

Sports Week

The amazing Race

Dallas athlete earns 11 letters

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. — Mike Race began his high school athletic career as a sure-handed football receiver with the ability to run patterns like a seasoned veteran.

Four years later, he finished his career as one of the best athletes in the history of Dallas High School.

The 18-year-old son of Bill and Sandy Race earned three varsity letters this school year to bring his career total to 11. Race earned four letters in football, four in baseball and three in basketball for the Mountaineers.

"That's almost impossible to accomplish anymore," said Dallas athletic director Jack Wolensky, a former multi-sport performer at Dallas in the 1970s. "With each sport having off-season conditioning programs and the prep time before each season, it's a major time commitment. It just goes to show you what an incredible athlete Mike Race is."

And the letters weren't handed to him.

He was a standout in football and baseball, breaking into baseball team's starting lineup as a freshman and seeing significant playing time in football as a ninth-grader. Race was selected to the Wyoming Valley Conference Coaches Association all-star teams in both sports since his sophomore year. He set three all-time school records in football and hit above .400 for three seasons in baseball as a shortstop/outfielder.

Race earned his first varsity letter as a freshman under football coach Ted Jackson. Earning another 10 didn't cross his mind until he was called up to play varsity baseball.

"I thought an injury might be the only thing that could prevent me from accomplishing it," he said. "And I wasn't sure if I'd keep playing basketball."

Race finished his football career with 112 receptions, 1,671 receiving yards and 31 touchdowns — all Dallas records. Jackson says it didn't take long for him to realize Race's value to the football team.

"Right away, you could tell he was going to be special," he said. "His patterns were as crisp as any I've seen run. And he caught everything. If you got the ball near him, he'd catch it. But his patterns impressed me the most as a young kid. He ran patterns like he was a junior or senior."

Earning a way into the starting lineup as a freshman or sophomore is hard enough, but playing on an all-star level at such a young age is even more impressive, said baseball head coach Ken Kashatus.

"It's hard to play at the level he played at," he said. "I can see someone being a stud in one of the sports, but Mike was one of the premier guys in baseball and football for three years.

And no matter how many headlines he got, he remained one of the nicest kids."

Race knew he wasn't going to be a superstar on the basketball court. But that didn't prevent him from playing his role for head coach Ted Jackson Jr.

"I knew my job in basketball. It was to get other people the ball and play defense," said Race. "I didn't have a problem with that. I knew that was my role on the team. I wanted to do anything to help us win."

Race says playing three sports — especially physically demanding sports such as football, basketball and baseball — wasn't easy. And though he enjoyed playing all three sports, he did have his favorite time of the year.

"It's was real tough playing all three," he said. "You want to focus on one sport at a time, but the other coaches want you to be there. I never had much free time. I would like to have a job. Throughout my whole life, baseball has been my favorite sport. But I love football on game day. There's nothing like that."

Race not only was a standout on the athletic field — he excelled in the classroom, as well.

"The fact that Mike was able to earn 11 varsity letters and still be a National Honor Society student makes him even more special," said Wolensky.

The honor student plans to study engineering at Penn State's main campus in State College this fall. Race recently sent an e-mail to the baseball coach and might attempt to become a walk-on player.

One thing's for certain — he's going to be missed at Dallas.

"You don't replace a kid like Mike Race," said Jackson. "He's irreplaceable. He's the guy you want with the football when the game is on the line. He's the guy you want at bat with the bases loaded. He's an amazing athlete."

"You don't replace a kid like Mike Race. He's irreplaceable. ... He's an amazing athlete."

Ted Jackson
Dallas football coach



Dallas athlete Mike Race earned 11 varsity letters, including four in baseball and four in football.

TIMES LEADER FILE PHOTO/AIMEE DILGER



SPORTS BRIEFS

Basketball camp at Lake-Lehman

The Lady Knights Basketball Camp will be held from 9 a.m. to noon June 12-16 at Lake-Lehman High School. The camp is open to girls in grades 3-6 and the cost is \$30 a player. To register, call 675-8556 or 477-1375. Registrations will also be taken at 8 a.m. on the first day of camp. Each player will receive a T-shirt on the last day of camp.

Dallas football sets annual camp

The Dallas High School football team will hold its annual youth football Wednesday through Friday, July 19-21 at the high school. The three-day camp for players ages 7-13 will be held from 9 a.m. to noon each day.

The clinic will be under the direction of veteran head coach Ted Jackson, his coaching staff, parents and former players. Jackson has led the Mountaineers to a state championship, 10 Wyoming Valley Conference titles, three District 2 championships, and four Eastern Conference titles.

The camp stresses all aspects of offense and defense, including throwing, running, receiving, blocking, and tackling. One of the things that make the camp unique is that every player is given the opportunity to play each position.

In addition to the on-field instruction, Jackson will talk to the participants about sportsmanship, the importance of getting good grades, weightlifting, discipline and dedication.

For more information or an application, call 696-3748.

