

The summer before his sophomore year, senior Zach Smith, went for a swim before cross-country practice with graduate Tyson Wieland, captain of the cross country team. "Tyson asked me if I had made my times the day before, and I said no because it was really hot, which was a really dumb excuse," Smith said. "Then he told me, 'That's not going to get it done.'" Smith wrote that on a sticky note in his room. Since then he has not missed a work-out time, and devoted his life to the sport.

"When I first started to run I took it kind of serious, but I took it for granted a little, and I didn't really fully apply myself to the sport," Smith said. After that day with Wieland, Smith changed his perspective. He modified his diet, the amount he slept, and no longer went out with friends on week-ends during season. "I really just focused my entire life on it because it is one of my really only passions I have in my life," Smith said.

His coaches and teammates recognized his devotion to the sport. Head cross country coach Matt Jaschen said, "He never questions the coaches and does a nice job of building relationships with the young guys on the team. They really look up to him because he goes above and beyond in everything that he does."

Smith led the team. "Rarely do you have a high school athlete that possessed so many leadership qualities," Jaschen said. "Good leaders do what is expected. Great leaders go above and beyond what is expected of them. That is Zach."

Smith used multiple tactics to motivate himself. A talented runner from Cedar Rapids Prairie did not apply himself to the sport. "Last year I had a disappointing race at state (placed 72nd) and he went fourth in state after running crap all year. I was so mad and so I put a picture of him above my bed, so that everyday when I woke up I could see him and know that I have to go out there, and I have to train hard so I don't let crap like that beat me," Smith said. "I kind

Photo by: Ahmad Smith
Story by: Abbie Craig
Spread by: Helen Moritz



Above and Beyond
Runner changes lifestyle to succeed

of choked a little bit, and I promised myself I was going to go all state my senior year," Smith said.

State proved challenging his senior year. A bottle neck formed at the start of the race that slowed some racers to a walk. Smith estimated he was in about 80th place. It took him until the two-mile mark to get himself on pace. "I just started to sprint as hard as I could, as soon as I could."

At the finish he collapsed and some lady dragged him off to the side.

Coach Patrick Mattingly told him he had placed 16th, when only the top 15 made all state. "It absolutely sucked, I just broke down," Smith said. Later he found out he actually placed 14th. "I was so happy."

Smith also attributed his success to his coach. He hoped to become a cross country coach because of

Jaschen. "...if I can be half the coach he is I will be shocked," Smith said.

Smith committed to Creighton University. He will run cross country team, and join the unofficial track that races in all meets. "Zach has made huge strides throughout his high school career and he has the mental and physical attributes to become a highly successful athlete at the D-1 level," Jaschen said.



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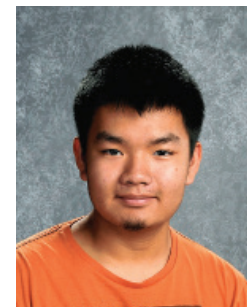
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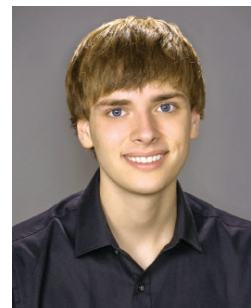
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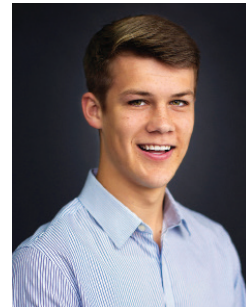
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