

FEATURE

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Basketball rules, but why?

by Kyra Welker

Editor in Chief

Ketchikan is a basketball town. In fact, as much as Texas has a reputation for being a football state, Alaska is a basketball state. Closed businesses, empty streets, crowded gyms. Year in and year out, Ketchikan residents donate hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars to support kids, but that dedication isn't always reflected in the stands.

"I think the community does support all Kayhi kids, but the attendance at activities seems to be determined by the sport's popularity and the community's interest in it," said junior guard Brittany Slick. Last season the girls basketball team went 25-3 and finished third at the state tournament. It was the most successful season in school history and the back-to-back-to-back Region V titles were also a first.

"The whole community comes and watches our games and knows who we are," said Slick. "People come up to me in the grocery store or restaurants to talk about last weekend's game or how our season is looking - as well as teachers and even other students congratulating us on our wins and performances. Thanks to the success, locals showed up in droves."

"I think this community supports all kids. In fact this community supports girls activities more than any other community I have been to in Alaska," said girls basketball coach Kelly Smith.

While the boys team enjoyed similar success (one region title, three trips to the state tournament), the buzz surrounding the team was greater. Unfortunately, the buzz doesn't always spill over to other sports.

Slick said fans are drawn to the style of play and culture of following basketball more than other sports.

"Ultimately, the boys team at Kayhi does get more supporters and



An example of how large the crowds get during basketball. (Courtesy of Payton Simmons).

spectators, it's a given fact," said Slick. "I do believe, in some sports, it is because they play at a more uptempo, physical pace and that's what people like to watch. Girls are more logical and consistent on the court than guys are, which could make games slower or boring to watch for some people."

While success is not only limited to basketball, the amount of game-day support, from students and community members sometimes is.

"There are definitely bigger turnouts [for other Kayhi sports] than there are in sports like football or wrestling," said junior athlete Micah Eichner.

The same goes for volleyball, soccer, track and field and other Kayhi

activities regardless of whether or not it is a girls or boys team.

The Kayhi volleyball team is the defending Region V champions, yet on game days only half of the bleachers are pulled out, and even those aren't jampacked with supporters.

The wrestling team, the most successful sports team at Kayhi, has won 23 region titles - including the last eight.

The biggest draw is the annual Bill Weiss tournament, but the stands are filled with as many athletes from other schools as spectators.

Packed stands or not, coaches encourage athletes to represent Ketchikan well.

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College

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interested in. Remember, the more scholarships you apply for the more chance for success.

Deciding what college to go to is the biggest and sometimes the hardest decision for a highschooler. There are thousands of choices in thousands of different places all around the world which can be overwhelming. A way to make the decision easier is to find what classes you like and are good at and look for schools that excel in and offer a major for your specific likings. Some schools are big enough to offer a major for practically anything while others focus on a certain subject and give very in depth education into that subject. Some people can't stand certain places because of the weather. Make sure that if you have a strong preference on climate, you find a college within your boundaries. Also size

can sometimes make people feel uncomfortable so if you don't like crowds you may want to focus on small schools. Finally, money can be a key deciding factor. A lot of colleges will empty your pockets and put you in major debt but if you plan good enough you can drastically decline that chance, or you can find a nice community college that is affordable and still offers a good education.

Colleges like smart people and the only way colleges are able to see if you are smart is through your test scores and your GPA. Making sure you stay on top of your classes is essential. Many high schoolers do not take their freshman or sophomore year seriously and end up regretting it because their GPA is crippled and a college won't accept them. Tests such as the PSAT, SAT, and ACT are nationwide tests used to measure the intelligence of students. They are also key factors

in what colleges look for in accepting students. Colleges have a chart that show the relationship between test scores and GPA and the probability that they will accept you. If you have a bad GPA and good test scores there is a good possibility that they will accept you or vice versa if you have bad test scores but a great GPA you can still get accepted. These tests have a time limit and are quite difficult. Any chance you get to take the tests is a good idea because the more you practice the better you'll perform.

"They're [colleges] wanting kids who've shown community service, leadership, academic excellence, and those who challenge themselves," said McCloskey. "Then it's just the matter of getting it on paper."

Getting ready for college is a big and difficult process. But if you break it down over time and into simple tasks it can glide right by.

A year from home



Ella Hillberry enjoying the scenery in Lapua, Finland. (Courtesy of Ella Hillberry).

by Farren Linne
Staff Writer

"Honestly, the first thing I thought was, 'What did I get myself into?'"

Traveling 4,147 miles away from home can be extremely frightening. For junior Ella Hillberry, this was no exception. Lapua, Finland was somewhere she had never even heard of before, but soon she would be calling it her home.

She worked hard to prepare herself for new experiences and a complete culture change. Hillberry would be leaving for a whole year and stepping foot in a country she knew little about.

"The biggest way I prepared myself was by meeting other exchange students online," said Hillberry.

Seven months ago she was preparing to start her new life. By talking to other students going through the same situation, she was able to feel much more comfortable. Not only would she be experiencing a new home life, she would also be receiving a new type of education spoken in a completely different language.

"Here you don't have the same classes everyday," Hillberry said. "It's interesting how having block classes really helps benefit my work ethic."

According to an article on Education.com, Finland has the fifth best educational system in the world. Ella explained how teachers put all of the responsibility on students. Teachers don't check your homework or force you to do your classwork, they give you the freedom to choose what you do and don't do.

From home to school meal times fall somewhere in between. Food varies from country to country, and Finland's food choice is much different from America.

"In Finland, people focus on a very simple diet. When walking into a grocery store there will only be about 12 different drink options and 6 different types of cereal," Hillberry said.

Ella describes Finland as "a very self sufficient country". Most of their diets are based on food grown in their country. Processed food is not very common.

Coming from America, people are always chatting up a storm. Finnish

people are stereotypically much quieter than the average American. Hillberry states,

"If you're sitting with your friends most of the time you'll be sitting in silence," said Hillberry. "When at home you'd walk past your friend and say something like 'hey what's up?'"

In Finland, people place great value on words. Most people don't talk as much to avoid "unnecessary" small talk. They feel that silence is more valuable over excessive talking.

Ella was extremely grateful for this opportunity she was given. She said that her number one goal was to take the chance to be herself. Hillberry states,

"You should really appreciate what you're given and not care what people think. The moment that I stopped caring if people judged me was in the first week and that's when I started having the most fun here."

Ella was able to have the best time by opening up and being herself. She was able to adapt to the new culture and make the most of her experience. Finland may not have been her first choice, but she was happy with how it all ended up.

"People here are a lot more grateful for what they've been given and they make sure to not take anything for granted. They really understand that this is the world that we are going to be living in the rest of our lives and they really try to take good care of it."

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