

Gymnast Lauren Haney took part in probably the shortest Senior Night ceremonies ever in Hinsdale South athletics history Thursday, Jan. 22.

She was the lone senior.

“Usually there’s like five so it was weird so I was like the center of attention. It was like a shrine of me,” said Haney, laughing.

“At first it was awkward because I walked in and my senior banner (from the school) was hanging in the middle of the gym. I was like, ‘Oh my God,’ but then it was fine.”

Haney then enjoyed arguably her best meet ever for the Hornets. She had a season-high 33.75 all-around total and won balance beam with a season-high 8.6 to help the Hornets defeat Willowbrook 133.30 to 125.60 in their West Suburban Conference Gold Division dual in Darien.

Junior Maddie Nowak won all-around (36.65) and the other three events – vault (9.65) and uneven parallel bars (9.6) with season-high scores and floor exercise (9.15).

Haney also had a season-high 8.5 on uneven bars for second and was fourth on vault (8.65) and fifth on floor (8.0).

Haney’s 33.75 all-around total eclipsed the 33.30 from Jan. 12. Her highest all-around total as a sophomore, the last season in which she competed high school, was 33.65.

“Maybe (Senior Night helped me). I always try to do well, but I feel like because I was happier, good vibes,” Haney said. “I was the only one, but it was really nice. They decorated it for me. All of the girls made me posters and hung them up. It was really cute.”

This is Haney’s third season with the Hornets. Nowak and Meyer also returned to the team this season after competing as freshmen.

All senior athletes receive large posters of themselves courtesy of the school.

Nowak surprised Haney by lining the gym walls with numerous snap chat photos from online conversations between them.

“Maddie and I are pretty close friends. She screen shot them and then she put them all over the gym,” Haney said. “They were really embarrassing pictures of me. (But) they were so heartfelt, nice. She made all of these nice posters. Maddie’s were really nice because they were personal.”

Thursday’s 35.25 team vault score was a season best. Besides Nowak and Haney, Hall tied for fifth (8.5) and Meyer was seventh (8.45).

Meyer (8.3) and Nowak (8.15) were second and third on beam with Nowak counting two falls. Meyer also was fourth in all-around (33.00) and uneven bars (8.2) and floor (8.05) and Hall was sixth on floor (7.6). Hall (30.00) and freshman Lizzy Lowery (27.85) also competed as all-arounders.

Haney is not the only Hornet who has upped her game in recent meets. Since returning from winter break, the Hornets have been on the rise and scored as high as 136.00 for third place at the Neuqua Valley Invite Jan. 17 behind state-title favorite Prairie Ridge co-op (143.525) and Lincoln-Way co-op (139.40).

The Hornets returned to action after winter break at the Lincoln-Way Invitational Jan. 10 and scored a then season-high 134.10 points for sixth among 10 teams. They then defeated Leyden 135.00 to 107.55 Jan. 12 in Northlake.

The Hornets’ 136.00 at the Neuqua Valley included season-high event scores on beam (34.00) and uneven bars (33.80).

Nowak won all-around (37.20) over Prairie Ridge co-op sophomore Nikki Baars (36.75) and won uneven bars (9.4) by .05 over Baars and floor (9.35) by .05 over Addison Trail senior Casey Boksha. Nowak also was fifth on vault (9.35) and beam (9.1).

Meyer hit 34.00 in all-around – a season best by 1.35 – for eighth place behind an 8.75 vault (tied for 9th), 8.65 on beam (tied for 11th) and 8.3 on uneven bars (tied for 18th) that achieved or equaled season bests. Her 8.3 on floor was just .05 from her season best the previous meet.

On uneven bars, Haney had a then season-high 8.35 to tie for 16th and Hall had a season-high 7.75. Haney also was 12th in all-around (33.05) and 16th on beam (8.45) and Hall was 16th in all-around (31.75) and 18th on vault (8.35).

At the Lincoln-Way Invite, the Hornets placed just behind rival Downers Grove South (5th, 137.10). Geneva, fifth at state last year, won with 145.10 points.

Nowak achieved a season-high 37.60 all-around to take second to Geneva sophomore Claire R ose Ginsberg (37.90), last year's state champion in all-around and an all-stater (top five) on everything but uneven bars.

Nowak also won vault (9.55) by .05 over Sandburg/Stagg co-op freshman Maddy Roe. Nowak was second on floor (9.4) and beam (9.3) to Ginsberg by .15 and .3, respectively, and was fourth on uneven bars (9.35).

"I was just .3 below the state all-around champion from last year (Ginsberg) so that was a good accomplishment," Nowak said. "Lincoln-Way was a really good meet for me. Just overall it was consistent. We started on beam (as a team). I hit my routine really solid and I just kept going for the rest of the meet."

Meyer (32.65), Hall (32.20) and Haney (31.65) were 19th, 21st and 23rd in all-around. Meyer tied for 17th on beam (then season-high 8.4) and Hall tied for 20th on vault with a season-high 8.6. Just two days later, they all followed up with strong performances at Leyden.

"I think that (winter break) really made a difference just having more time to focus on specific things instead of doing everything all at once, just focusing on what I needed to improve," Meyer said.

At Leyden, Nowak won all-around (36.55), floor (season-high 9.6), vault (9.2), uneven bars (9.15) and beam (8.6). The Hornets finished first through fifth in all-around and uneven bars and first through fourth on the other four events.

Hall achieved season highs in all-around (32.80) and beam (8.6) and Haney had then season highs in all-around (33.30) and uneven bars (8.2). Meyer had then season highs of 8.65 on vault and 8.3 on uneven bars.

Lowery, who made her varsity debut at Addison Trail Dec. 18 on three events, also competed all-around (28.25), and had varsity season highs on vault (7.9), floor (7.4) and uneven bars (6.65).

"At Leyden, my floor was really good. I stepped out of bounds and I still got an 8.5. That was definitely a highlight," Hall said. "My fulls (on floor since break) have gotten a lot higher. I'm getting used to my landings again and on bars, I put a free hip in on high bar that wasn't there (before)."

The Hornets' Jan. 7 home dual meet with Morton was canceled due to no school that day because of frigid temperatures. That dual now will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27, in Darien, the Hornets' last regular-season meet before the Gold Meet at 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31, at Willowbrook.

-- by Bill Stone