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1,000 Point Club at Laconia High makes room for pair of inductees

Keaton Beck, Macy Swarmstedt
8th and 9th student-athletes to join

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LACONIA — Keaton Beck was 13 when he started taking basketball seriously, joining a travel team to play year-round. Macy Swarmstedt was a fifth grader when she realized that basketball would be her primary athletic focus.

Over the years, they studied the game, sharpened their individual skills and helped their teams compete. And this year, they each earned the right to carve their own names into Laconia High School history, scoring 1,000 points as a Sachem. They are only the eighth and ninth players in

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Keaton Beck, left, and Macy Swarmstedt both earned their way into Laconia High School sports history this month, scoring their 1,000th career point as Sachems. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

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school history to score so prolifically.

Beck, who plays center and power forward, hit the elusive milestone on Jan. 3, against Kennett High School. Swarmstedt, a point guard, reached quadruple figures on Jan. 12, in a game against John Stark. In both cases, the Laconia teams won.

Beck is an Illinois native who moved to New Hampshire when he was six. He said he grew up watching his older brother, Demarco McKissie, play on sports teams.

"I always wanted to prove something to him," Beck said. "I feel like the 1,000 points was the exclamation point."

Swarmstedt, a Laconia native, also had a figure to chase. Hers was her uncle, Jim Swarmstedt, a member of the school's athletic hall of fame, and another member of the 1,000-point club.

"We are very close," Swarmstedt said of her uncle. "I probably go over to his house three times a week. He always talked to me about it, since I was a freshman. 'You are going to score 1,000 points, do better than me,'" she said.

The two Sachems got to the same place by different paths. Beck is a "big," who gets his points at close

range while playing in the post.

"My freshman and sophomore year, I was a scrap collector," he said, grabbing rebounds and putting them back up. As he has grown as a player, he has learned how to use movement to get open for passes, generating opportunities. "I've been driving into the lane, making my own shots," he said. Beck averages between 15 and 17 shots per game.

Swarmstedt, who made her 1,000th point halfway through her junior season, averages around 20 points per game, making about half of her shots from three-point territory.

She said much of her opportunities are born from velocity, which has become a signature of the Laconia girls' team.

"We run a lot of fast breaks," she said, because not many other teams can keep up. "I just know that when the time comes, if we need a score, I can score." Swarmstedt can hit from beyond the arc, but that's only half of her offensive game. "I like to drive a lot, because teams know I can shoot, so they guard me at the perimeter."

Basketball has been more than just a game for both Beck and Swarmstedt. It has taught them

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about how to prepare for life outside of the court.

"I try to stay calm in all situations," said Beck. When applied to basketball, he said that means he evaluates the best and worst outcome of a shot before the ball leaves his hand. He might take a low-percentage shot if he has teammates in position to collect the rebound, or he might pass up a shooting opportunity if he felt it might lead to a break for the other team.

"It's like a real-life situation. Stay calm, think about your next move, and if that plan doesn't work out, you should have a next one."

Swarmstedt said she also finds a calm state is the best way to lead.

"If there's an open shot, I'm going to shoot it every time," she said, but she also knows she can trust in her teammates. "Our team is very good at moving and communicating, so I will pass it; we don't want to force any shots."

She said her team has become like a family, maybe even a group of best friends.

"It's not like I scored 1,000 points, it's like we all did," Swarmstedt said.

Stephen McDonough, LHS boys'

basketball coach, said Beck has been part of three runs to the quarter-finals, including one in lacrosse, and was named NHIAA's Player of the Year for Division II last year. He said Beck is "empathetic, intelligent and team-oriented at all times. Keaton is an absolute pleasure to coach and teach."

"As a person and student Keaton is a tremendous Sachem," McDonough said. He is outgoing and energetic, and also volunteers to officiate youth basketball games.

Craig Kozens, athletic director for LHS, said both Beck and Swarmstedt "play the game with class and passion," and have put in the work, playing in leagues outside of school, summer ball, "and in the gym putting up shots all the time." He also credited supportive families cheering on their student-athletes.

"It has been an exciting winter season, being able to watch them both graciously get their 1,000 points as team players first. They are both very talented yet humble. We are proud of them as exemplars for our athletes," Kozens said.

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