



New Mexico Activities Association Student Spotlight

So Much to do and Taos High School Senior Eli Collignon Handles It All

By Arnie Leshin

The Taos High School tennis team was set to travel to Farmington to compete but, for senior Eli Collignon, the show must go on off the court.

Head coach Kurt Edelbrock understands and realizes that Collignon has plenty on his plate. The youngster also plays some soccer, participates in drama, sings, plays with a student band that he formed and more.

On this day, Collignon had rehearsal for a school play in which he had one of the leading roles, but he assured Edelbrock that he'd be back for the next matches as he wished the team luck as it traveled to this tournament.

"He's quite a student-athlete," said the coach, who began the tennis program back in 1989. "One important thing is that he is diversified. In tennis, he has really improved, especially with his mobility and ground strokes, and his serve is not bad."

"Then he has that contagious smile, a super attitude and has fun out there. He's just a pleasure to have around."

Currently, Collignon is listed as the team's second to fourth singles player. In doubles, perhaps on the No. 1 or No. 2 team.

Then there's his busy, busy everyday schedule that presently includes the school production of "Midsummer Night's Dream," where he has the role of Oberon. It's a show that will be playing at the Taos Community of the Arts.

He has no problem reciting his everyday activities.

"Well," he said, "I'm hooked on exploring music, doing theater stuff like drama shows, musicals, watching films, being a journalist by writing and traveling a lot, and being with my band, 'Life Support,' that I founded back in the 8th grade."

Taking the band first, he obviously could do a one-man show.

"I play the drums, guitar, piano, bass, violin, and do vocals," he said. "We play outside of school at some venues. As for the singing part, we do this with original music. We also do harmonizing."

Shows? Well he recently played the lead role of Willie Wonka in the "Chocolate Factory." But, he's also into other theater roles like in Shakespeare.

As for movies, he's a big fan, follows them, but admitted he doesn't watch the Academy Awards.

So much to do, but he also fits in enjoying baseball as a spectator, although he said he did find time to play second base or shortstop at an early stage and he's played soccer for four years.

Oh, and he once played a good game of chess, very good he



said when he was younger.

Taos Athletic Director Nickie McCarty is also on his bandwagon.

“Eli has an excessive amount of activities,” she said. “I know him through athletics, never taught him in class, but I know he has good grades.”

“I watched him play as the MC (master of ceremonies) in “The Night of a Thousand Stars” and he was in the talent show that played at the Taos Community Center. I did watch him on the tennis courts and he was relaxed and cheered on his teammates.”

Not to leave anything out, Collignon recently created a radio show that is mixed with comedy and mystery.

“We write all the scripts,” he said, “and perform them on the air on KNCE 95.05.”

As for tennis, it’s his favorite sport and he has reasons why.

“I love it,” he said, “It’s an individual sport and I’ve been playing now for four years. You make your own one-on-one decisions and you have to stay calm and be competitive to do well. I also enjoy supporting my teammates.”

Coach Edelbrock said he’s a joy to coach, that he laughs along with us over things, doesn’t let pressure bother him and is tenacious.

“We don’t have courts at the high school and the public courts are damaged,” the coach said, “so we play at the Quail Ridge Inn courts in Taos.”

With all this going for him, Collignon is also a family man. He was born and raised in Taos, but his parents relocated from other states.

He has two older brothers and two younger twins. His parents own a roofing company and he has no problem working for them.

“Myself, my brothers, we all chip in.” he said. “And my dad has written four fiction books on the roofing business. My mom also teaches yoga and works as a waitress.”

He doesn’t do yoga or wait on tables, but his dad’s writing skills is probably how he also relates to journalism.

If he has time for other things, more power to him. He has hobbies, like horseback riding. He has a favorite baseball team in the Chicago Cubs, hoping that they finally win a World Series.

As for continuing his education in college, Collignon has looked at the possibility of attending Hampshire College, a private liberal arts school in Amherst, Mass.

“It has a unique program,” he said. “I’ve been accepted there, but it a super expensive school, so I don’t know.”

Then there’s an interest in the University of New Mexico.

“I’m looking at that,” he said, “because I intend to do some musicals. It’s in Albuquerque, and there I could probably obtain an agent in order to get parts in shows.”

With all that he does, there’s no doubt he will find the time and the place in which he can further his education, for he does have a variety of choices.