



SPORTS

A 'fun' journey

Gach worked hard to be a leader in the line

By Doug Wolter
dwolter@dglobe.com

WORTHINGTON — In what has, for the past several seasons, been a Worthington High School football program that has had to work hard just to stay even, the 2020 unit has shown signs of promise.

To do that, the Trojans needed to improve themselves on the line of scrimmage. To protect the quarterback better. To be more consistent on the offensive side. And on the defensive side, to get tougher. To assert itself.

Godmar Gach, a 6-2, 225-pound offensive tackle and defensive end, entered the campaign as a leader. The Trojans are opening a few holes, holding their ground, and making inroads, and Gach is one of the reasons.

The senior wasn't very polished as a fifth-grader out for the sport for the first time. He admits he didn't know much about the game.

"I was so terrible," he said as he looked back.

But like the program itself, Gach continued to battle.

"I worked hard to get where I am today, and it's been a fun journey," he added.

He plays two sports for Worthington High, football and basketball. Not only does he know what to do to get better; he knows what makes him a danger to the opposing team.

"I think my best traits are my quick feet — I've got quick feet, I've got pretty good footwork — and I can use my hands pretty well," Gach said.

And on defense, he knows the score. "The secret about (defensive end) is that you gotta be quick off the ball and you gotta get your hands on the lineman before they get them on you."

Gach is this week's Drill subject. During our interview with him, he admitted to us that he is a fan of the New England Patriots. But we went ahead with our plan to feature him, anyway.

You can see the video online at www.dglobe.com. Here's a sample of the interview:

DRILL: Page 12



Tim Middagh / The Globe

Worthington Trojans football player Godmar Gach (54) protects the pocket for quarterback Brock Bruns.

TROJANS: Page 12



Tim Middagh / The Globe

In the summer, Jacob Van Dam pitched brilliantly for the Hadley Buttermakers amateur baseball team.

ADJUST AND ADAPT

Coronavirus has not been kind to Jacob Van Dam, but the versatile athlete keeps moving forward

By Scott Mansch
The Globe

The only thing that beat Jacob Van Dam's Southwest Minnesota Christian basketball team last year was the virus.

COVID-19 also got the best of his final year on the Edgerton High baseball team, thanks to a canceled season last spring. And now the pandemic potentially threatens the start of his college athletic career.

But Van Dam, now a freshman basketball and baseball athlete at NCAA Division III Crown College, remains optimistic and upbeat.

"I'm doing well," he said last week. "We're definitely keeping up with stuff here. We're hoping we can play."

The 6-foot-4 Van Dam is a 3-point sharpshooter on the hardwood, and a hard-throwing right handed pitcher and slick shortstop on the diamond.

He decided against picking one sport in college.

"I'm doing both," he said.

So even though the pandemic continues and sports routines have been impacted near and far, Van Dam is as busy as ever.

"We had 'fall ball' for baseball, weightlifting and throwing bullpens," he said. "And we've had captain's practices and open gyms for basketball."

Because the gym floor at Crown, located near Waconia, is currently under renovation, the basketball players have had to use a recreation

center near campus, taking whatever is available.

"Three nights a week, and it's only open from 9-11 at night," Van Dam said.

That means he's often up early for class and up late for basketball.

Whether it pays off on the court, though, is sort of up to the virus.

"Starting (basketball games) in mid-January is the plan," he said.

"What the season format looks like right now is hard to say. We've been told we won't have a JV season, so if you don't make the varsity there might not be one. And we don't really know about varsity yet, either."

Uncertainty is nothing new for athletes these days, of course. There are many 'what-ifs' for prep and college athletes who have lost games — and seasons — during these uncertain times. Van Dam's Southwest Christian basketball team posted a 29-0 record and clinched a berth in the state tournament with a triumph over Central Christian in the Section 3A championship game last March.

The very next day the Minnesota State High School League canceled the state meet in a response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Van Dam was asked about his emotions at that moment.

"I've had a lot of people ask me that," he said. And then he paused.

"You still don't ever really cope with that," he said. "We were all at the top of our game and looking forward to that state tournament. And then it was

taken away from us.

"It wasn't easy."

Senior teammates Avery Pater and Kade Fey were also stars on coach Jamie Pap's Southwest Christian hoop team. Van Dam, Pater and Fey each scored more than 1,000 career points for the Eagles.

"We were all just heartbroken, especially the three of us seniors who had been on the varsity for four years," Van Dam said. "We had worked four years for that. To have it stripped away from us was just surreal."

Turns out it affected his sports future, too.

"I honestly think if that wouldn't have happened I wouldn't be playing basketball in college," he said. "It really impacted my decision. I felt like I couldn't end my basketball career on that note."

It was a sour one, to be sure.

"You know, it was more realistic that the spring sports were canceled," he said when asked his opinion of the MSHSL decisions. "To cancel a state tournament only a week away was, I think, very irresponsible and it could have been handled a lot better. That state tournament, there's no doubt in my mind it should have happened."

