

Post Crescent  
Team Bocchini to Be at Paper Discovery Duathlon  
By Gloria West  
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Team Hoyt, Dick and Rick, his paraplegic son, are inspirations for many. The words "Team Hoyt" have become nearly "household." They are the father and son athletic team you see on television and billboards, wheeling down the long winding road of life. Dick Hoyt has pulled his son through many endurance sports, especially the grueling Hawaiian Ironman. He swims, bikes and runs together with his son. They are always together. Rick is always with him. While Dick may do the work, Rick provides the inspiration, and most importantly, they both share the glory of crossing the finish line.

Other than the Hoyt's, there are almost no other multi-sport duos like this, for sure not locally or even in the state of Wisconsin. The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Appleton "Paper Discovery Duathlon" will introduce a team like Rick and Dick Hoyt. Let's call them "Team Bocchini" otherwise known as AJ and Doug Bocchini from Kohler, Wisconsin. They have teamed up and entered this Sunday's event which consists of 5k run, 22 mile bike and 5k run. Son AJ and father Doug Bocchini may just become our new local heroic athletes as they join the ranks of choosing to do multi-sports like duathlons and triathlons. This Sunday at the Paper Discovery Museum they both will cross the finish line and earn the honorable title of "Paper Discovery Duathletes."

Sixteen years ago, AJ was born with cerebral palsy and has been in a wheelchair since birth. His brothers Sam, age 11 and Douglas, age 17 are typical sport jocks. As AJ's mother puts it, "so is AJ in his own way". Although confined to a wheelchair, this did not stop this active teenager's involvement in high school sports. In fact, he is very involved. AJ is the manager of the local high school football and boy's varsity basketball teams. His parents are proud of their son's ability as a sport team manager, especially AJ's dad, who has always desired more for AJ. Doug Bocchini loves to attend his other son's sports events and participates in sports himself. Secretly he always wanted for AJ to find a way to also feel the passion of participation in events too. Doug has now found the way.

Inspired by the Team Hoyt story, Doug and Lisa Bocchini began to search for a similar experience for Doug and AJ. They found a "duet" which is a wheelchair attachment to use in the front of a bike. Doug and AJ began to ride together finding extreme fulfillment in this "special bonding process." With a little help from their friends, they found a used large-sized child jogger to use for running together. Next, they took to practicing the combined sports. Through practice, Doug and AJ gained confidence for their next big challenge of signing up for a duathlon. Doug readily admits he is somewhat nervous as a "newbie" in the sport of duathlons and triathlons. "I never really have done anything like this, but for my son, I will do anything."

This Sunday will be their first try. Combining the distances of Sunday's duathlon, especially with Lawe Street hills as part of the run course, can be challenging. To make sure Doug and AJ have a solid lift off into the world of duathlons, event organizers wanted to give them some extra support. They called on a local Fox Tri Club member to provide shadow support to this new "dynamic duo." Immediately, Gordy McDaniel, a Fox Tri member from Little Chute responded to the request and said "This is great because the Fox Tri Club is about making triathlons and duathlons achievable for everyone. I would love to help.

It will be motivational for everyone.” As a Pace Leader in many of the local marathons, helping others achieve their goals comes natural for him. Gordy will be their “little bit” of extra insurance.

Lisa and Doug Bocchini are ready for the big occasion to have their son participate in a multi-sport. They know AJ will be mainstreamed with other athletes. AJ will feel the wind on his face and will experience the passion of sport. Mom quickly added, “We are excited for AJ to have two first ever experiences this weekend. While I know AJ is ready for the duathlon, he will be attending his first prom the night before. Even though he is going solo to prom, he may be tired at first due to a long night. This will be a very big weekend for him.”

Let’s all welcome “Team Bocchini” to the Fox Valley this Sunday when the gun goes off at 8 a.m. We invite all of Sunday’s duathletes and spectators to share in AJ’s first thrill of leading the start line combined with the glory of crossing the finishline. For details to participate or spectate: visit [midwestsportevents.com](http://midwestsportevents.com)