards and championships in the MLB," said Moller.

And with his number 7 ranking in the 2021 MLB Draft class, that is a very real possibility.

"It's pretty cool knowing my hard work paid off. There is still a lot of work to do, but it feels good."

Like Moller, Specht also began playing baseball at a young age

"I started playing baseball when I was 4 and it has always come naturally to me. I played other sports, but baseball stuck out because it came so easy. I love everything about the game."

While playing baseball,

Tommy has always had people in his corner.

"My parents influenced me the most. They have always supported me in what I do and remind me that it is just a game and there are more important things in life."

Specht chose Kentucky because he loved it the moment he stepped on campus.

"Kentucky felt like home. Nothing beats the SEC. And I believe that the

coaching staff will help me become a better player and a better human being."

Specht also hopes to play in the Major Leagues

"I believe Kentucky is a good spot for me to develop into a draft pick and possible opportunities could come out of high school, so I am just working hard every day towards that ultimate goal and not stopping for anything," said Specht.