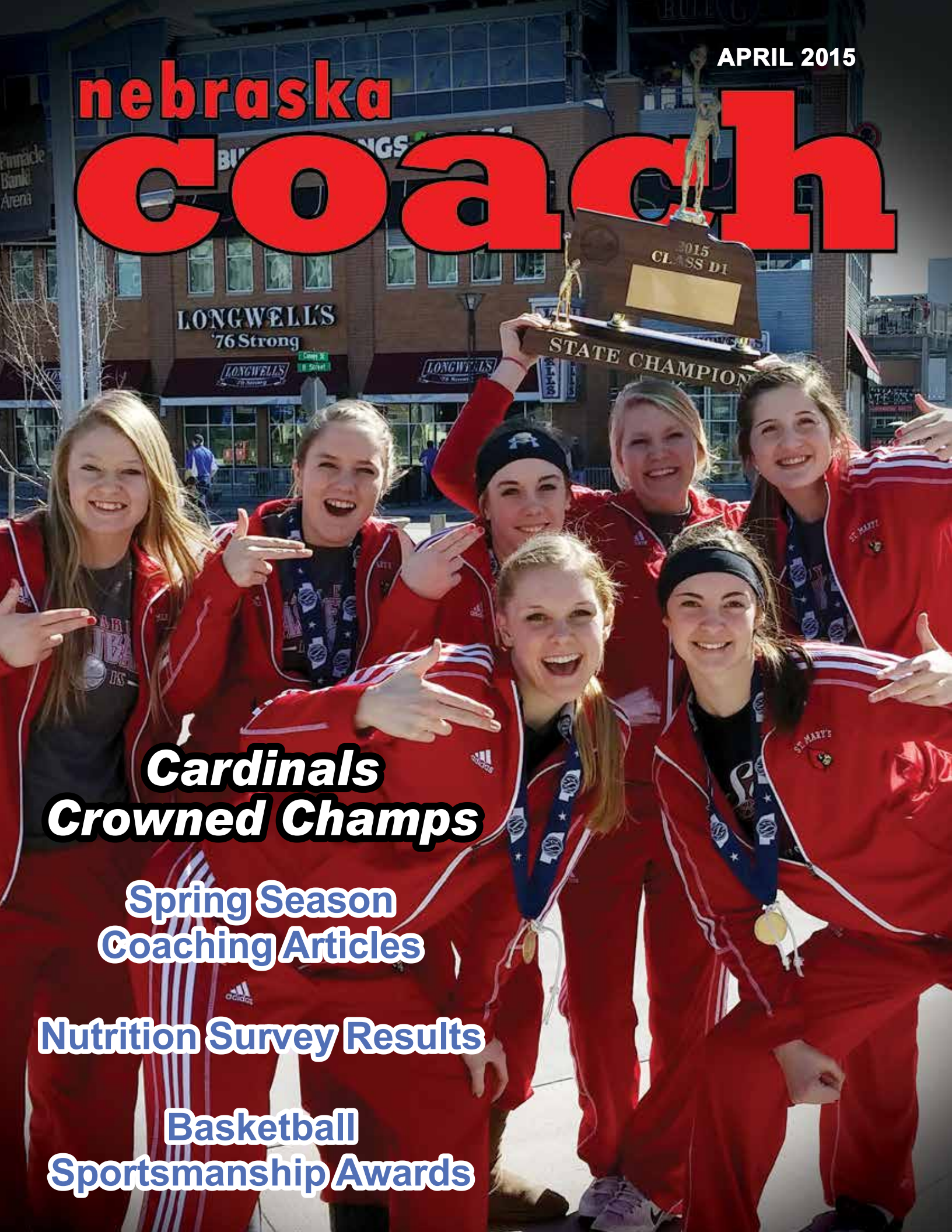


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Cardinals Crowned Champs

**Spring Season
Coaching Articles**

Nutrition Survey Results

**Basketball
Sportsmanship Awards**



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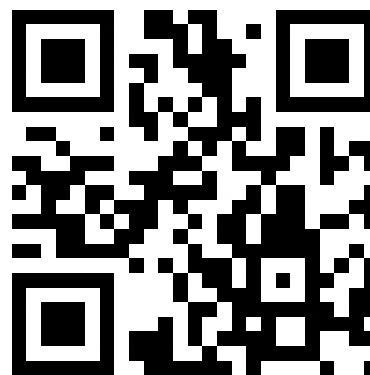
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Steve Clark, Head Girls’ Basketball Coach at Omaha Westside, directs his team during a timeout of the Class A Championship game on March 7 at Pinnacle Bank Arena. Omaha Westside defeated Norfolk 53-40 to capture their first Class A title since 1999. – NCA Photo



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Peter Miller, University of Minnesota, presents a session to throws coaches at the NCA Winter Track & Field Clinic on February 7 in Lincoln. Over 160 coaches attended the annual event. – NCA Photo

FEATURED 2015 NCA UPCOMING EVENTS

- April 26, 2015 NCA Board of Directors Meeting - Lincoln
- May 1, 2015 *Nebraska Coach* Pre-Clinic Magazine Mailed to Members
- May 1, 2015 2015-2016 Online Membership & Clinic Registration Opens
- May 13-19, 2015 Soccer Championship Sportsmanship Awards - Omaha
- May 22-23, 2015 State Track & Field Championships Coaches Hospitality Tent - Omaha
- June 1, 2015 NCA Service & Jerry Stine Family Milestone Awards Nominations Due
- July 19, 2015 NCA Awards Banquet - Lincoln
- July 20, 2015 NCA Clinic Golf Scramble - Wilderness Golf Course, Lincoln
- July 20, 2015 NCA All-Star Girls' & Boys' Basketball Games - Lincoln
- July 21-23, 2015 NCA Multi-Sports Clinic -Lincoln
- July 21, 2015 NCA All-Star Volleyball Match - Lincoln
- July 22, 2015 NCA Softball All-Star Doubleheader - Lincoln
- Sept. 3, 2015 *Nebraska Coach* Magazine Fall Edition Released

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The Game Plan *Darin Boysen, Executive Director*

Each day I'm reminded by teachers, coaches and school administrators that young people are under attack. They're being pulled in countless directions. Coaches ask, "Are the sacrifices being made really making a difference? Is it really worth it?" My simple and resounding answer is YES! I'm here to remind you that your greatest job as a coach goes well beyond wins and losses on the scoreboard, team stats or team standings - but rather that you the coach are in the *people business*.

