

Hook, Line and Sinker

With Tony Hooker

It's 4:30 on a rainy Thursday afternoon. Almost as soon as I get out of the car, I see someone staring intently at my VGH football playoff hoodie. He asks if I'm from Villa Grove and then tells me that he too is a Villa Grovian, Kenny Mitsdarfer. I'm too taken aback to tell him that the chubby kid who used to ride along as his Uncle Gopher drove the team bus when he was playing for the Blue Devils is now the chubby gray-haired dude who writes for the VG news. Small world.

I meander my way into the ARC to pick up my race packet, and I'm struck by the cacophony that awaits me. This is a fish out of water situation for me. If the fish was in a tree. In the Mojave Desert. At night.

But there are so many friendly volunteers around that help me get my bearings and pointed in the right direction. I pick up my race number in the first gym, and then proceed to the second gym to get my goody bag. Again, Villa Grovians are in the house, handing out the bags and being the general helper bees that we are. I also run into my friends Mary and Malea and we pose for a picture. Malea has overcome so much and is doing the I challenge. (5k Friday, 10K Saturday) What an inspiration she's been for so many of us!

Again, I find my footing and take a stroll through the

runner's expo. There are tables trying to recruit UIUC engineers. There are vendors hawking natural oils, (a dab of peppermint oil on the back of the neck? Thank you very much!) and there are vendors hawking Cannabis products for pain relief (not this time, thanks!) All natural, high protein waffle and pancake mix? Sure, why not? Contest to see who can hold the longest plank? Buh bye!

After chatting with a few folks that I know, I leave, feeling excited yet uncertain about the next day's big event.

Friday night. Race night. Worrying about parking, I leave my best friend's house for the 7:30 pm start at 6... and then sit in the E14 lot for an hour while my lovely bride and bestie try not to laugh at my nervousness.

Finally, 7 pm arrives and we make our way to our starting corral. I'm in G corral, which my smarty-pants cousins and I quickly dub the "Golden" Corral. I'm about 100 feet behind the UI marching band Tuba section, and this is as close as I'll come for the duration of the 5k. Those dudes can move the metal. I see families and sharks and bananas and an older gentleman who looks like he just woke up from one heck of a St. Patrick's Day bash, given the shining green lights on his head and chartreuse tutu, with matching dinner gloves. Nice.

Finally, the time comes and we're off. The first mile comes and goes without incident. My cousins are faster walkers than I am, so two of them quickly move ahead, with Tami hanging back with me. At about 1.5 miles, we get our first surprise, as our mothers have trekked up to the route to cheer us on! Thanks, Reebster and Aunt Sandy, it really meant a lot to

see some familiar faces along the way. There were parties on rooftops and parties on patios. Oh, and the patio at the Lion was poppin', too. Fun times.

Mile two passed by so quickly that neither my walking partner nor I actually saw the marker, though there was a kicking bluegrass band along Green street to keep us moving. We grabbed some water and headed into the home stretch, past the David Bowie cover band in front of the psych building and then the techno DJ on the corner by the Harding band building. Since I've not worked on campus for 5 years, it's a trip down memory lane...especially when I passed the stacks, where I worked as an undergraduate, and later when I'm just beginning my UIUC career.

The last mile is so fun. From the guys jamming the Bruno Mars licks to the characters in costume to the frat guys, who have obviously been getting "prepared" for race day for several hours.

And then, there it is. Looming like a beacon in the dark, the brightly lit stadium. The green turf feels so spongy underfoot, as we trek toward the beckoning finish line. And then I cross. 4 minutes and 55 seconds under my stated goal, and I am exultant. What a night. From fear to exhilaration and everything in between. And now? Foolish exuberance says "why not try a 10K, or better yet, the I challenge" next year? We'll have to see. A 10k would require actual, dedicated training and discipline, and that's not been my forte'. For those who have considered doing any distance at the Illinois Marathon, I encourage you to give it a shot. It's a hoot. And maybe you'll beat the Tuba players. I know I'm gunning for them in 2020.

