By Diane Stamm

In case you haven't heard, I'm a sports junkie. Every morning when "The Cat In The Hat" gets over on PBS the channel gets changed to SportsCenter on ESPN.

My favorite segment is Plays of the Day. A close second is Sports Science. The premise is using math to explain sports. Have you ever saw a hit on the football field and wondered "How hard did he get hit?" Here's where you can find your answer. One of my personal favorites is when they demonstrate that it's harder to hit a 70 mph softball than a 90 mph baseball.

You're probably wondering what this has to do with sports in southwest Nebraska.

While I watched the Broncos in Cambridge on Saturday the thought occurred to me: How in the heck does Tailor Lee throw an eight pound shot 32 feet? For those of you who haven't seen Lee, she's a relatively tall kid, but no one could call her big. What makes tall, skinny kids good at throwing shot? How many factors go into throwing a shot put?

Sports Science crossed my mind again as I watched Emma Skelton run the hurdles. I've always enjoyed watching those athletes that don't break stride and look like they just take a step over the hurdle. In the 100 meter high hurdles, each hurdle is 33 inches tall. Skelton is 63 inches tall. That turns into a pretty big hop 10 times while running like crazy in between.

Late in the day as the meet was wearing down Sports Science crossed my mind again as I watched 5'3" Abbie Fanning turn on the jets and track down Chase County's 5'8" Paige Spady in the 800 meter run. Spady had a comfortable lead rounding the final turn. Fanning kicked it into gear and chased her down only to lose by a step. How many more steps did Fanning have to take in the race? How fast was she running down the stretch?

In school I enjoyed algebra and trigonometry, but physics never really sunk in. Watching Sports Science explain the physics of athletics has increased my enjoyment of sports. It makes me appreciate the effort and enjoy the accomplishments of local athletes all the more.