

A juggling act

Stough manages to play on 3 varsity teams

Austin Weaver 05'

Coffman's band plays the fight song on a hot, fall Friday night. The football team runs out of the tunnel onto the field in front of thousands of people.

Then in the dead of winter, the jazz band heats up the gym with "Eye of the Tiger." The basketball team runs onto the hardwood as the Coffman Crazy's go wild.

Finally in the rain of spring the baseball team takes batting practice as "Put Me in Coach" blares over the PA system.

Keeping up with all three teams would seem nearly impossible if not totally exhausting.

But one sophomore, Sam Stough, did just that this year. He is the only male student athlete at Coffman to play on the varsity football, basketball and baseball teams.

"I just want to play," Sam said. "Playing football, basketball and baseball in high school is so much fun!"

"Being regional champions for football, distract champions for basketball, sectional champions for baseball (as of 5-17-04) and starting for the football and baseball teams has made an exciting year."

Senior Jack Rafferty, a teammate on the football squad, admires Stough's efforts.

pressure of being a sophomore on a varsity team get to him.

"I try not to be so uptight for games because then I don't feel ready. I need to be relaxed," said Stough.

Before games Stough has a certain CD he listens to help him stay focused and relaxed.

"I listen to songs from A Goofy Movie soundtrack and it tends to relax me."

Although Stough has a great time playing all three sports it has its hard times.

"I don't really have enough time to hang out with my friends as much as I used to and I can't always go to Young Life."

"I can't always do all of my homework in one night, but that's what study hall is for."

When Stough finds some free time away from athletics and school, the first thing he does is looks for a place to play poker.

"I call **Greg Purdy** to try to see if anyone's playing poker even though he's not very good."

When Stough is not playing a sport, doing homework or playing poker, more than likely he is sleeping.

"It's hard for me to find time for that too!"

When it comes to having free time and breaks between sports, for Stough there is none.

"I wish that after every sport I could have a long break, because they are all physically and mentally demanding," said Stough.

When it comes to three different practices they all have one thing in common, running. During the football season Stough had to run perimeters.

A perimeter is a dead sprint around the entire football field and everyone must make a certain time.

On a particular day Stough recalls, "No one could make the time and we ended up running about 20 perimeters."

Later in the winter for basketball practice Stough remembers the time the team had to run four 10 in 1.

A 10:1 is down and back five times and you must make the time under a minute.

When spring rolled around for baseball season Stough had more running to do.

"We had 36 poles before one game." A pole is the length of the outfield fence and one pole is down and back.

Not only does Stough have to juggle three types of practices, he has three different coaches -- but they share one expectation.

"All three coaches just want me to try my best. It isn't always



about scoring a touchdown, making a three, or hitting a homer, but basically just doing my job in each three sports," said Stough.

"I think the expectation at the beginning of the (football) season was to work hard and make the older guys better," coach Ondrus said. "As the year went on I realized he played more like an upperclassman and my expectations of him increased each week."

Another pressure Stough has dealt with is people not liking him.

"A lot of people think I am full of myself because I'm on three varsity sports, but I'm definitely not like that at all."

Junior Clark Koury said, "he is friendly and everyone seems to like him, including me."

Stough has to deal with injuries too.

He broke his foot last spring in baseball, setting him back in all three sports this season.

Stough went to physical therapy for a month to rehab.