WEEKLY SPORTS WRAP-UP

VGH Baseball Undress streaks Ryan Cheatham went 3-3, with a double and drove in four runs to lead VGH to a 15-1 win over Martinsville on April 22. Carson Howard scattered 4 hits over 3 innings, giving up 1 run, to earn the win. Evan Wilson and Noah Davison each doubled and drove in a pair of runs, and Austin Grimm had a triple and scored 2 runs for the Hawks.

Fall to Warriors Logan McKee and Noah Davison tallied runs, but it wasn't enough as VGH dropped a 10-2 decision to Tuscola on April 23. Mason Wyant took the loss, giving up 5 earned runs in 5 innings.

VG Softball Split DH with Panthers

Maris Eversole homered and drove in 2 runs, but it wasn't enough as the Blue Devils dropped the opening game of a doubleheader to Oblong 10-3. Reagan Cheely took the loss, giving up 4 earned runs.

The Devils bounced back in the

nightcap, winning 9-6. Jordyn Ray earned the win, scattering 8 hits and allowing 4 earned runs. Reagan Cheely went 3-5 with 3 RBI's to lead the way offensively, and Molly Mixell drove in 2 runs with a pair of hits. Chelsea Harrison, Kyleigh Block, and Reagan Cheely each scored a pair of runs for Villa Grove.

Weather Storm Villa Grove hammered out 15 hits in a 11-1 win over Salt Fork on April 23. Reagan Cheely went 3-4 with a double and 3 RBI's to lead the way at the plate. Kyleigh Block earned the win, allowing just 2 hits and 1 win in 6 innings. Jordyn Ray went 3-4 with a double and a pair of RBI's, Madie Burwell drove in two runs, and Molly Mixell doubled and had 2 RBI's on the night for Villa Grove.

VG athletes Special Olympics regional meet, held on April 26.

Morgan Quigley led the way, qualifying for state in the shot put and the 100m. Jacob Miller qualified for state in the softball

throw, as did Mary Tumbleton in the 100m, and Kaleb Drew who also made the distance in the softball throw.

At the regionals, all the athletes performed well. Kaleb Drew took 4th in the softball throw and finished first in the 100m. Alexander Cook earned bronze medals in the 100m and the softball throw. Aleah Hatten finished fourth in the softball throw and earned a bronze medal in the 100m. Chance McClain earned silver medals in the 100m and the softball throw, and Violet Erl-Soper took home 5th place in the long jump and the 100m.

Morgan Quigley had an outstanding day, earning gold medals in the 100m and the shot put. Jacob Miller brought home gold in the softball throw and silver in the 100m, and Mary Tumbleton won the 100m and earned bronze in the softball throw.

The city of Villa Grove will be behind those who qualified as they head to state on June 7-9th.

Holding It cont'd from pg. 4

next day. I bartered a bit, asking if he thought \$10 was enough compensation for ruining a child's birthday party and watching tears stream down his face all night ("Ok, I fleshed out the story a bit for effect, I'm a writer, what can I say."). He went on to explain that no one in the history of the company, no matter how big of a boo boo has happened, has ever gotten more than the \$10 coupon. It is company policy. So I had to take it or leave it. Oh, and if I read the fine print, I will find some legal exclusions that clears them of any wrongdoing if a package doesn't arrive at a specified time, which I agreed to upon placing the order.

So, to make a long story short, big corporate America doesn't give a rip about you, your child's birthday, the tears your child cries, or any-

thing else besides what's in your wallet. Small print is small for a reason. And don't believe a promise unless you know them very, very well and they have proven themselves worthy of your trust. And even then, you can get in the boat, but wear a life-

jacket. Be careful out there, my friends.

