



**CONNOR HORN**  
**NVHS BOOSTER CLUB FEATURED ATHLETE OF THE WEEK**  
**BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PROGRAM**

Connor Horn started out as a baseball player, having played the sport until his 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He was introduced to running in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, as a fun and natural outlet that appealed to his personality and body build: "I was always pretty competitive when it came to racing friends and running fast around the playground so running seemed like the natural choice, especially because I was too small for most other sports." His love for running, the great friendships born out of the camaraderie of long hours of practice and the succession of arm injuries caused by baseball ended up causing his focus to shift to cross country and he started competing exclusively as a runner in seventh grade.

Through his four years of high school Connor has learned that to succeed in sports, as in life, one has to make sacrifices and hard choices. His recipe to juggle academics and sports "is all about time management. Sometimes you have to sacrifice one in order to benefit the other, but you really can't leave time for much else if you really want to give yourself the chance to succeed in both." As tough as it may seem, he adds that "teams also provide relief from such a rigorous academic life, while letting you bond with your friends as well". Another positive: "teams give people a sense of accountability that keeps many from feeling lost in the flow of such a large high school".

Connor tells us that, with time, he had to learn to seek balance: "one thing that I've learned throughout my time running is the importance of getting really good sleep. I now benefit from this, but I wish I had been a lot more effective with my time freshman and sophomore year so I could have slept more."

When asked what lesson he learned from playing competitive sports that may serve him well in his adult life, Connor said: "I have learned the importance of relationships with people and how others can push you to be your best. I have been taught such valuable lessons in compassion and understanding that go way beyond racing and competing in meets". He adds that the coaches are fundamental in teaching life skills to the athletes. "Our coaches work hard to inspire us and keep us at our best, but they have taught us that at the root of every great team is self-motivation. Because of this, we are motivated to work hard when the coaches aren't there and when there is nobody to show off to."

In fact, Connor has shown this very same work ethic through his rehabilitation time from a serious injury that left him incapable of running for 6 months. Connor suffered a stress fracture to his

navicular bone and had to miss his entire sophomore cross-country season. He says: "it took all the willpower I could exert and all the support I got to continue to bike and swim to maintain my fitness. I couldn't run with my friends and do what I loved, but with everyone's help I got through it."

He no doubt did! In his senior season, which is not even half way through yet, he holds the third fastest time for three miles in the history of Neuqua!

I asked him how he did it. Here is his answer: "if you are going to devote so much of your time to something, like I try to do with running, you have to try and do it to the best of your ability. It's so important to do everything with the focus of getting better to validate all that time you devote to it at practice."