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## **Family, grades big part of 'the athlete's' life**

### **Do '80s teen film stereotypes exist in Chillicothe?**

**Byline:** JONA ISON

If anyone follows Chillicothe High School sports, they know about Ron Smith, especially after the basketball state championship win last year. Recognized in football, recognized in basketball, and most recently taking on track and field, he knows he's athletic and isn't surprised when sports is what his name brings to most people's minds.

"I do more than just play basketball and football. I hang out with friends, and I work hard in school," he said.

Although Smith admits he may have "slacked off" a little freshman and sophomore years, the senior has been on the honor roll the past two years and is only a few tenths away from a 4.0 grade point average. He takes advanced placement classes along with less stressful classes such as culinary arts, his favorite class because he gets to eat.

"A lot of people probably think I'm not that smart ... but I think a lot of people that think that, I pretty much have a higher GPA than them but I don't say anything. I just let it go," he said.

However, it bothers him sometimes when people take it too far, especially when they call him dumb or stupid. A lot of times, that's when football, his favorite sport, can help.

"I like winning, and in football, if you have a bad day and you go to practice all mad, you can hit people and not get in trouble," Smith said.

After school, when he doesn't have practice or a game, Smith often heads home to spend time with his grandparents, 16-year-old sister or mom. Family is an important aspect of his life, evident by the tattoo down his arm that simply reads, "family."

"I come home and help my grandma and grandpa because my mom's not always around, so I just help them a lot, and watch out for my little sister ... (Family) is pretty much all you have when nothing else works out for you, and my family has been there for me through everything," Smith said.

Maintaining relationships with others also is important. For the most part, Smith has had the same group of friends since junior high, and those relationships are what brought him onto the basketball court.

"In seventh grade, all my friends tried out for basketball, and I pretty much tried out just to stay close to them ... so ever since then I've just stuck with it," he said.

They often spend time together outside of school and sports, too, just watching TV, going out to eat or joking around.

"I think that (people) assume that since a few people on the basketball team get in trouble every now and then and stuff that everyone on the basketball team is like that and really we're not at all," Smith said.

Actually, Smith said he just really likes to laugh, like most other people, and is ready to graduate and head to Otterbein College to start a new chapter of life. Down the line, Smith can see himself maybe courting a career playing football, owning his own business or doing something in sports marketing and adding to the family he loves.

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**Art caption:** For "the athlete," Ron Smith, family, friends and academics are just as important as success on the football field, basketball court and track.  
Lindsay Niegelberg/Gazette

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