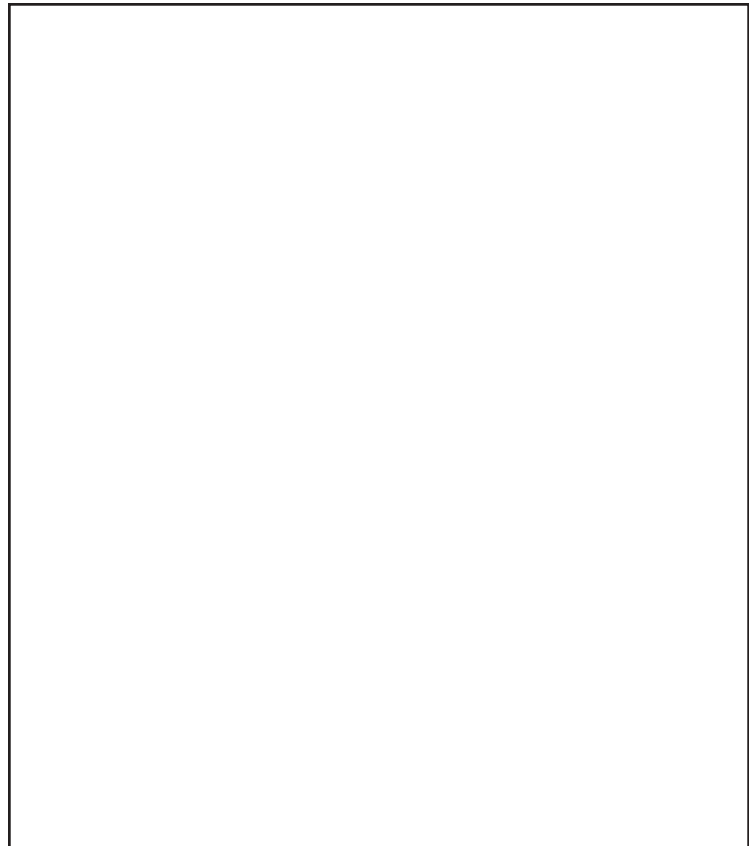
"This fall was the worst injury though. I had a third degree separated shoulder and it was unbelievably painful," said Stough.

Stough separated his shoulder in a playoff game for football against Hilliard Davidson.

This injury effected his basketball and baseball seasons too.

"It was extremely bad for basketball and baseball because it was my shooting and throwing shoulder, which was real bad," said Stough.

"Sam has really come on for us the second half of the season,"



baseball coach Saunders said. "When we went on our spring trip he did ok and he didn't look hurt but I think he knew deep down that we was."

Stough claims he couldn't shoot as well or throw as hard as he used to. He works his shoulder in the weight room and he uses special rubber bands he received from his physical therapist to help recover from this injury.

When Stough goes through tough times he relies on his family.

"My family always supports me," said Stough.

Mr. Stough gives Mrs. Stough and Maddie credit for where

Sam is today.

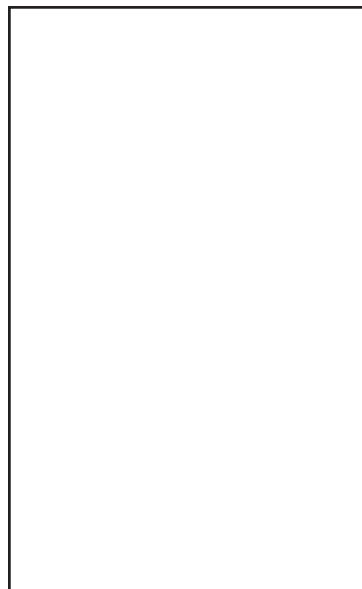
"He listened to his mother and his sister always set the bar a little higher," said Mr. Stough.

Mrs. Stough is not only proud of her son on the field but with how he deals with everything that comes with being a three-sport athlete.

"I'm most proud of the way he balances his sports, Young Life, academics and family with lots of humor," said Mrs. Stough.

Sam's biggest fan is his sister, senior Maddie.

"I love my brother and the worst part of going to college next year will be not watching him play," she said.



"Sam brings to a team leadership and competitiveness. When you play only one sport all year you spend a lot of time in noncompetitive situations because so many games don't count. But when you constantly have to perform under pressure, you're ready."

"I know playing baseball made be a better quarterback because I was used to having to make decisions and compete," Rafferty said.

Despite the juggling act Stough performs, he doesn't allow the