"With spring sports and the way Corona was (becoming more prevalent) I think it was a little more realistic. Obviously nobody wants their senior season taken away — nobody wants a season taken away. So we can't help but be mad at that. But I think it was more realistic than taking away a state tournament that was only a week away."

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Trojans embracing the 48 plan

By Doug Wolter
dwolter@dglobe.com

WORTHINGTON — The Worthington Trojans led Marshall 6-0 early in the second quarter Friday night, but couldn't sustain the momentum, losing 22-6.

That's been a theme this fall. They played an outstanding all-around game for their only victory against New Ulm, and they played brilliantly in spots against the rest. But, as has sometimes been the case, they committed untimely penalties against the Tigers, special teams had sudden breakdowns, and they were

unable to move the ball consistently.

Complete games. That's what the 1-4 Trojans need now.

"That's exactly what we talked about going into the (Marshall) game, playing for 48 minutes," head coach Gene Lais said Saturday morning. "And that's exactly what we talked about after the game, we've got to play 48 minutes against Luverne."

On Thursday, in the Trojans' final regular season game, they travel to play a 4-1 Luverne squad. They'll need to be on their mark in that one.

Several area games are

scheduled for tonight (Wednesday), as Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial is at Pipestone Area, Westbrook-Walnut Grove is at Edgerton, Red Rock Central is at Heron Lake-Okabena/Fulda and Murray County Central is at New Ulm Cathedral. Other Thursday games have Jackson County Central at Fairmont, Windom Area at St. James Area, Wabasso at Adrian/Ellsworth and Mountain Lake Area/Comfrey at Hills-Beaver Creek.

Give the Trojans credit. They played arguably their worst game of the season at St. Peter just prior to the Marshall showdown,

but they were ready to play against the Tigers despite the fact that the Tigers had dominated them for the last 10 years.

This WHS team, said Lais, is a team that doesn't dwell on the past — whether it's last week or the last decade. The senior and junior classes have had some success against opponents while they were underclassmen, and they're not prone to being intimidated.

Luverne is coming off a 34-28 victory against a good Redwood Valley team and have won three in a row.

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Godmar Gach
Worthington
Senior - Football



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LOCAL SPORTS CALENDAR

TODAY FOOTBALL

7 p.m. — Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial at Pipestone Area
7 p.m. — Westbrook-Walnut Grove at Edgerton
7 p.m. — Red Rock Central at Heron Lake-Okabena/Fulda
7 p.m. — Murray County Central at New Ulm Cathedral

THURSDAY FOOTBALL

7 p.m. — Worthington at Luverne
7 p.m. — Jackson County Central at Fairmont
7 p.m. — Windom Area at St. James Area
7 p.m. — Wabasso at Adrian/Ellsworth
7 p.m. — Mountain Lake Area/Comfrey at Hills-Beaver Creek

VOLLEYBALL

7:15 p.m. — Worthington at Pipestone Area
7:15 p.m. — Windom Area at Redwood Valley
7:30 p.m. — Marshall at Jackson County Central
7:30 p.m. — Murray County Central at Heron Lake-Okabena/Fulda

FRIDAY VOLLEYBALL

6:15 p.m. — Edgerton at Heron Lake-Okabena/Fulda
7:30 p.m. — Adrian/Ellsworth at Westbrook-Walnut Grove
7:30 p.m. — Hills-Beaver Creek at Red Rock Central

VAN DAM

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Van Dam scored 1,469 points at Southwest Christian, second-most in Eagle basketball history. With well over 100 3-pointers, he holds the school record. Last season he averaged about

15 ppg on an unbeaten team. As a junior baseball player, he won five games and displayed an excellent fastball. Van Dam is also an exceptional shortstop and hitter, skills he showed last summer while helping the Hadley Buttermakers earn a trip to the Minnesota State Amateur Baseball Tournament. Fey is also a fine baseball

player, while Pater had a great prep track and field career. "It was going to be our year for baseball as much as basketball," Van Dam said. "This was going to be our year. We had five seniors who had been playing at the varsity level since we were eighth-graders. We were ready to actually do something and give some respect to Edgerton

baseball. "We also had a few seniors on the track team who were that close to setting records and going to state. So it's all hard to cope with." While it hurts to look back, Van Dam is optimistic for the future. "Yes sir," he said. "That's what you've got to do. You've got to learn from it."

TROJANS

From Page 11

LHS beat Worthington 14-0 in the 2019 section tournament. "They're a good football team. Last year in the playoffs, it was a good football game, it was a close game," said the veteran Worthington mentor. "Like the Marshall game, it's one of the old Southwest Conference games, which is always fun." After five games, the Trojans are still work-

ing on improving their running game. It's had "moments of success," Lais said, but with the weather getting more uncertain, no team can rely only on passing. Elsewhere, the Adrian/Ellsworth Dragons are happy to be in the win column after their 28-14 win over Sleepy Eye on Friday. The Dragons, a proud team with a proud tradition, are low on numbers this year, but they're doing the best they can. In the Sleepy Eye game, A/E's youngest players "got after it," said head coach Randy Schettler, playing more like juniors than

underclassmen. The backs ran hard, breaking a lot of tackles. Some things don't change. The Dragons threw the football only twice. Schettler says the program still thrives on the ground game, and for a team like the 2020 version it only makes sense. Winning the time of possession helps the defense, too, and this year all 11 players go both ways. Wabasso? The Rabbits are 4-1, losing only to state-ranked Murray County Central. Schettler said that according to his own count, this week's opponent suits 17 seniors.

