

STUDENT'S P.E. GROANS MIGHT BE WARRANTED

By Ellie Leech, staff reporter/incoming editor-in-chief

Every morning as students amble into the locker rooms, complaints of “why do we have to do this?” and “this is stupid” fill the air, as freshmen and sophomores change for gym class.

Why, indeed? It is a common viewpoint that passing gym class as a graduation requirement is simply ridiculous.

In order to understand why exactly gym class is an unreasonable requirement for graduation, a description of what actually happens during class must first be presented, because the average gym class truly does not contain 90 minutes of strenuous exercise.

By the time all students are finished dressing out, the class is typically 15 minutes old. For the ensuing 20 minutes, students jog around the gym and grumble through “dynamic” and “static” stretching. This is followed by what the gym teachers describe to the class as “intense” conditioning, which is basically a jog around the track for most of the class. When all of the preliminary activities are done, 20 minutes remain for the primary activity of soccer or badminton, or whatever recreational activity is favored that day.

During class, three types of students generally inhabit the gym.

First, the average scrub—the kid that does just enough to get an A in gym. Most students fit this description of crushing their classmates in badminton while still refraining from doing push-ups if the teacher isn't looking.

Student-athletes generally fall under this category, largely because some say that full effort would force them to excessively exert themselves, amid the training they already put their bodies through.

“I think [P.E.] is an unnecessary stress on your body,” sophomore varsity soccer player Lauren Brady said. Brady has missed time this season due to a stress fracture, an injury typically caused by over-working the body.

Brady also mentioned that she doesn't think the lessons taught in P.E. are on par with what she knows from participating on sports teams. “I feel that P.E. does not provide adequate information on physical activity,” she said.

The second type of P.E. student is the extreme slacker; the kid that sprints for about 2 seconds during warm-ups and then considers himself done and proceeds to walk for the rest of class. While the majority of the class may be slightly amused by this kid's antics, they generally roll their eyes at the extreme lack of effort.

Lastly, the rarest type of participant lies on the other end of the spectrum of effort put forth in gym class: the kid that pushes himself to the limit in class just

so he can beat everyone else in the current activity. Approximate number of student-athletes that put on such displays of energy in gym class? Zero.

According to estimations conducted by current P.E. students, the time spent on actual physical activity totals approximately an hour per class. Continuing along this line of addition, it can be determined that the amount of time spent actually exercising in gym, during the entire duration of high school is 90 hours (not including another 45 hours of getting dressed and shuffling along from activity to activity).

When this approximation is compared to the amount of time a student-athlete spends in practice, pushing their bodies infinitely harder than they would in gym class, the conclusion can realistically be drawn that it is ridiculous to make student-athletes take gym.

Not including time spent traveling or waiting around at games or meets (which is very much like those 45 hours of wasted time in class), time spent at practice totals to between 75 and 80 hours...in a single season. And let's be honest, which is harder; mile repeats or Carolinas during practice, or a one-lap sprint in class?

The numbers continue to support changes to the requirements. The athletic office estimates that over half the population of the gym classes participate in some kind of athletic practice outside of school: 300 freshman and 250 sophomores. In the midst of an education-funding crisis, could the state save some money by changing the physical education requirements? Probably.

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