Basketball camps at Misericordia

College Misericordia will host its annual basketball school for boys June 26-30 and July 17-21 in the Anderson Sports-Health Center. The camp will be under the direction of men's head coach Trevor Woodruff. The school is also holding its annual basketball school for girls July 10-14 under the direction of women's head coach Tom Grifith.

The camps are open to boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 15. The cost of each session is \$115 and includes a T-shirt, basketball, lunch, and access to the Anderson Center pool.

For more information, call 674-6289.

3-on-3 soccer tourney June 24

Registrations are being taken for the ninth annual 3v3 Summer Soccer Clash on June 24 at Abington Heights High School. The rain date is set for June 25. The EPY-SA-sanctioned event is open to players of all skill levels, ranging from U-7 to U-18. There are also divisions for college-aged and adult teams. The entry fee is \$125 per team (four to five on a roster) and teams are guaranteed a minimum of three games.

Medals will be presented to the top two teams in each division. Each division also qualifies teams for the Challenge Sports National Tournament at Disney World in July and the 3v3 national tournament in San Antonio in February. A Keeper Klash is also held in conjunction with the event. The entry fee is \$25 for individuals and \$20 for registered team members.

For more information, visit the Web site www.nepa3v3soccer.com.

Slocum wins tournament championship as Dallas teammates square off in final

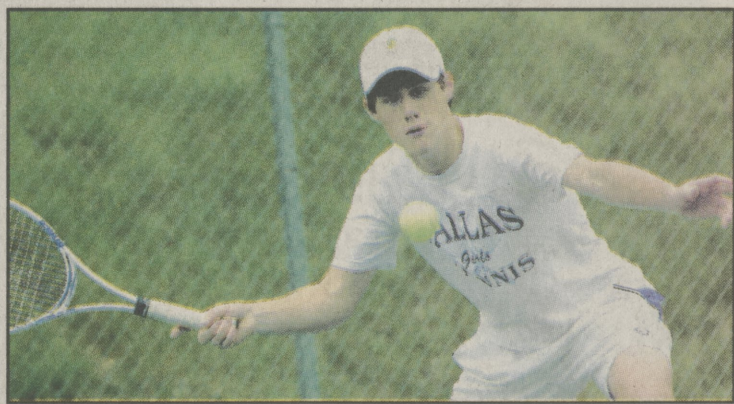
By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

Drew Slocum never had thoughts of winning a Wimbledon championship or images of himself hoisting a U.S. Open trophy on center court at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

So when the son of Bartt and Laura Slocum of Dallas began taking tennis lessons as an eighth-grader, he decided to keep things in perspective.

"My parents and I decided from the beginning that I was going to play tennis to have fun," said the Dallas High School junior. "We weren't going to spend thousands of dollars in camps and travel across the country. I enjoyed playing recreationally and I thought it might be fun to play in high school on a more competitive level. I really enjoyed the lessons and they made me better."

Slocum has blossomed into



Drew Slocum gets ready to return a serve during last weekend's tournament.

one of the top tennis players in the Wyoming Valley Conference and recently added a championship to his resume. The 16-year-old defeated fellow Dallas teammate Mark Covert in the finals of the Valley Tennis and Swim Club tournament last weekend at the club in Trucksville.

Slocum held off a second set rally to defeat Covert 6-0, 7-6,

winning the tie-breaker 8-6. In girls action, Cassandra Bowman defeated Stephanie Podczasy, 6-0, 6-1, in the final. There were 28 competitors in the tournament, which featured boys and girls age 18 and under.

The tournament was the first time Slocum and Covert — who played as doubles partners in the recent District 2 Class 2A cham-

pionships — faced each other in a competitive environment.

"It was a little different," said Slocum. "It was a little intense and it got a little heated during the match. He really wanted to beat me. It was a relief when it ended. I was very happy that I won. He's a tough player."

Slocum felt the clay-like surface of the court gave him a slight advantage.

"I'm more of a finesse player," he said. "I use a lot of techniques and different kinds of shots. Mark is more of a power player. He's all about hitting it hard. I had to use drop shots and all kinds of shots to throw him off his game. I think the court favored me more than him."

The duo had success at the district tournament, advancing to the semifinals before losing against eventual champions.

"Mark and I played well together,

especially considering that fact that we never really played that much together," said Slocum. "We gave them a great run. They said we were the toughest team they faced."

Slocum also did well as an individual in the tourney, advancing as the No. 4 seed to the quarterfinals before losing to the No. 5 seed. He's hoping to make a run at a district title next year.

"I want to be the best high school player I can be," he said. "I really want to get to the (District 2) singles finals next year. That's my goal."

Slocum, who also plays goalkeeper in ice hockey, says there are similarities between the sports.

"I like the fact that tennis is an individual sport," he said. "If I win, I want the glory. If I lose, I'll take the blame. It's kind of like being an ice hockey goalie. In hockey, if you allow a goal you can't



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Mark Covert runs to return a volley. He finished as the tourney's runner-up.

get overwhelmed. Playing goalie is 90 percent mental. It's the same in tennis. You can't lose it if you make a bad shot or two. You have to stay in control and stay calm."