



A workout in progress

By Larry Fleming

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— On a 90-plus degree day in Chattanooga, it's just as hot inside the new D1 Sports Training and Therapy center.

Three aspiring athletes from Dalton — Carson Hagen, Taylor Poteet and Kyle Stanley — are put through a strenuous workout conducted by Ryan Murphy, a young gung-ho D1 instructor.

In short order, the athletes' T-shirts are soaked with perspiration. They sprint through cone courses and then do 40-yard sprints. They jump flat-footed over 40 yards. They lift weights and do leg bends with a 5 or 10-pound weight in each hand.

They are physically tested.

"It was good. It was fun," said Stanley, a 10-year-old travel team baseball standout who will be a sixth grader at New Hope Middle School in the fall.

"I think going to D1 is going to help me in the future," Stanley added. "I want to get stronger and faster for sports."

Even at such a young age, Stanley's agility is apparent. He does each drill with relative ease.

"Ryan pushes us pretty hard," he said, "and that's good. I go up there twice a week and after my last (baseball) tournament in Nashville this week I'll start going three times a week."

Stanley's father, Dale, said this isn't his son's first exposure to constructed athletic training. He worked out at Building Better Athletes in Hixson, a Chattanooga suburb, prior to joining D1.

D1's facility, which opened on May 21 with great fanfare and co-owner Peyton Manning on hand, cuts about 20 miles off Stanley's trips from Dalton. Initially, Dale Stanley was not aware of Manning's ownership in D1, but it certainly sparked interest from his son.

"While it didn't influence me getting Kyle into D1, it fired him up," Dale Stanley said. "He liked that." Dale Stanley said he pays \$1,200 annually for D1 membership. The fee provides Stanley's son with unlimited access to D1.

Former Tennessee-Chattanooga football standout Cos DeMatteo directs the day-to-day operations for D1 Chattanooga — there are also D1 facilities in Tennessee in Nashville, Knoxville and Memphis, as well as Greenville, S.C., and Little Rock, Ark.

"Well, D1 is something you can't find in Dalton and that's why we go to Chattanooga," Dale Stanley said. "The reason we go is to keep Kyle in shape. The workouts are pretty intense and he's always been pretty athletic, but they're working him hard on things like footwork that will only improve his athleticism."

Hagen is 12-year-old standout softball pitcher for Dalton Middle School with a 54 mph fastball and plays travel ball for the Chattanooga Bandits. She migrated to D1 from Chattanooga's Velocity Training after that business closed its doors, said Melissa Hagen, her mother.

Carson's 7-year-old brother, Nicholas, also works out at D1. His workout schedule has been interrupted lately with summer baseball tournaments.

"My kids love it," Melissa Hagen said. "Carson is stronger, getting faster and I can see her coordination improving. I think it's giving Carson an extra edge. We're up there three or four times a week.

"It's not me out there trying to tell Carson what she has to do, but it's people who really know what they're doing, and they're preparing her for a higher level of competition."

Carson Hagen could easily appear in a D1 television commercial.

“It’s amazing,” she said. “They go step by step, show you what to do, they’re more strict than Velocity. When I first started it was really tough. After awhile, I know I’m making progress and getting better. I’m very glad we found this place.”

James Poteet, Taylor’s father, said he can already see his son’s confidence level rising after about a dozen workouts at D1.

“And I love the atmosphere,” James Poteet said. “The coaches really know what they’re doing with the kids. The kids love the coaches. One night we were up there and I was in the locker room area and turn around to see Peyton, Eli and Archie Manning standing there. That fires a kid up.”

Taylor Poteet, an 11-year-old who will play baseball and basketball at North Whitfield Middle School this coming school year, doesn’t want to miss any workouts.

“I go at least twice a week,” he said. “If I miss a day one week, I’ll go at least three times the next week. It’s really good and it’s helping me a lot.”

Former Tennessee fullback Will Bartholomew started D1 — short for Division I athletics — in 2002.

Bartholomew bases his operation in Franklin, Tenn., and co-owns the Chattanooga, Knoxville and Nashville businesses with Manning.

It has been reported that Bartholomew’s WB Sports of Chattanooga LLC, paid \$500,000 for the land on which to construct the 18,000-square foot building that includes an artificial football field, a weightlifting area and a physical therapy room.

D1 is located on Commons Boulevard behind Lowe’s, just off Shallowford Road near the Hamilton Place Mall.

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Photos



Twelve-year-old Carson Hagen, lying down, lifts weights under the watchful eye of D1 Training Center instructor Ryan Murphy on Wednesday in Chattanooga. Larry Fleming