



## Four state champs agree: STC was a special place to be

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What do Denise Hefferin, Casey Dauw, Patrice Feulner and Jim Caine have in common?

First and foremost, they're graduates of St. Charles (East) High School..

But the quartet also shares another common bond - as athletes who played valuable roles during the Saints' record-breaking 1998-99 season when seven teams (boys golf, girls cross country, girls swimming, boys swimming, drill team, girls soccer and baseball) captured state championships..

In addition to the seven team titles, the Saints also received an individual state championship effort that memorable season from senior Jason Potter, who repeated as Class AA champion at 171 pounds with his 7-6 victory over Maine West's Bill Kopecky during the 1999 state tournament in Champaign.

### Denise Hefferin

Hefferin remembers her junior year with fondness as she was the Saints' fourth finisher, placing 32nd overall during the team's second of back-to-back girls cross country state title.

"It wasn't just winning that state championship - it was about winning multiple state championships," said Hefferin. "The pressure was on us but we used the wisdom gained from other teams around the school who had already won multiple state championships.

"We saw how successful the girls swim team was (fifth of six straight state titles in 1998-99) and wanted to be a part of it ourselves. We asked, 'Why can't we?' "

Hefferin's older sister, Melissa, was a member of the Saints girls soccer team that captured the second of five straight state titles in 1997.

Denise took great pride putting on the Saints' uniform and competing for St. Charles High School.

"It's so cliché but everyday it was so great to be a Saint," said Hefferin. "Everyone was so proud of everybody else - athletes, teachers, coaches.

"Looking back, it was almost a joke how successful we were, winning trophy after trophy. And it wasn't a fluke year."

Following a successful collegiate career at Wake Forest, Hefferin has returned to her roots, having just completed her third year as head coach of the Saints' girls cross country team that participated in last weekend's state meet at Peoria's Detweiller Park.

"When I moved on to competing in college at the Division I level, it was unheard of to be a member of back-to-back state championship teams in high school," she said. "And when I'd tell people that we weren't the limelight of our school, they couldn't believe it.

"It was an unbelievable year."

### Casey Dauw

As a freshman in 1998-99, Dauw was just hoping to contribute for the Saints boys swim team.

"I was trying to find a way to fit in with my new team," said Dauw. "We had a good freshman group - Jim Brennan and Andrew Hime helped the 200 medley relay team win the state title.

"And we had strong leadership from our juniors and seniors. We all had trust in their guidance."

Dauw, who placed ninth in the 500 free and 10th in the 200 IM, remembers feeling little pressure as a freshman.

"Looking back, I was so naïve that I wasn't overwhelmed by the situation. I didn't know any better.

"From the team's perspective, Marmion was favored to win the state title that year. They had a great swimmer in Andrew Schnell. But we competed in the same sectional with Marmion so we knew we could swim with them."

Dauw also credits Saints coach Joe Cabel as a key part of the state title run.

"Coach Cabel is one of the most influential people I've met in my life," said Dauw, who went on to enjoy a great collegiate career at the University of Tennessee, where he was a five-time All-America honoree and earned ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District IV honors in 2006.

Dauw, who will graduate from Loyola University's medical school next May, plans on becoming an urologist. The 25-year old is married to St. Charles native Colleen (McAndrews) and has a 4-month-old son, Owen.

"He likes being in the bathtub so that's a good thing," said Dauw.

### Patrice Feulner

Feulner was a junior forward on the Saints girls soccer team that claimed its fourth of five Class AA state titles in 1998-99 under the direction of coach Joe Moreau. The Saints also extended their unbeaten streak to 88 games (still stands as the state record) that season before an April loss to Fremd.

"I definitely remember the streak," said Feulner, who led the team in scoring with 27 goals and 17 assists. "We didn't focus on it that much at the time but looking back it's such an amazing accomplishment.

"It was just a fun time to be an athlete from St. Charles. Everybody else was out to get you. I was very proud to wear the St. Charles uniform."

Togetherness was a common feeling among St. Charles student-athletes 10 years ago.

"We really supported each other and rooted for each other," recalled Feulner. "St. Charles High School was so well-known for athletes during that time period.

"I believe almost every girl who started on the soccer team went on to play Division I college soccer."

Feulner enjoyed a solid career at Arizona State, where she helped lead the Sun Devils to a No. 9 national ranking during her senior season.

"I scored a ton of goals and had a great freshman year when we made the NCAA Tournament for the first time," she said. "Then we got a new coach and I switched positions, moving to center midfielder."

Feulner, 27, graduated from ASU in 2004 and earned her master's degree in 2006. She currently works as an academic advisor (for football and baseball teams) at Arizona State.

### Jim Caine

After helping the Saints baseball team set a single-season record for victories as a sophomore (before losing to first-round MLB draft pick Greg Miller and West Aurora in the regional finals), Caine had a feeling things would get even better before he graduated in 1999.

"Apparently, I told my mom after sophomore year that we'd get downstate - if not junior year then for sure senior year," said Caine.

During his junior campaign, the Saints lost a 5-2 sectional semifinal decision to Glenbard West.

"We played really well and I knew we had most of our guys coming back," said Caine.

And then the Saints got off to a slow start in 1999.

"I think we were 5-9 at one point," said Caine. "Then we won 16 in a row and 26 of our next 28."

While other STC teams were accustomed to winning state titles, the baseball team was heading in uncharted territory.

"We had a mountain to climb because we had never been there before," said Caine. "After the semifinal game (a 10-0 win over Rock Island), I remember hearing guys say, 'We're here - everybody else is winning state titles, now it's our turn.'"

Caine, who recorded his 31st consecutive victory on the mound during the Saints' 4-1 quarterfinal win over Champaign Centennial, went 2-for-3 with a double, RBI and 2 runs scored during the team's 12-3 title victory over New Trier at Elfstrom Stadium.

"The seven state titles were an amazing combination of a lot of things working out at the same time," added Caine, who can be seen and heard as the announcer at STC East football/basketball games.

"It truly was amazing."

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