

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight

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Hoppes is Not your Ordinary Grease Monkey

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

Junior Paige Hoppes of Hagerman High School does it all. You name it, she is involved; from volleyball to cross country to basketball to track and cheerleading, Hoppes is engaged in the Bobcat Nation. Did I mention she is also a member of Business Professionals of America and Future Farmers of America? She somehow does all of this, while holding down a job at her dad's auto shop at night. Hoppes has mastered the art of time management.

"It is definitely hard to balance school, sports and a job at my dad's auto shop but I just make sure that my schoolwork comes first."

Hoppes admits that her sports career was average at best in the beginning, as she struggled to find her way in middle school. She said it all changed when she reached high school.

"I wasn't always good at sports. In fact, I was pretty bad in middle school, but when I got to high school something changed. I am not sure exactly what it was that changed it around but if I were to point to one thing, I would have to say being with my teammates and knowing they are counting on me made me want to try harder for them."

She has been involved in FFA since she was in middle school and joined BPA as a sophomore. Hoppes says that both activities have helped her come out of her shell, claiming that she was an extremely shy person before getting involved.

"I joined BPA last year and I've been involved in FFA since middle school. I used to be shy and I think both BPA and FFA have helped me come out of my shell a little bit. My involvement has also helped me become a leader in the classroom and on the playing field. I don't have a problem talking to people anymore and BPA and FFA have helped me tremendously."

In just her first year in BPA, Hoppes found success, placing first in the regional competition and 11th at the State level. Although only the top-10 from state earn the right to compete at Nationals Hoppes took the opportunity to participate at the leadership conference in Boston and says it was a great experience.

"It was amazing to go to the BPA Nationals in Boston. I really learned a great deal about being a leader and how to lead others. We would be done with our meetings around noon and then go sightseeing. To see all the historical sites in Boston was amazing."

Although Hoppes has gained many life experiences through sports and activities, working with her father at his auto shop has also taught her valuable lessons as well.

"I've been around cars since I could walk. My dad runs his



auto shop out of our garage at the house and he needs the help, so my two younger siblings and I help him at night. My brother fixes small motors and my sister and I work on the bigger projects.”

She continued by saying, “My dad makes us work for our money. I am responsible for paying my own phone bill. Having a job and earning my own money has taught me how to manage my money. It is a good life lesson to know at an early age. It is preparing me to use my money wisely.”

Following high school, Hoppes is hopeful to attend college and earn an engineering degree but is also contemplating opening up her own auto shop and following in her father’s footsteps as a mechanic.

“I’ve considered going to New Mexico Tech and getting an engineering degree. I have also considered becoming a mechanic and opening my own shop someday. My dad and I also have a lot of old vehicles we are rebuilding. We own a couple of rental properties here in Hagerman and are currently remodeling one of them. So, I guess you can say I do some carpenter work on the side as well.”

Regardless of which path Hoppes decides to travel, you can rest assured she will be leading the pack.