

BOYS TRACK AND FIELD

Undeterred by detours

Despite setbacks, Le Seur still driven

By Matt Beardmore
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"Strapped to the stretcher with his ravaged ankle immobilized, No. 4 was wheeled off the football field for the final time as his teammates lined up to offer their encouragement."

En route to the same hospital where 2½ years earlier he had nearly died, two of the paramedics in the ambulance recalled the fire that recently had destroyed his family's home.

To say it has been a trying four years for Barrington senior Brian Le Seur would be an understatement. Yet "with more time logged at Good Shepherd Hospital than a first-year resident, he has persevered, never complaining or asking 'Why me?'"

So what else could this 18-year-old possibly have to prove as he completes his final season of track for the Broncos? Apparently a lot.

"My goal is to compete at a high level and win state in the 400 [meters]," said Le Seur, who placed fifth in the event last season at 49.22 seconds. "Maybe medal in the 4-x-400 [relay] too."

At least his confidence hasn't been affected by his ordeals.

"In a way, the athletic competition has been an escape for all the trouble he's dealt with in his life," said Barrington senior Teddy Schell, an Indiana-bound quarterback who witnessed Le Seur's latest setback.

With Barrington hosting Wheeling last September, Le Seur split out right of Schell on the Broncos' second possession.

"I score on [the post route] all the time," Le Seur said.

Not this time. The speedy wide receiver sprinted past the Wildcats' defensive back as designed, but then something went wrong. "[The pass] was underthrown and I had to come back for it," Le Seur said. "We jumped to the ball together, and [the Wheeling defender] just landed on my leg."

Le Seur curled up, writhing in pain.

"[Brian's injury] definitely made the season a little harder, because other teams didn't have to worry about the deep threat that much," said Barrington senior Andre Anderson, a Michigan State football recruit.

While the Broncos were putting together a six-game winning streak, eventually snapped by Wheaton Warrenville South in the Class 8A state quarterfinals, Le Seur was attacking his predrawn rehab sessions with hopes of rejoining his teammates.

"The doctor said it looked like

a grenade exploded in my ankle," said Le Seur, who spent seven weeks in a hard cast and two weeks in a boot.

Rehabbing those torn ligaments and tendons was painful. Realizing he wouldn't contribute on the field hurt worse.

"That was the hardest thing I've had to go through sports-wise," he said.

Indeed, because of what he has dealt with off the field, a torn ankle has been the least of his concerns. While preparing for a track meet his sophomore year, Le Seur received tragic

news. Earlier that afternoon, a gust of wind had blown over a halogen light onto a pile of newspapers stacked in the basement of his family's home. His father, Steven, saw smoke rising through the vents and woke his wife, Tracey.

No one was injured in the blaze, but for the next nine months, Brian and his family had to rebuild the home.

"We lost everything," he said. A year earlier, his family thought it had lost Brian.

Suffering from severe stomach pains one night, Le Seur felt

light-headed as he walked into the bathroom. After he passed out and crashed through the glass shower door, it was evident that what he first thought could be cured with something from the medicine cabinet was much more serious.

He spent the next week and a half in intensive care with a bleeding ulcer. His family was unsure if he was going to survive that first night.

"It's a surreal moment when you see the LifeSource van that has the blood that is going to save your son," said Tracey Le

Seur.

Brian lost 35 pounds from his then-145-pound frame during the monthlong hospital stay, but determined as ever, he still played baseball on the freshman "B" team that spring.

"I'm the most competitive guy," he said. "I hate to lose."

And as much as Brian Le Seur hates moral victories, just the fact he's running around the same field from which he was carted off just seven months ago is a win, no matter how you look at it.

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Barrington senior runner Brian Le Seur survived a bleeding ulcer, a broken ankle and a fire that destroyed his family's home.

Photo for the Tribune by Joshua Loft