

Outside The Lines With: Tommy Hemingway

Becoming a member of the Sandwich High School track team was one of the best things he has done, according to senior Tommy Hemingway. Never having competed before his freshman year and now in his fourth season, Hemingway is one of the captains of the Blue Knights this spring.

Always a sprinter, last fall he joined the cross-country squad for the first time, trying his hand at distance running. This winter he was a captain of the Blue Knight indoor track team. He is also a member of the Knights Theater Company, the International Studies Club and the Philosophy Club.

How would you describe the Blue Knight spring track and field team?

The spring track team is like one big family. This is one of the team's biggest strengths, in my opinion. In a sport like track, you're always striving for your next personal record, to do better than you did last time in your race or come in first in your race, and it's easy to lose track of the big picture—that we're a whole team, and no matter how well you as an individual do, it takes the whole team to really succeed. We are all so supportive of each other and sometimes it makes all the difference. We all cheer for each other and oftentimes that is the difference between doing well and doing poorly.

You ran winter track and did cross-country last fall.

This year I did cross-country and winter track, each for the first time. I did cross-country mainly due to the pushing of others, my coach and some other track team members. One day over the summer they told me, "A bunch of us got together and we decided you are doing cross-country this year." I was petrified. I had spent the past three years training specifically for short sprint races and had never had very good stamina that would be needed for distance running. But I tried it anyway, because everyone wanted me to and it would be really good training for my final spring season; and I was surprised to find I really enjoyed it. It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, and I've noticed I have better stamina this spring season than I've had in the past. I also did winter track this year because I thought it would be a good way to keep in shape between cross-country and spring track, and I had been thinking about doing it anyway to have something to do in the winter.

You're one of the spring team captains.

I am really excited about being a captain this year. Being a captain is really important to me because it is important to the team as a whole. With so many people on the team and so many different parts of the team—sprinting, jumping, throwing, and distance—the coaches can't be in every place at once, so it's really helpful for them to have captains. They tell the captain what needs to be done and the plan for that day's practice, and the captain oversees it and puts it into motion. I like it because it shows the coaches have trust in me and my abilities to pass on the information they have told and taught me over the past years, almost like helping to continue their legacy, which is huge for me because I have gained so much respect for the coaches, and their trust is especially important to me

You joined the Knights Theater Company this year.

I joined KTC this year mainly because I hadn't done anything but track since freshman year, and I wanted to expand my palette and try some new things. I had a few friends who already did KTC, so I figured I would give it a try. It was a lot of fun, and it helped me with my slight fear of public speaking. I also got closer to a lot of my friends and made some new friends I wouldn't have met otherwise, and I'm really happy to have met them and worked so hard.

What role have athletics played in your high school experience?

Athletics have played a huge role in my high school experience. Being part of a team and something bigger than just myself has been great for me. I had never been part of a real team before and everyone is so close that I learned a lot about people from it and gained social skills I was lacking before. I owe a lot of who I am today to this team.

What will be some of your favorite memories from SHS?

I think one memory I will never forget would be my first track meet ever, right before the race started. I had never had a game or meet before, never run or performed in front of a crowd, and there were people watching but I wasn't nervous at all. I think about that time a lot, because now when I run, just before the race, I am always nervous, and I find it funny that I wasn't then, but am now. There aren't too many other specific memories I have, just a lot of events like doing KTC and the first performance, and this year's pep rally senior skit in which I also helped. I think the biggest thing I will take from senior year and high school in general is my confidence in front of crowds. I used to be terrified of them, but this year I have branched out and learned to not only be unafraid but to really enjoy them. I also will remember a lot of people, mainly my close friends who have helped me through so much in the past four years, and the track coaches.

Who has been your inspiration?

I think the track team, in general, and all my coaches and teammates have all been a huge inspiration for me. Joining freshman year, having never been part of a team, I learned so much about being part of a team that I never learned before. I had never been very social, never part of a group of close people all supporting each other and doing things to help someone other than themselves. I gained so many social skills that will help me throughout the rest of my life.

Is there anyone to whom you would like to say thank you?

First, I would like to thank my parents. They pushed me to do track my freshman year when I didn't want to, and I owe them so much from that because I can't even imagine where I would be, if I hadn't done track. They really pushed me to do it and are so supportive of it, driving me to practices when I need it and paying for it, not to mention giving me life. That's a big one, too. Second, I would like to thank Coach Steve Infascelli. He was the one who really pushed me to not only do cross-country and winter track, but to always be the best I can possibly be at the sport. One quote I will always remember from him, and I know I will use later in life, is, "Push through every barrier of pain." It's helped me with track because, no matter how much it hurts, you can never give up. You are counting on yourself

and so are your teammates, and you can't let them down. Life is like that, too. No matter how hard it gets or how much it hurts, you have to keep going. There isn't any other option.

Do you plan to attend college?

I do plan to attend college. I'm going to Cape Cod Community College for two years to figure things out a bit. I'm not entirely sure about what I want to do with my life after college, so I need to find that out before I make any more permanent plans. I hope to continue running in college, if possible, and will keep running for the rest of my life.