

# TWO-GETHER

By Joe Vanden Acker

At first glance, these two guys are both one of a kind. Matt Frelich '10 is tall, dark-haired, and he's the talker. Andy Frelich '10 is several inches shorter, blonde, and quiet. Matt is more studious, Andy more laid-back. Matt's the hard worker, Andy's the natural athlete.

Spend some time getting to know the Frelich twins and you will realize that Matt and Andy are more alike than either one of them would like to admit. One thing they definitely share is their significant impact on Lawrence University athletics. "We've always been on the same team," Andy said. "We usually didn't want to be, but it always ended up that way." The brothers are now together on Saturdays in the Banta Bowl for the Lawrence football team and share the diamond at Whiting Field for the baseball squad.

Growing up on a small farm in Maribel, Wis., a town of 264 located less than an hour east of Lawrence in Manitowoc County, the Frelich brothers have been playing together since they were five-year-olds in T-ball. "That was always funny because they wanted to see which one was better," said their father, Ron Frelich, who coached them for years during youth sports. "They were always very competitive. They were quiet on the field and quiet in practice, but they gave as much as they could to the team." In a rare exception, the boys met for the fourth grade flag football championship on opposite sides of the line of scrimmage. Andy's team came out on top. "That proves I'm better, right?" Andy asked with a laugh. "That was the only time we weren't on the same team," said Matt.

**Below:** Matt, left, and Andy Frelich

**Right:** Matt Frelich (number 42) lines up against Ripon.





Matt got his revenge on the wrestling mat when he beat Andy, who readily explained back then and to this day that he was taking it easy on his big brother (Matt is quick to point out he was born 20 minutes ahead of Andy). "That's what he said that day when he came home," said Joy Frelich, the twins' mother. "He let Matt win because he knew Matt couldn't handle losing. They always liked to win, but they weren't competitive with each other because they always played different positions."

The twins agree with their mother and father that their competitive nature never extended to each other. Their size and athletic abilities put them in different places on the field. "We always played different positions so we kind of had our own roles," Matt said. "(Playing with Andy) never bothered me. It's kind of like having a friend on the team. You always know what he's thinking."

That kind of connection only comes from brothers. When you spend every waking moment with someone, you can't help but understand them. What makes them tick, what makes them laugh, what makes them cry. You also become as much a part of them as they are of you. "I think we kind of grew together in some instances," Matt said. "I'll be the funny guy and Andy will be the serious one, and in another situation we will switch roles."

These interchangeable Frelich twins didn't plan on attending college together, but they visited Lawrence and rivals St. Norbert College and Ripon College. "We visited Ripon and immediately crossed them off," Matt said very seriously. "We visited St. Norbert and decided we wouldn't play there. We talked to some professors and football coach Chris Howard. We liked the atmosphere, and we knew we would get a chance to play sports. It was actually a mutual decision." "They gave us a

deal, two-for-one," Andy added with a laugh.

While Ron and Joy Frelich wish Lawrence had that kind of tuition discount, they couldn't be more pleased at the decision made by their sons. "I'm happy they went to Lawrence because it gives our family a chance to watch them and be a part of the college," Ron said. "They're alike in a lot of ways. They try not to be. I know when they were in high school they wanted to be separate, but now they're trying to get back together. Joy said it the other day, 'Matt and Andy, they are best of friends again.' They have that little sense of security with each other."

Joy falls back on something she stresses to her twin boys, who have an older brother and a younger brother and sister. "I'm totally glad they are at the same school and I think Lawrence is a perfect fit for them," Joy said. "I always tell them that their friends come and go but you will be brothers forever. They will look back and have so much to share in life later on."

## WHICH ONE'S BETTER?

Sibling rivalry only goes so far.

When you ask twin brothers Matt and Andy which one is the better athlete, the answer comes quickly. "I think it comes to him naturally. I have to work at it. I've been busting my butt to keep up with this guy," said Matt, eyeing his brother. "I think the same way," said Andy, quickly agreeing, a large smile crossing his lips, that he is the better athlete. "I guess you can say I'm trying to be like my little brother," said Matt. The Frelich brothers have been contributors to the Lawrence baseball

**Right:** Andy Frelich winds up to deliver a strike.

and football programs since they arrived on campus in the fall of 2006. Matt has made the bigger splash in the Banta Bowl, and he has been named to the All-Midwest Conference football team in each of his first two seasons. Matt, who already ranks fourth in career tackles for loss (29) and seventh in sacks (12), also was named to the D3football.com Team of the Week in 2006. A defensive end, Matt blocked a school-record four kicks in 2007 and is the career leader with five blocked kicks.

Andy played a reserve role as a cornerback during his freshman season and stepped in as a starter in 2007. He has piled up 72 tackles, four interceptions, and seven pass breakups in two seasons. Andy has seen much more action for the Lawrence baseball team. He saw most of his time as a relief pitcher during his freshman season but took the top spot in the starting rotation in 2008. Matt has seen only limited action at first base and in the outfield in his two seasons.

"I think it's a nice balance because he's better than I am in football," Andy said of his brother. "And he can take all the glory in baseball," added Matt.

## IN THE CLASSROOM

A football coach would say Matt has a "great motor." That's football jargon for being a hard worker and never stopping until the whistle blows. That same coach would say Andy is a "gifted athlete." In the same football parlance that means the game comes naturally to him. The same things that hold true for the Frelich twins on the fields of play at Lawrence University also take place in the classroom. True to form, these twin brothers have the same major — biology. They also have always taken a slightly different approach to their studies. "In everything, Matt always wanted straight As. Always worked, always studying. He's always had to work for his grades," said Joy



Frelich. "Whereas Andy was 'Well, whatever happens, happens.'" Don't get the impression Andy isn't taking his academic career seriously. He went to Arizona over spring break, as the baseball team played eight games to start the season. Andy wasn't with his teammates, though — he was taking the opportunity to study desert ecology with Professor of Biology Nick Maravolo and a group of Lawrence students. Matt is leaning toward graduate school after he leaves Lawrence. Andy hasn't decided his future quite yet.

Watching his sons play at Lawrence gives Ron Frelich peace of mind. "Matt was never satisfied unless he had a 4.0 or straight As. Watching Matt play football, that gets me to believe he will succeed in life. I can see that same thing in Andy's determination," said Ron, adding the mix of athletics and classroom work suits his twins. "If they didn't play college sports, I think they would be missing something out of their lives. I think they are really going to look back at this time in college, baseball and football. They are going to be talking about this the rest of their lives. They are going to tell their kids this happened or that happened." ■