

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight

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Cooper Encourages Involvement

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

Hondo Valley senior Joyce Anne Cooper has enjoyed every moment of her middle school and high school career, taking advantage of every opportunity she had in front of her at Hondo Valley. Before middle school, though, Cooper never really knew what involvement in sports and activities was all about.

“I never really paid much attention to sports before getting to middle school. I would attend the occasional sporting event but I really was not that interested. I wasn’t even sure going into my sixth-grade year that I wanted to try out for the team but I’m glad I made that choice to try and I haven’t looked back or regretted a single moment since.”

She continued by saying, “I really got involved in sports when I was in sixth grade. I started playing basketball and volleyball and then in eighth grade, I made the varsity. I also started running track in eighth grade as well. Overall, it has been a great experience in all three sports.”

Cooper, a three-sport athlete in volleyball, basketball and track and field says that winning a state title would be a dream come true but just getting the opportunity to compete at that level is special as well.

“To compete in a State Championship is amazing. You get to see the best teams in the state and compare yourself or your team to those other teams. As a competitor, you want to play the best competition and the State Championships give you that opportunity. You also get a chance to see other teams from around the state that you may not see during the regular season.”

She continued, “I’ve been fortunate enough to make the State Track & Field meet every year and in 2017 we made the State Basketball Tournament. To compete at State and compete with my teammates that have the same goals as me has been a wonderful opportunity and hopefully this year we can make it in all three sports.”

When asked what impact playing sports has had in her life, Cooper said there were too many to count, however, leadership skills and friendships were two areas that stuck out to her the most.

“Being involved in sports has taught me to be a better leader, a better teammate, and friend. It has taught me to work with others and push through tough times. I’m not sure I would have acquired all of these characteristics if I didn’t play sports.”

Cooper is also involved in FFA and the 4H Club at Hondo Valley.

“Over the last four years, I have taken advantage of the opportunity to be involved in anything I can. I’m involved in Knowledge Bowl, I was the Lincoln County Fair Queen, I show and



raise animals in FFA and 4H Club.”

Cooper continued by saying, “I would say the best thing I have taken away from all these activities has been the opportunity to meet and make friends with so many people not just at Hondo Valley but across the State. I have built some great relationships that will last a lifetime.”

She was selected as the 2017-18 Student Body President, after serving as her junior class representative in 2016-17. Cooper said it is an honor to be selected to lead her school.

“Last year I was the junior class representative and this year I was just elected as Student Council President. I am honored to be able to lead my fellow classmates this coming school year. It made me feel good that my peers believe in me to lead our school.”

In her spare time, Cooper raises goats and rams and shows ranch steers, participating in the Lincoln County Fair over the last several years. She said that raising and showing animals is a huge responsibility and managing her time has been difficult.

“I have participated in the Lincoln Fair for the last few years. I have learned so much about responsibility and time management. There is a lot of hard work and time that goes into raising and showing animals but I have learned to juggle those responsibilities, along with my school work and sports activities.”

She continued, “I try to really stay on top of my responsibilities. I’m not going to lie, it is a struggle sometimes when you travel to far away places and have to do your school work on the bus to and from games but I have learned to manage my time as best I can.”

Cooper currently carries a 4.2 GPA and plans to attend New Mexico State University next Fall, in hopes of one day becoming a veterinarian or an athletic trainer.