



New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight

Lovington's Bailey Embodies True Student-Athlete

By Douglas Clark - Hobbs News-Sun

Although there is no patented formula for student-athletes seeking a healthy balance between academics and athletics, it's pretty safe to say Lovington senior Caden Bailey has a pretty good idea of what's required to be successful in both realms.

"It takes a lot of time and effort to balance school and sports," said Bailey, who possesses a 4.6 grade point average and competes in football, basketball and golf for the Wildcats. "I know school comes first, so I have to work hard and buckle down. With practice and game time to consider, time management is important so I have to make that extra effort to apply myself to my studies."

Bailey, who also serves as president of Lovington's National Honor Society chapter and participates in the Science Olympiad, has been juggling multiple sports since middle school. He draws a parallel between his classroom approach and the manner in which he goes about his business on the field of play.

"I think football teaches work ethic," Bailey said. "The sport takes focus and concentration and you need those same traits in the classroom. I know that same high level of determination I have in the classroom carries over to athletics. I'm driven to compete in the classroom and with athletics. - I also try to be vocal in the classroom and on the field, encouraging my classmates and teammates to work their hardest."

Lovington football coach Jaime Quinones extended kudos to Bailey for his stellar work ethic and drive.

"He's a great young man and academics have always been a priority," Quinones said. "He continually strives to be the best student he can be. That type of drive is going to get him to a great university. I'm very proud of him."

And Bailey never fails to step to the forefront when needed, Quinones said.

"He just has that charisma about him and possesses those leadership skills you just can't teach," he said. "He's great to have on the field and is that calming influence who pushes the kids to be the best they can be. He's an extension of me on the field. And you can't ask for anything more than that."

Bailey said his parents, Michael and Kelli, have served as a guiding influence every step of his journey.

"They always encouraged me to do my best," he said. "They have never expected me to be perfect, but they have always wanted me to give my best effort in the classroom or on the field or court. My dad is the booster club president and my mom is helping me to apply to various schools. They've backed me 100 percent academically and athletically and I'm very appreciative of their support."

With regard to his short and long term goals, Bailey has designs on serving as class valedictorian and attending Duke University after graduation. He also plans to pursue a law



degree.

Bailey's academic aspirations have been bolstered by his recent landing of the 2015 Jack Maddox Distinguished Scholar Award, marking the third time a Lovington High School student has received the honor, which entails a \$20,000 "full ride" encompassing tuition, fees, room and board to the college or university of his choice for four years.

"I was familiar with the application process because my brother, Josh, was a finalist five years ago," Bailey said. "So I was a little less nervous about it. Once I received the news that I was the recipient, I was super excited and psyched about such a tremendous opportunity that will benefit me for the rest of my life. It's a prestigious honor and strengthens the college application process."

Bailey, whose favorite subjects are mathematics and science, said Josh has been a constant source of inspiration.

"He's also been a huge influence on me," Caden said of his brother, who currently plays football at Wayland Baptist University. "He was a three-sport athlete here (Lovington) and graduated with a 4.0 grade point average. He always kind of set the standard and I've tried to meet that standard he set for me. I try to reach for dreams and goals while never giving up. Just keep grinding when things get tough, both academically and athletically."

Quinones said Bailey is to be commended for being the very best that he can be.

"You can have all of the athletic ability, but if you don't have good character there's something missing," he said. "Caden has great character and it's one of the reasons why he is where he is today. He's a wonderful role model that makes us all proud."