This winter I paid a visit to a coach that was really hurting – dealing with a devastating tragedy. This coach has sacrificed a great deal professionally and personally over the past decade to advance in the world of education and coaching. He grew up in a very difficult home, facing daily challenges. I am amazed at his ability to overcome such obstacles. Today he has the strength to teach confidence, values and skills through education and athletics.

This coach works tirelessly to improve and build relationships with his athletes. This winter his team enjoyed a great deal of success which has not been witnessed at the school in decades. He is surrounded by a positive coaching staff that he trusts and his athletes embrace. Everything was pointing in the right direction... goals and dreams of a state championship were realistic.

Suddenly his world stopped on a dime. He faced the unthinkable; one of his athletes took his own life. As I learned of the news, I knew I needed to go see Coach. When I arrived, Coach took me to an empty classroom. There were times Coach was inconsolable. The same question kept coming to the surface over and over – Why? I had no answers.

What made this visit even more difficult, Coach was MY former athlete - nearly a decade and half ago. He still calls me "Coach" every time I see him. He wasn't a state champion or even a state medalist for our teams. But now he was the Coach, the one his school and community needed. Coach needed me, but I had no answers other than to listen and cry with him.

His concerns were not centered around himself – but rather the athletes, families, coaches and community. I assured him, that through his leadership, this terrible tragedy would serve life lessons and would be remembered for a lifetime. He was concerned about making me proud. We shared more tears and hugs.

As I walked out of his school that afternoon I felt many emotions. It was a difficult drive back to Lincoln. I wanted to rescue him from this terrible situation. I wanted to give him some form of useful advice. In hind sight, I realized that there wasn't anything I could say. Instead, I listened and encouraged him to stand on his convictions. Weeks later his team captured a district championship. They went on to finish as state runner-ups. The student-athlete that took his own life was listed on the team roster for the state dual championship, because we are in the *people business*.