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2019 VILLA GROVE/HERITAGE HAWKS BOYS BASEBALL SCHEDULE				
			record	
Mar 11	SJO	L	0-1	0-1
Mar 12	@ Marshall	ppd		0-1
Mar 13	@ Salt Fork	ppd		0-1
Mar 14	Urbana	ppd		0-1
Mar 16	Paris	W,L	6-5, 8-11	1-2
Mar 18	@ Monticello	L	0-9	1-3
Mar 19	@ Armstrong	W	11-0	2-3
Mar 20	Sullivan	W	5-3	3-3
Mar 22	@ BH	L	8-11	3-4
Mar 26	@ Judah	W	11-3	4-4
Mar 28	Oakwood	L	1-3	4-5
Mar 29	@ Arcola	ppd		
Mar 30	@ Blue Ridge	ppd		
Apr 01	@ Pal-Hut	W	10-0	5-5
Apr 02	LSA	W	17-15	6-5
Apr 04	G-RF	W	7-3	7-5
Apr 05	@ M'ville	W	10-0	8-5
Apr 08	@ C'land	L	3-8	8-6
Apr 10	Oblong	W	12-2	9-6
Apr 11	@ Fisher	W	15-2	10-6
Apr 12	Tri-County	W	18-5	11-6
Apr 16	Schlarman	W	21-0	12-6
Apr 17	@ Hutsonville	W	12-9	13-6
Apr 18	AOC	ppd		
Apr 22	Martinsville	W	15-1	14-6
Apr 23	@ Tuscola	L	2-10	14-7
Apr 29	@ Tri-County			
Apr 30	Cumberland			
May 3	@ Oblong			
May 04	Neoga (DH)			
May 08	Cerro Gordo			
May 09	ALAH			
May 11	@ Unity			

HEAD COACH Jason Conn

2019 VGH Girl's Track & Field Schedule

Mar 09	@ EIU invite		
Mar 13	@ Uni High (Armory)		
Mar 19	@ Arcola		
Mar 26	@ Arcola		
Mar 28	@ Tuscola		
Apr 05	@ ALAH		
Apr 09	@ Salt Fork Invite		
Apr 12	@ Unity (girls)		
Apr 19	@ Tuscola		
Apr 23	@ ALAH		
Apr 26	@ Monticello		
May 03	@ Arcola (LOVC meet)		

HEAD COACH Heath Wilson

2019 VILLA GROVE Blue Devils GIRLS SOFTBALL SCHEDULE				
			record	
Mar 12	@ MS	L	4-7	0-1
Mar 14	@ ALAH	ppd		
Mar 18	Tuscola	L	3-6	0-2
Mar 19	@ Unity	L	9-10	0-3
Mar 20	Urbana	W	11-2	1-3
Mar 21-24	@ TENN	LLLLW		2-7
Mar 26	GRF	W	10-9	3-7
Mar 27	@ AO	W	9-0	4-7
Mar 28	Windsor	L	1-18	4-8
Mar 29	Okaw Valley	ppd		
Mar 30	@ Rantoul	ppd		
Apr 01	@ C'land	W	4-3	5-8
Apr 02	@ SJO	L	2-7	5-9
Apr 03	Tri-County	W	25-0	6-9
Apr 05	@ Oblong	ppd		
Apr 08	Martinsville	W	15-0	7-9
Apr 09	Centennial	W	16-6	8-9
Apr 10	@ Hut-Pal	W,W	16-1, 9-1	10-9
Apr 11	@ Fisher	L	4-6	10-10
Apr 15	vs Heritage	W	10-0	11-10
Apr 16	@ Casey	W	2-0	12-10
Apr 17	Cumberland	W	3-2	13-10
Apr 18	@ Blue Ridge	ppd		
Apr 19	@ Tri-County	W (forfeit)		14-10
Apr 22	Oblong (DH)	L,W	3-10, 9-6	15-11
Apr 23	Salt Fork	W	11-1	16-11
Apr 24	@ M'ville	ppd		
Apr 25	@ Arcola	ppd		
May 01	@ Heritage			
May 02	Armstrong-Potomac			
May 08	Cerro Gordo			
May 10	@ PBL			

HEAD COACH Jeana Block

2019 VGH Boy's Track & Field Schedule

Mar 13	@ Uni High (Armory)		
Mar 16	@ EIU invite		
Mar 19	@ Arcola		
Mar 26	@ Arcola		
Mar 28	@ Tuscola		
Apr 05	@ ALAH		
Apr 09	@ Salt Fork Invite		
Apr 12	@ Monticello	CANCELLED	
Apr 19	@ Tuscola		
Apr 23	@ ALAH		
Apr 26	@ SJO (boys)		
May 03	@ Arcola (LOVC meet)		
May 11	@ Shelbyville		

HEAD COACH Heath Wilson




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