

WAKE-UP CALL

Early morning workouts highlight athletes' dedication to sport

Eric Miller | Staff Writer

The clock strikes 5:00 a.m. Most students are sleeping, but not Mason's athletes as they are preparing to start their day with a morning workout rather than a cup of coffee.

Varsity baseball coach, Curt Bly, said one of the reasons his baseball program works out before school is due to the sheer size of the athletic program.

"The amount of sports and teams that we have at the high school makes it difficult if you have large numbers of students to have them (workout) after school," Bly said.

According to Bly, the morning workouts are more than just time to workout, they show who's dedicated to the program and who's not.

"Another big reason is I think it does demonstrate a commitment," Bly said. "It's not easy getting up and getting in to do that."

For junior swimmer Jordan Decker the most difficult part of the morning workout is not the early wake-up call but the first moments in the natatorium pool.

"Just diving in the water (is the worst) because it's really cold in the morning," Decker said.

Although some athletes find these workouts annoying and inconvenient, senior Tyler Krabbe said that although he has to wake up earlier, the early start doesn't have a huge impact on him after.

"You're tired throughout the day," Krabbe said. "But it's not too bad, you can still focus and get through your day."

Decker echoed Krabbe's thoughts, she said the early start helps her attack her day.

"I feel like morning practices wake me up for the rest of the school day," Decker said. "You can also get more training in and it makes it all worth it in the end."

Head coach of the boys cross-country team, Thomas Rapp, said it's the responsibility of the student athlete to lessen the blow of the earlier wake-up time.

"(Athletes are only tired) if they haven't been responsible enough to go to bed earlier the night before," Rapp said. "That's something that I push hard with my runners. If you go to bed earlier the night before, it's not a very big deal."

Rapp also said he doesn't require freshmen to attend the morning practice to help them become acquainted with high school.

"(Morning practices are) only for our top sophomores, juniors and seniors," Rapp said. "I want freshmen to adjust to life as a high school student."

Bly said his team follows a tightly structured workout program for these early morning training sessions.

"We have a three-phase workout program that we do," Bly said. "One is initial strength development, we move into heavier lifting and core development and then in-season lift. There's certainly a science behind it, there's research behind it, we're not just in there running around."

Bly also said that his team's commitment to the early morning training has paid off with success on the field.

"I've seen in our program over the years that we've been committed to an off-season lift program, the last seven years, I think it's a contributing factor to the success (of) our program," Bly said.

The numbers back up Bly's claim. Over the last seven years the Mason baseball team has gone 135-62. This includes a record of 51-6 over the past two seasons. According to Bly the morning workouts also serve as a lesson for his team.

"The commitment that's required to be part of those morning workouts is a lesson that young people will have to learn at some point," Bly said. "Sometimes you don't feel like it. The difference between your feelings and your discipline to your commitment are often different."



Photo by Madison Krell
Junior Justin Koehler and sophomores Tony Rabe and Peyton Krell run during morning practice.