DRILL

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QUESTION: Describe to us how you're a better player than last year. ANSWER: "I think I'm a better player than I was before, because last year I

was kinda on the smaller end, so I would kind of get pushed around. During the offseason I got in the weight room more and started working more on my technique. ... I learned a lot last year from some of the older guys." QUESTION: What is the

best advice you've received, athletically, over the years? ANSWER: "The best advice I've received in sports is to control what you can control. Especially this year with COVID and stuff, we don't know what's going to happen throughout the year. Just

got to focus on what we can control, and do our best." QUESTION: Have you got a special story to tell us about something that happened in your sports career that you'll always remember? ANSWER: "Jacob Neu-

berger (a Trojan lineman) when he was a senior, I think, I'd always have to come up against him and I'd get whipped every play. That's just something I'll always remember. It made me feel like I should put in more work and get better, to get where he was at."

LIBRARY NEWS

The Nobles County Library, 407 12th St., Worthington, is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays. The Adrian Branch Library, 214 Maine Ave., Adrian, is open from noon to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday and noon to 5 p.m. Friday. **Veterans Day closure** The Nobles County Library in Worthington and the Adrian Branch Library will be closed on Wednesday in observance of Veterans Day.

Children's Programming in Worthington
▶ Please stop by the library or call 295-5340 to sign up, as class size is limited.
▶ Just Gurlz for grades 5+ meets Monday after school until 4:45 p.m.
▶ Wii for grades 5-9 meets Nov. 16, after school until 4:45 p.m.
▶ After-School programming for grades K-5 meets Tuesday after school until 4:45 p.m.
▶ There will be no Story Time

for preschool and younger on Wednesday due to Veterans Day.
▶ After-school programming for grades K-5 meets Thursday after school until 4:45 p.m.
▶ Visit nclibrary.org for all library events.
New in the Youth Room at Worthington
▶ There's a brand new computer in the Youth Room. It contains over 100 educational titles, games and art programs for babies, toddlers and elementary-aged kids. This youth-ded-

icated computer is designed to ensure children have a safe, friendly experience each time they use it.
▶ There's also now an improved DVD player next to the youth computers. Come in and watch your favorite show! Headphones are also available.
COVID-19 guidelines
▶ Please maintain a distance of six feet from non-family members when inside.
▶ In Worthington, children under 16 must be accompa-

nied by their parent or guardian between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. (except during organized activities).
▶ Hand sanitizer is available near the front door. Spot cleaning is done throughout the day and after hours.
▶ Please bring exact change or the nearest dollar amount for copies, scans, faxes, etc. Large bills cannot be accepted.
▶ Visit nclibrary.org for updates.

LOHSE

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"It's exploded access to our services," Lohse explained. "Mental health is a rapidly evolving, necessary part of health care." Although headquartered in the Twin Cities, the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation operates in 17 states, and each state has different laws that govern access to treatment for mental illness and other mental health concerns. "I don't know if we fully appreciate how wonderful our health care is here in Minnesota," Lohse said. In her experience with Hazelden Betty Ford, Lohse has noticed that when people self-medicate with drugs or alcohol, their overall physical health is affected, too. "SUD (substance use disorder) and mental illness are diseases of iso-

lation," Lohse explained, noting that an event like the COVID-19 pandemic might make symptoms more acute or apparent in individuals who struggle with their mental health. "We've been able to meet people where they're at." Like many mental health services, Hazelden Betty Ford has expanded its telehealth program in the advent of the novel coronavirus. In fact, the foundation had a comprehensive program ready within one week of Minnesota's March lockdown order. "Is virtual care going to be as effective as in-person care? As with many aspects of health care, it depends ... but many patients have had success," Lohse said. While the most effective treatment method varies widely from patient to patient, many have been pleased with the telehealth services offered. During such as isolating time, it's important for

people to have meaningful social connection, Lohse noted, encouraging members of communities to check on each other. Anyone who needs help should reach out as well, without delay, and before a bad habit or low mood becomes "life-ruining," she added. **Women in Business** Being recognized by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal is a great honor for Lohse. "I'm pleased to be among such accomplished women," she said. "I credit

a lot of (my success) to my upbringing. "I love being from a small town," she added. "I hope I have made Slayton proud." To area young women who are striving for successful, meaningful careers, Lohse offers this advice: "Find a mentor and be a mentor. I don't know that I knew a lawyer growing up, nor did I know what lawyers did. I didn't have a full grasp of what I could do as a career." Mentorship can be formal or informal, she noted,

sharing that in her own life, the time to learn Lohse's one of her most influential values, and when difficult professional relationships decisions arise, reminds Lohse to stay true to those values. This person took

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