

Skin ailments plague Decatur

Paxton Mitchell
 Staff Writer

COVER STORY
 In the middle of his match, he slips up and ends up with a burn across his skin after he is dragged across the mat. As he starts to bleed, he starts to wonder: How many other grapplers have wrestled on this mat? The next day, he breaks out in a raw, itchy rash. What is going on?

It may seem unbelievable, yet this is exactly what happened to the mens wrestling team. The boys were not even sure what they were infected with for some time.

"It took a couple weeks and some doctors visits to figure out I had Shingles," senior Nick McLoota explained. "I acquired it from a different school when I got a mat burn on the side of my face and it got infected."

"It was very itchy and emotionally painful," senior Johnny Soghomonian remembers. "It was a bunch of tiny bumps that scabbed over."

"The hardest part, once we caught the outbreak, was figuring out what it was," Head Coach Kevin Gilligan stated. "It's caused by direct, skin-to-skin contact and we must have wrestled a team who contracted it."

The outbreak may have had a negative impact on the boys performance. McLoota and Soghomonian had to wrestle with face masks. Senior Mike Baglieri and junior Nick Craven were not allowed to compete in the Bayside or any of the following matches.

"I missed a whole week of school and had to stay in the hospital to figure out what I contracted," said Craven.

Craven had staphylococcus, commonly known as staph, on his forehead. Senior Mike Meekins also acquired staph on his shoulder.

"I had to wear an Under Armour shirt for the rest of my matches, so no one would touch my healing infection," Meekins said. "It threw off my swag."

The most serious case of shingles that hit the wrestling team was acquired by

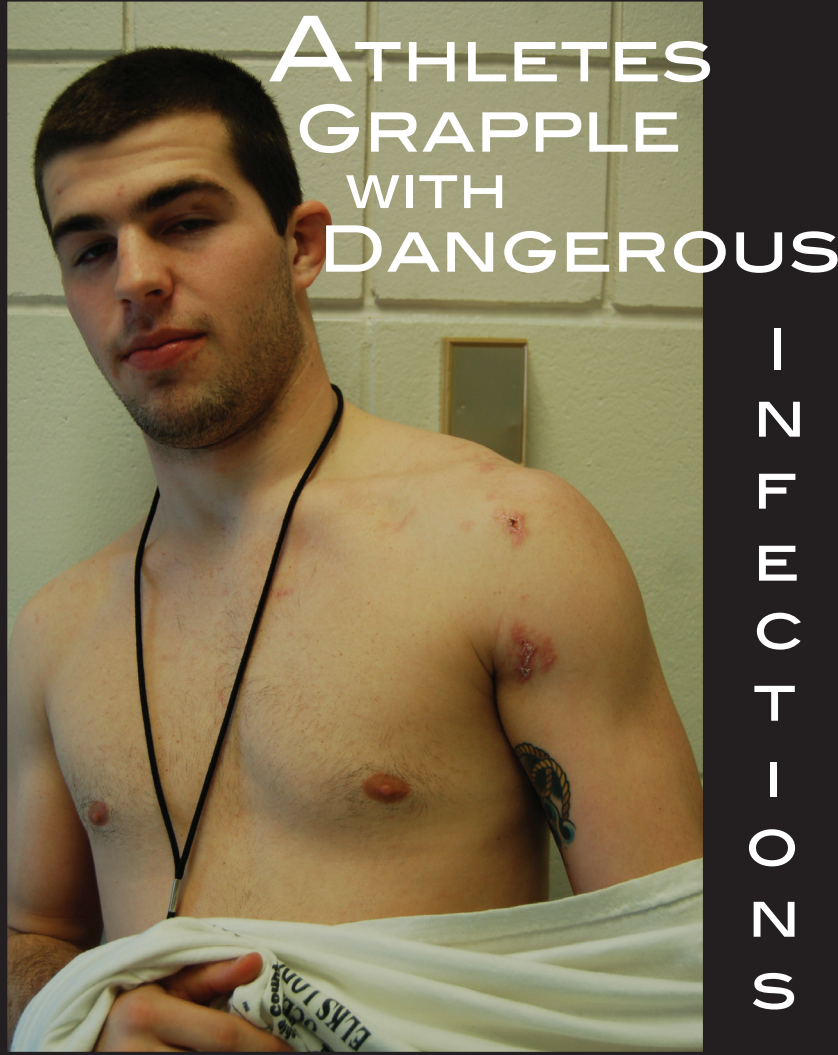


Photo by Johnny Soghomonian

Senior Mike Meekins was forced to wrestle with Under Armour beneath his singlet after he acquired staphylococcus skin infection on his shoulder.

senior Kyle Gilbert who was infected in his throat.

"It started off with a really bad fever and chills," Gilbert explained, "When I started throwing up, I went to the hospital where I got a scope down my throat to find out that shingles had spread down the side of my face and into my esophagus. It was hard to eat and drink, so I was hooked up to an IV and given nutrition. While I was in the hospital for a week, I lost a lot of weight that I'm still trying to gain it back."

While ointments and antibiotics have quelled the epidemic for the time being, the wrestlers still have to bear the scars that follow and remain conscious that Shingles will always remain in their systems.

Even with an infectious breakout, these determined wrestlers did not let that affect their game as they finished with a typical winning record and a 10th consecutive Bayside title. Meekins even placed second in the state with Shingles.

ATHLETES GRAPPLE WITH DANGEROUS

INFECTIONS

• Outbreaks of skin infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria are becoming more common among athletes, according to recent health reports.

• Staph is a group of bacteria that can cause a multitude of diseases as a result of infection of various tissues of the body.

• Shingles is a painful, blistering skin rash due to the varicella-zoster virus, which causes chicken pox. (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001861/)

NJROTC program facing elimination



Photo by Abby Simpson

The Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps is in jeopardy of being cancelled due to deep federal budget cuts. In existence since 1995, the program has had over 1500 students. A recent facebook campaign has been launched to help save the program.

National Honor Society inducts 71 students

Jamie Parker
 Staff Writer

Seventy one juniors and seniors were inducted into Stephen Decatur's 55th group of National Honor Society members on Wednesday, March 30, among much pomp and circumstance.

"It is a great honor to recognize the students with not only high academic records, but with character and commitment," Principal Lou Taylor said.

"I look to the National Honor Society students to achieve excellence and leadership in both our school and community," Taylor added. In order to become a member, students must not only obtain an 87.5% grade point average in core classes from the start of ninth grade, but also display the equally important qualities of character, leadership, and service.

This means they are expected to represent our school with honorable and behavioral qualities at all times, inspire others with positive behavior, and participate in multiple school and community service endeavors, all while keeping a high academic record. These requirements help keep the NHS program as elite and successful as possible.

While students work hard to be accepted or qualified, that is only half the job. After being inducted, members partake

NHS Requirements

- **Scholarship:** 87.5 grade average core courses
- **Character:** Desirable behavior in/out of school
- **Service:** Render without need of recognition
- **Leadership:** Inspire others; initiate solutions

(story continued on page 2)