

Durant disc golfer takes to the course

By Katelynn Toft

Durant sophomore Kayden Kerr plays basketball for Durant High School, but once the season ends, he begins preparing for a sport not many people know about. Kerr has been playing the game of disc golf since he was 6 or 7 years old and was introduced to the sport by his father, Justin Kerr.

“My dad and his buddies were always going out, and I wanted to go and just try it, so I did, and I liked it,” he said. Nine years later, Kerr knows the ins and outs of the game. He has participated in a variety of disc golf tournaments including the Statesmen Open in Oskaloosa, the Titan Tundra in Des Moines, and the Annual Muscatine Open.

“Statesmen Open is probably my favorite to participate in,” Kerr said. In the last year, Kerr has placed first in four tournaments. Two were adult divisions including the Statesmen Open, and two were junior competitions.

A lot of these competitions are for adults with only a handful of teens taking part in the tournament, according to Kerr. To be able to compete at the higher level, Kerr practices three to six times a week or plays a

round or two at courses in Muscatine. There are some similarities between the game of disc golf and golf. “You have to put it in a designated area and stay on the fairways,” said Kerr. For disc golf, putting the disc in a basket is the most important part. To accomplish difficult shots, disc golfers use different types of discs. Four of the more popular discs are the fairway, mid-range, driver, and putter discs. According to Kerr, he owns around 300 discs. “Every shot you have to pick a certain disc for a different flight pattern,” he said. Those decisions can really cost a disc golfer if they are not made correctly, and for Kerr, he said decision making is what he strives to improve in his game along with his stronger skills such as his forehand shot. Competition is not all there is for Kerr.

He said he enjoys “being able to go out with my dad, turn off our phones and play disc golf.” Kerr’s father spoke fondly of his son’s growth and improvement over the years. “It was just kinda cool to see him



Photo contributed by Kayden Kerr

Sophomore Kayden Kerr drives a frisbee at the Goose Lake Open in the summer of 2021. barely go from throwing it five feet into the ground to you know, he’s throwing like 300-350 feet now,” said Mr. Kerr, who worried that Kayden would fall away from the game of disc golf due to his busy schedule.

Silver cord program draws attention of many students

By Mayson Eddy

Up to 10 seniors earn the silver cord each year at Durant High School, according to Principal Joel Diederichs. A senior must earn 160 community service hours before they get a silver cord when they graduate.

The silver cord, which is hung over the graduation robe, looks good on a college application, future job interview, and a scholarship. The silver cord program started at Durant High School seven years ago. “You can start earning silver cord hours after eighth grade,” said Mr. Diederichs. “It ends on May 1st of your senior year.” The principal said students must

average 40 hours per year for the silver cord and “between 5 to 10 students” receive the silver cord at graduation each year. He said in the past, former Durant students have thanked him for having the program because it helped them to receive scholarships. Max Thoma, a senior, started earning hours for the silver cord in his sophomore year and has done many activities to contribute to the hours. “I worked at the concession stand a lot over the summer, volunteered to mow the St. David’s Church every week, did the announcements for many of the games, and just a bunch of other little stuff,” said Thoma. The most memorable moment for Thoma was mowing for the church “because

I could tell how much they appreciated it, and it helped me out too, gave me more stuff to do.” Adison Daufeldt, a sophomore, started earning hours for the silver cord in her freshman year because she “wanted to give back to the community and help people.” To earn silver cord hours, she helped with livestock at the state fair, worked in the kindergarten, and helped at a couple of sporting events. The most important memory for Daufeldt was when she helped at the state fair. One reason she encourages others to earn silver cord hours is because “it does look good on scholarships.” Rayana Hollenbeck, a senior, said she did not know about the silver cord pro-

gram, but if she had known about it earlier, she would have started this program her freshman year. Hollenbeck does participate in community service activities on her own. She also participates in other activities at school, including FCCLA, basketball cheer, volleyball, softball, dance, and basketball. Hollenbeck said she would encourage other people to join the program. Senior Alex Rappel was also unaware of the program, but he said he would encourage others to join the program “because it is good to have silver cord hours.” Rappel, who has done community service outside of school, said he would have joined the program last year if he had known about it.

