

'Singing Saint' picks football over music

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 18 November 2013 18:47 -

Harry Daubitz, the Singing Saint, had to make a tough choice this week.

He was selected to perform at the All-State Music Festival in Ames Saturday night, but he also plays football and the Xavier Saints have a date with Dowling in the championship game of the Class 4A playoffs Friday night in Cedar Falls.

He could have practiced for the Music Festival for part of the day Friday in Ames and gone straight to Cedar Falls for the game, but that would have meant missing the bus ride from Xavier to the UNI-Dome with his teammates.

He missed the bus ride last year as a junior when the Saints played in the state finals due to the Music Festival, but he didn't want to do it again.

"I've already been to the Festival twice," he said Monday. "I weighed my options and being a senior, I'm not going to be in the All-State Festival this year. I'm going to play football. I'll just have to forfeit that honor and play football instead."

That bus ride from Xavier to the UNI-Dome Friday is important to him, even though he could have met his teammates in Cedar Falls like he did last year.

"We have a lot of tradition and routines that we do," he explained. "When you have a routine like that, it's something you want to follow, especially for a game like this."

Alan Greiner, the executive director of the Iowa High School Music Association, was willing to excuse Daubitz from practice on Friday at 3:30 p.m. so he could get to Cedar Falls on time, but he was not willing to let Daubitz miss all of the rehearsals Friday as the group prepares for

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Saturday's performance.

"The experience starts Friday morning at 8:30," Greiner said. "It goes through Friday evening with rehearsals all day long. We have 600 kids who have never sung together with their conductor, and they're all learning what the conductor wants."

Daubitz's family was hoping Harry could be excused for the entire day Friday and then report for rehearsals Saturday morning, but Greiner rejected that proposal, feeling it was important for Daubitz to be in Ames for at least part of the day Friday.

"Our schedule would have allowed the student to leave Ames at 3:30, travel to UNI, be with the team a couple of hours before the game, play the game and then return to Ames," he said. "But that wasn't acceptable to them."

Daubitz said he sees Greiner's point of view.

"It's understandable," he said. "You set a rule, especially when you have 600 people who haven't practiced together."

Daubitz is the long snapper on the punting team at Xavier. He also plays on kickoff returns and is a reserve offensive lineman.

He suffered a mild concussion in the Class 4A state semifinals against Bettendorf last Friday on a punt, but expects to return to practice Wednesday and be cleared to play. The Bettendorf player was called for a personal foul when he hit Daubitz and caused the concussion.

Daubitz has been selected for the Iowa State Honor Choir this year. He's also a member of the Show Choir at Xavier and is a member of other singing groups at the school, so he'll have other chances to perform during the 2013-14 school year.

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This will be his last football game, however, and he does not want to miss any second of the experience.

"I think it's going to be really exciting," he said. "We obviously came up a little short last year (a 23-17 loss to Ankeny) and I think that's really going to fuel us a lot."

Xavier Coach Duane Schultz appreciates Daubitz's dedication to the team.

"That tells you how much value and priority he puts into football," Schulte said. "He's a role model to these guys."

Daubitz has not played a lot of football for the Saints the past two years, but he loves the game - even more than singing. "If I had to pick one, I'd play football any day of the week," he said. "It's the sport I grew up with. And being with these guys is a lot of fun."

Daubitz plans to study Elementary Education in college, with a specialty in Special Education. He's leaning toward Iowa State but has not made a final decision.