One day later, I was reminded, while reading Tony Dungy's best-selling book, *Uncommon – Finding Your Path of Significance*, of how proud I am of *Coach Mattox* at York and coaches across the state of Nebraska. Coaches can and do make a difference each day by leading with core values that empower student-athletes for a lifetime.

Coach Dungy's keys to developing your core:

1. Remember what you do when no one is watching matters.
2. The means matter as much as the ends, if not more.
3. Hang in there. Character is revealed through adversity.
4. Often we grow as much through the little things as we do through the big ones.
5. Truth is critical. Being truthful is too.
6. Don't rationalize your way around honesty.
7. Don't blow your own horn.
8. Don't be falsely modest; you have amazing gifts. Just recognize others do too.
9. You are important, but not indispensable. The same goes for others. See yourself as a significant part of the process.
10. Be careful what you do with your resources, gifts, time and talents. You've been entrusted with them.
11. Some of the most rewarding times in life are when you have to stand alone, even if you are uncomfortable doing so.
12. Life is hard. Courage is essential.
13. Never give up. Never.

"Stand by your convictions. Summon the courage to be uncommon." —Tony Dungy

LEADERSHIP WEDNESDAY

Bob Greco – Omaha Westside



Photo Credit: Eric Gregory, Lincoln Journal Star

“As a program, we strive to get our players to be hard working, encouraging, well disciplined individuals who care more about each other than about themselves. We want them known as the mentally toughest players in the state. We expect our teams to be aggressive, cohesive units that always give their best and never give up.”

The above is the mission statement for Omaha Westside Baseball. This article summarizes a program we initiated three years ago in an effort to more effectively focus on an important component mentioned in our mission statement—the mental aspect of the game of baseball.

I made the decision to start meeting on Wednesday mornings before school in the preseason because I had so much material I wanted to share, and not enough time to present it to my team. Our “Leadership Wednesday” meetings are held in my classroom, and start at 7:00 a.m. and conclude at 7:40 a.m.; starting in mid-December and concluding with the start of tryouts in March. (We typically have 10 sessions.) I invite all of the returning Junior Varsity and Varsity players from the year before, and we rotate bringing treats.

As a coach, I’ve always been very interested in the mental “game within the game” of baseball. After reading a few books on visualization, my interest was sparked to learn more. I then progressed to researching other topics related to one’s mindset, such as mental toughness, commitment, hard work, self-talk, teamwork, and leadership. Initially, I shared quotes from athletes and famous people that

related to these topics. Each year, however, I found myself wanting to share more and more material. The more I learned, the more I enjoyed it, and the more I shared.

At about this same time, Curt Shockey joined our staff after retiring from Ralston High School. He also shared a strong passion for the mental aspect of baseball, which seemed to peak my interest even more. I added his material to what I had previously shared with our teams.

In addition to Curt’s impact, I was also energized by my interactions with our new American Legion sponsor, who joined us in 2009. He also loved to discuss and learn about leadership, which inspired me even more.

Additionally, I was reading 15-20 books per year on this topic, and this eventually all evolved into my passing out an 80-page binder to each player at the beginning of the year. These binders contained material from books, speakers, and articles. The players were assigned to read a specific article beforehand and then we’d discuss it the next day at the start of practice or a game. We were consistently spending the first 5-20 minutes of practice discussing and breaking down the important aspects of the assigned readings. This passion and focus continued to grow to the point where I had so much material that I needed more time to present it. I realized 10 minutes before practice was not enough time to teach all of the vital lessons to my players. This is how our tradition of “Leadership Wednesday” began.

