



Julia Dippold makes special impression as athlete and EMT in Mountain Lakes

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Julia Dippold had an incredible afternoon on April 17, and it had nothing to do with the fact that she had a hit, drew a walk and scored a run as the Mountain Lakes softball team defeated St. Elizabeth, 4-0.

Aside from batting leadoff and playing center field for the Lakers, the senior is also an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) with the Boonton Volunteer EMS, as well as an aspiring doctor, who'll enroll at the University of Arizona in the fall. She was also a member of the volleyball team at the Morris County school.

The softball and baseball teams play on adjacent fields behind the school at Mountain Lakes, and on that day, the baseball team was home to Pequannock while the softball squad was playing St. Elizabeth.



At one point during the softball game, something happened on the baseball field that drew her attention. Her center field counterpart on the Lakers' baseball team was chasing a deep fly ball, and injured his shoulder while running into the soft fence. Because the fields are very close, particularly in straightaway center field, his momentum carried him onto the softball field.

With her own game delayed because of that situation, Julia turned her attention to the injured player until Mountain Lakes trainer Paul Bongiorno soon arrived from the nearby lacrosse field.

"The center fielder jumped over the fence attempting to catch a home run," she said. "I left center field and stabilized his arm before the trainer got there."

Once he was stable, she returned to her game, but her involvement with the baseball contest was far, far from over.

The softball game ended while the baseball game was still in progress. Julia, in fact, returned home and changed out of her softball jersey and into her EMT uniform.

Within minutes, she received a page - there was a serious incident back at the high school, and more specifically, on the baseball field.

"I had left, and was probably home for five or 10 minutes before I got the call," she said.

A Mountain Lakes batter hit a fly ball, and two Pequannock outfielders were involved in a vicious collision while in pursuit. It was so bad that one of the players was knocked unconscious, while the other had a severe gash on his head. The game was ended at that point, with Pequannock leading 11-5 in the sixth inning.

With two players injured, everyone involved in the response was put to the test. Bongiorno was heavily involved, as was Julia, who happened to be the first EMT to arrive, along with police.

“I rushed to the field,” she said. “I was the first EMT on scene, so PD and the athletic trainers were taking over and controlling bleeding. They had one on oxygen. I started triaging, called for additional resources and started ordering around where help was needed and did what I had to do. With two patients, I had to definitely manage my time wisely. They were pretty significant head injuries, so it was essential that it was managed quickly.”

The players will be okay, thanks to the coordinated efforts of everyone who responded, including Julia.

“I arrived on the scene before the ambulance,” she said. “When there’s two patients, you have to understand who’s more at risk for a possible infection, bleeding out and stuff like that. Once I managed things, then I could take a breath. One of the kids was unconscious on impact, but by the time I got there he was conscious. The other had a deep laceration to his head.”

Her efforts drew much appreciation from Pequannock.

“Pequannock is very proud of the caring efforts from the Mountain Lakes coaches and training staff, as well as Julia Dippold,” said Brian Silipena, the school’s athletic director. “In a tense situation, these individuals stepped up and provided appropriate and efficient care to our athletes. We wish our athletes a speedy recovery and send a huge thank you to Mountain Lakes.”

“It was a scary situation for all, but we are proud of the way everyone responded,” said Kevin Wallace, the Mountain Lakes athletic director. “I would also like to recognize our athletic trainer, Paul Bongiorno, who was out there right away when the accident happened. We’re hoping the two Pequannock boys are back on the field soon.”

As for Julia, the day at the field encapsulated her maturity, volunteer spirit and career ambition.

“It feels really nice to be recognized,” she said. “It is my job, so I am proud of it and hope to be pre-med one day.”

“I joined my local ambulance squad and it just came natural to me,” she said of her start. “They pushed me to go to EMT school, and I ended up loving it and now I hope to be a physician. I took EMT school last year, and have been doing EMS for two years now. It’s interesting being a young EMT because I see a lot of mature things.”

She’s an outstanding presence around the softball team, not just for her take-charge skills, but for how she plays the game. She’s 10-for-18 this spring at the plate, after missing significant time last year due to her own injury.

“Julia missed the majority of last season with a severe concussion, so I am happy that she is able to play this season and is enjoying early success,” Mountain Lakes coach Alison Preston said. “It is always nice to know you have someone on the team that can handle emergency situations calmly.”



The afternoon was also odd considering Julia was a center fielder involved with treating two different players from the baseball game who happen to play her own position.

“It was definitely interesting treating them being an outfielder myself,” she said. “But when something happens, I kind of just go into EMT mode. I’ve responded to Boonton High School before for an injury, but this was the first athletic injury I’ve been called to at Mountain Lakes. This was the most significant sports injury that I’ve ever seen. It was pretty intense. But it really is my passion and I’m just super happy that I could have helped.”

Wallace is also happy to have a student-athlete of such high caliber representing Mountain Lakes.

“She was calm, cool, and collected, letting all the training she has gone through help out in a bad situation,” he said. “She continued to assist throughout the whole process.

“Julia is a very dedicated young lady to the EMT profession,” he said. “She spends a lot of her free time tending to her duties and helping people in need. I am impressed by her demeanor as a high school senior during those events that occurred. She knew exactly what to do and acted in a precise and effective manner. It’s very impressive for someone of that age to be that confident and decisive.”