

## HIGH SCHOOLS

### All work, know pay

Not all student-athletes at parochial schools go home after practice. Some go to work to help pay their tuition.



Joe Hess, a senior running back at Marian Catholic, works a part time stock job at Gordon Food Service store to offset his tuition costs at the Chicago Heights school. (Warren Skalski, Chicago Tribune / September 18, 2009)

By Mike Helfgot Special to the Tribune

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It's Sunday, so Joe Hess can take it easy.

He might start with some AP calculus, or AP economics, before spending the bulk of the day working at one of his part-time jobs.

The AP physics homework can wait until later.

The Marian Catholic senior's idea of a lazy Sunday is probably different than what many high schools students picture.

A football player and top student at the Chicago Heights school, Hess will use the day off from football duties to put in an eight-hour shift as a stock boy at Gordon Food Service Marketplace in Lansing.

Private high schools may be costly, but they are not just for the privileged.

Hess is Exhibit A.

Rather than attending public school at Bloom, Hess works his you-know-what off to pay the approximately \$8,000 per year it costs to go to Marian. Hess' brother and cousins attended Marian, so the family ties run deep.

"It's the best school around," said Hess, who also has a need-based academic scholarship to help with tuition. "At first I didn't expect to be working, but that is what is happening."

Hess began working 40 hours a week the summer after his freshman year. After his sophomore year, his mother allowed him to work after school and on the weekends. With the scholarship and his long hours, he was able to pay his entire tuition

last year. He's close to paying off this year's already.

"I was also able to buy books, buy books for my sister and help out the family when I can," Hess said.

Working 75 hours a week over the summer paid off. In addition to his job at the grocery store, Hess works as a janitor at the school as part of a work-study program that many private schools offer to all of their students.

The work-study program at Montini has been a blessing for senior Ryan Gorrell and his two brothers, junior twins Connor and Jordan. The Gorrells live in Westchester, in the Proviso West school district. They work off much of their tuition, which combined is in the neighborhood of \$25,000.

"It is tough for our parents with three kids, so we work," said Ryan, a standout linebacker and running back who plans to resume working at Toys "R" Us after the season. "We do maintenance work at the school in the summer. Half goes in our pocket and half goes to tuition. During the school year, we work during study hall, and that all goes to tuition."

Hess also works during study hall at Marian, but only for collateral with the man upstairs. Even with everything else he has going on, he spends his study hall period as a volunteer at the campus ministry.

The most impressive thing about Hess might be that neither his studies nor his game have suffered. A straight-A student who has applied to Illinois and Michigan with the intention of studying aerospace engineering or astrophysics, Hess is getting a jump on college credits by taking three Advanced Placement courses this semester.

A 5-foot-10-inch, 170-pound running back, Hess rushed for 186 yards and five touchdowns on 21 carries during Marian's 3-0 start. He scored at least one touchdown in all three games, including an 80-yard run in a 17-7 victory over Notre Dame last week.

"He's a very good player and an impressive kid," said Dave Mattio, Marian's 34th-year head coach. "He does a real good job managing his time. We've had a lot of kids who have to work, but usually they do it before and after the season."

All that responsibility does not come without a cost. While other kids are playing video games, watching TV or just hanging out, Hess is nowhere to be found.

"That is the hard part," he said. "I don't get out too much, which I'm OK with. This is kind of who I grew up to be. I needed to help out with tuition, and I just kind of grew with it and accepted it. I am happy with what I'm doing. I am going to be more prepared for the future."