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UNION CITY SCHOOLS

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By all accounts, Brad Schlager is the perfect student.

He now has the ACT score to prove it.

Schlager, a Union City High School senior, received notice over the Christmas break that he had scored a perfect 36 on the standardized test used for college admission.

Less than 0.2 percent of the nearly two million students to take the ACT last year made a perfect score.

“I really didn’t know how to celebrate,” Schlager grinned, when asked how he reacted to opening the mail and discovering his elite status. “I knew there was a strong possibility and thought I had at least a 50 percent chance to get that last point. It was always a goal of mine to get the 36.

“I just sat there and looked (at the letter) and was obviously very happy.”

Schlager made his perfect mark after scoring 30 on his first attempt as a sophomore. He upped that to 34, then made consecutive 35s before reaching the ultimate grade.

“When I hit 35, I knew I couldn’t just leave it there and not get that final point,” Schlager continued. “The big thing was to not make the two or three mistakes I’d made then and I could get to 36.

“I had to learn some stamina, and it really stresses you out to be in testing mode for four hours. I’m really glad I was able to push through.”

Brad, the son of Leigh and Dave Schlager, has now set the standard for a UCHS student body that ranks seventh in the state – first in rural West Tennessee – in ACT scores.

Two other seniors have made a 35, and seniors at UCHS already surpassed last year’s graduating class in ACT composite scores, currently posting a 22.63 on the test.

Currently, a record number 17 Union City High School seniors have made 30 or better on the ACT – edging past last year’s total by one. Four seniors and a junior recently joined the 30+ Club, giving the school 19 students in all (17 seniors, two juniors) in that distinguished category.

An amazing 59.8 percent (64-of-107 students) of this year’s senior class have made 21 or higher on the ACT, qualifying them for the HOPE Scholarship. And 40 seniors raised their respective scores on the test by at least one point.

UCHS Principal Jacob Cross echoed the sentiments of his faculty and other administrators when he heaped praise on Schlager while also noting the academic prowess of other students in the 2018-19 class.

“We are so proud of Brad’s accomplishment. I know this has been a major goal of his, and he has worked extremely hard to get to this point,” Cross said.

“This is a very competitive group of seniors, and it seems there has been a race to see who would hit 36 first. Brad has struck first, but I know we have a few more seniors in the hunt.

“That is one of the great things about Union City High School, these guys are just as competitive in the classroom as they are on the court or the field.”

Likewise, UCHS guidance counselor Martha Townes was thrilled with Schlager’s accomplishment.

“I was thrilled to open the envelope of ACT scores and find out that Brad had scored a 36,” Townes claimed. “Brad is a fine young man and an excellent student who works hard and is very deserving of this honor.”

Schlager plans to attend the University of Alabama, where his sister, Sarah, the 2017 valedictorian at UCHS, is already a student. He intends to major in some type of engineering.

“The scholarship money they’re offering was just something I couldn’t say ‘no’ to. The football’s nice too,” he smiled.

Schlager credited the Union City High School faculty and administration with readying him for the ACT, noting, “I’ve had some great teachers, like Mrs. (Joanna) Wisener, who really helped out with proper grammar in writing. That helps out a lot on the ACT.

“I have been well-prepared for the test. The ACT judges your readiness for college and the teachers here at Union City do a fantastic job of that. It’s reflective on our test scores as a whole.”

For Schlager, especially, his best was truly the very best.