



HANNAH GERDES
NVHS BOOSTER CLUB FEATURED ATHLETE OF THE WEEK
GIRL TENNIS PROGRAM

The NVHS Athletic Booster Club is proud to present the featured athlete of this week, tennis player Hannah Gerdes. The criteria we give each coach to nominate her/his athlete is their contribution to the team and their sportsmanship and leadership. When we asked coach Bennorth what were the reasons why she had nominated Hannah, she responded: "I chose Hannah because of her HUGE improvement as a tennis player, her "coach-ability" as a player and Hannah's positive attitude. She is also one of the Sr. Captains and sets a wonderful example as a player. She is almost TOO nice when she is playing! I'd like her to have a little more "killer" spirit. Her sportsmanship is exemplarily. I am very proud of her, as she has matured this year!"

Booster Club Reporter: When have you started playing tennis?

Hannah: I've played recreationally for pretty much my whole life. My mom played in college so she really wanted my sister and I to play too. I started playing seriously the summer before freshman year, so probably around four years. At that time I used to play competitive soccer, but after my freshman year I decided to dedicate myself to tennis.

Booster Club Reporter: What was the deciding factor for you to focus only on tennis?

Hannah: Tennis has always been in the back of my mind because the entirety of my mom's side of the family plays, but I was really drawn to the individual accountability of it. I had always played soccer, which is a team sport and I still wanted the closeness of a team, but I also wanted something where I could pinpoint what I needed to change and fix it.

Booster Club Reporter: Tell me a bit about your journey on the team...has it always been an easy one?

Hannah: Making the team junior year, I was the last person to make it, and stayed pretty much at the bottom the whole season. Everyone playing around me, looked so good and I wondered if I had the talent to be on this team, but playing with people so much better than me made me a much better player and gave me something to look up to for the future.

Booster Club Reporter: So what is the biggest life lesson tennis has taught you?

Hannah: I've learned many lessons. I've learned to trust my abilities and myself; I've learned to rely on my team to help me when I need it; I've learned to lead by example and I've learned to never sell myself short. Just a couple of weekends ago, we were playing a team who was really talented. I wasn't playing that well. I allowed myself for a moment to have doubts about whether or not I was on the same level as everyone else on the court, but then coach Bennorth told us that if we wanted this match it was ours to win. I realized that I had just as much right to be on this court as everyone else. It helped me realize that while it is fundamental that you rely on your partner you also have to believe in yourself. I started playing JV2 my freshman year and now I'm playing on varsity. I honestly never really believed that I would be answering these questions or even playing my senior year, so I just have to keep pushing myself, and be open for whatever the future brings.

Booster Club Reporter: What makes you a winner?

Hannah: I am very lucky to have both a great partner and a great team. I have improved so much just by getting to play with everyone at practice. I also think having a positive attitude helps a lot. It's easy to get down on yourself when you're playing a match so staying optimistic helps me overcome a lot.

Booster Club Reporter: Who is your role model? Why?

Hannah: My role model is my sister. She is a lot more organized and driven than I am. I look up to her to see where I should be and what I should be doing. She is a genuinely good person, which is something I'm trying to learn how to be.

Booster Club Reporter: Do you have a favorite quote?

Hannah: One of my favorite quotes is by Oscar Wilde. It says "we were all in the gutter but some of us were looking at the stars".