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a complete picture of all those that are involved,” he said. Rep. Kaufmann feels that HF 9 would not take away the safe space that many of these individuals rely on. “As far as the school being a safe space, this doesn’t say that you can’t be inclusive and understanding and listen and talk and work with people. This doesn’t say you can’t as a school district,” he explained. Rep. Kaufmann believes police should be involved if transgender students really feel unsafe at home. “School employees can not facilitate, concur, or coerce students to withhold information from their parents, and for goodness sakes, if kids are worried about going home and experiencing some sort of harm from their parents, then those parents ought to go to jail if they do anything harmful to them,” he said. This bill could potentially put teachers in a hard place if transgender students reveal unsolicited information and ask the teachers not to tell their parents.

“Every time we do legislation there’s a starting point and finishing point,” Rep. Kaufmann said. “This bill was a starting point for soliciting feedback from individuals and how to provide sections for those types of situations. Those were things that we’re considering as amendments to the bill.” When speaking about his experiences at Durant, Holbert said that it was not a good environment for him to be in. “My old school, Durant, a lot of the people there are very closed minded, and I was openly trans there, and I had a lot of students who would say some not nice things to me,” he said. Overall, Holbert said most of the teaching staff supported his gender identity. “I had a few teachers who definitely have shown me support, and there was like one or two teachers who very obviously did not show their support in me,” he said. Senior Skylar Larion, who identifies as bisexual, is very worried about what harm HF 9 could pose if it is passed.

“I think it’s really dangerous for kids,” said Larion. “There’s a part in the bill that says teachers or staff could ‘out’ a student, and I think that’s really dangerous if you have a student who’s not out to their family because their family’s not accepting, making it very harmful for the kid.” Larion said that she believes the bill was proposed to please conservative voters in Iowa. “I think since we live in such a progressive world now, a lot of people don’t like seeing, you know, cartoon characters that have like ‘Oh my gosh, I’m with my wife, and I’m a lesbian,’” she explained. “A lot of people don’t like that, so I think they introduced this bill, so it gives more conservative families more comfort to send their kids to school.” While Larion’s family has been very supportive of her sexual preference, she knows that is not the case for all students who might fear the reaction from a family that is more judgemental. “My family’s very accepting of who I am, obviously,” she said. “But if I didn’t come from a very accepting family, I would feel very unsafe.” Larion said that school was the first place she was able to come out as a bisexual. “The first people I came out to were people from school, and I was openly out at school before I even came out to my parents,” she said. Larion also believes that if gen-

der identity discussions are limited at public schools next year, staff members could “muddy the line” between gender identity and sexual preference and even report students who come out as gay. Rep. Kaufmann also co-sponsored HF 8. He said he felt that bill was a necessity because he doesn’t understand why the talk of gender identity and sexual orientation would need to be discussed in grades kindergarten through three. “For goodness sakes, talking to a first or a second grader about how they can be a boy or a girl on that day if they want to, it’s child abuse,” he said. He said HF 8 is also necessary because he feels some urban districts are introducing questionable, and even pornographic, material in their curriculums. “I would like to make it clear this isn’t happening in Wilton or Durant, or Cedar County,” he said. “This is absolutely happening in other places across the state.” For the third year in a row, Rep. Kaufmann, who said he talks with LGBTQ students on a daily basis, is pushing a House bill that would protect members of the LGBTQ community. According to a report from the *Iowa Capital Dispatch*, the legislation “would prevent defendants accused of violent crimes from using a ‘temporary insanity’ defense to lessen charges in cases where they discovered the victim was gay or transgender.”

Barks & Bubbles Dog of the Month



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