

FINDING HIS RHYTHM

Senior strummer's journey to newfound talent

By: Taylon Bennett

Passion struck yet another chord this past winter when senior Jacob Zakrzewski discovered a new creative outlet: playing the guitar. The Cardinal band trumpeter decided in December of 2024 to dip his toe in a new musical sector, and after some time, ended up diving in.

"I think I've always been musically inclined and have always had a sort of passion for instruments. As a kid, I enjoyed playing the ukulele and learned simple songs such as 'Riptide' by Vance Joy & 'Stand by Me' by Ben E. King," admits Zakrzewski.

He goes on to claim that, though that specific

interest fizzled out over time, he still kept a foot in the door of music. In fall of 2020, Zakrzewski joined the Doniphan-Trumbull band, to which he credits a lot of his musical talents. As he continued to improve year by year, Zakrzewski yearned for more, so he pursued something new.

His path to finding the guitar was unique, to say the least. Being a 3-sport athlete, it's hard to find free time for leisurely

activities, but after suffering a foot injury that required surgery, it seemed like time

was all Zakrzewski had. Following the operation in the winter of '24, Zakrzewski began learning how to play an electric guitar he had purchased himself, and from there, the rest is history.

"It's simple. The better you get, the more you want to play. As I continue practicing and learn more about it, the more I crave the ability to play better," says Zakrzewski, an aspiring axeman.

When asked where he finds inspiration, he claims he doesn't have to look far, being that his father, Luke, is a guitarist himself. "I've grown up listening to him and watching him play, so when I had the opportunity to learn myself, I took it, because I knew that any questions I had or problems I faced could be answered promptly," said Zakrzewski.

"Having him around while on my journey has definitely assisted me in my growth."

Growth is something that everybody chases, no matter the topic. And as we pursue it,

we all have different ways of tracking it. Zakrzewski found a good way to

not only keep tabs on his progress but also share it with people all over the world. In June, he began occasionally posting himself playing songs he's learned on the app 'TikTok', and he claims it's helped him tremendously. Zakrzewski said, "Just being able to know where I started and see how far I've come has been really cool. Knowing that I can go back and see how much I've improved from here or there will always help me out and keep me motivated."

Though he doesn't see the guitar as a staple at the moment, he doesn't fail to recognize the impact it's had on him. Whether it's just a hobby or a way to churn the clock, Jacob will always have a special place in his heart for the guitar and will continue to dance to the beat of his own strum.

"When I first picked it up, it was just a way to kill time while injured, but with every day of playing, I found out how much I enjoyed it. It's become a great way to relax and clear my thoughts, and I think that, in a way, it caught me off guard how quickly it became a part of me, but I'm sure glad it did."