The following would be a typical Agenda for a Leadership Wednesday meeting:

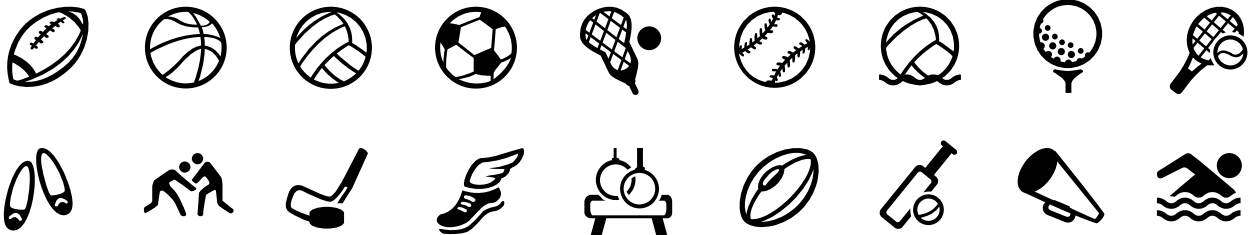
1. Our meetings start by having the players collectively read our Mission Statement aloud.
2. Discussion of Character traits and how each relates to baseball: *attitude, character, class, honesty, listening, loyalty, respect and unselfishness.*
3. Review of selected motivational videos from YouTube. (*These video clips come from movies, famous people, presentations, and sport clips.*) I’ve found my players would much rather watch these videos than read about something.
4. Instruction re: a specific baseball rule.
5. Review one of Bruce Brown’s lessons on leadership, sportsmanship, or some other aspect of mindset in athletics.
6. Coach’s book report & introduction of new drills, teachings or topics for the upcoming year.

Note: We post the Agenda for each meeting on a Google Doc to encourage our players to journal about what was discussed each week.



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SWING AWAY

Paul Reinertson - Gibbon



Spring time in Nebraska brings excitement as the spring sports seasons get underway. At Gibbon High School that means golf! We have been fortunate to get a lot of interest in boys' golf through the years. Many years back our school's best athlete decided to play golf, which coincided with a guy named Tiger Woods coming onto the scene who made golf seem cool. Thanks Tiger!!!

For younger coaches just starting out, a word to the wise; when you see some of your golfers it may look like Helen Keller at a piñata party. You've heard the expression, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, you will just have to assume that is true.

First thing we do at Gibbon is give them an explanation of golf. We tell our guys that you just selected to play one of the most difficult games. We tell them if you look at handicaps over the past 30 years, they haven't moved much. You stop and think of all the instruction on TV, equipment changes, improved course conditions, and video technology, yet there has been limited improvement. That can be discouraging! Likewise, I tell our players a story told to me once. A man wanting to learn more about golf asked a golf instructor how much it would cost for lessons. The instructor said, "Ten lessons for \$150." The man replied, "No, I just want one lesson, how much for just one lesson?" The instructor said, "\$1,000." The man was shocked. He replied, "How could one lesson cost \$1,000 while ten cost \$150?" The golf instructor looked him straight in the eye and responded, "You want a miracle, you will have to pay for it."

I think you have to let your players know that improvement takes time and effort. Maybe more so in golf than most other sports. In fact, this game is more about failure than success. When you get players to accept this fact, you then have a chance to make some improvements. We spend a lot of time talking in this area.

Second, we discuss fundamentals that we would like to see. There are hundreds of books on golf instruction, or many very knowledgeable club professionals to access. I do think your players need to understand what it is in their swing that makes them be able to hit a ball with some degree of success. In my opinion, with many high school kids, you make some tweaks, but not major swing changes due to the fact that many are not going to spend the time needed on the practice tee to ingrain bigger changes. If you get a player who plays year round, then yes, you can make bigger changes. If the year round player is getting lessons from a PGA professional, you need to be in contact with him/her so your player is not getting two different messages.

Third, we talk about their equipment. At many small schools you get players that literally have grandpa's old clubs. You need to find a way to improve their set. If they have some financial means, then it is easy. If not, contact an adult in your area who is a "player." Many times they have kept their old sets. Contact clubs that may have older sets to purchase. Any effort you can make in this area will help. Since I have been in our community for some time, we are fortunate that adults are willing to donate clubs to our program.

Fourth, is rules! I am a big believer in getting your players more familiar with the rules. This game is about honesty, so you want your players to be able to call penalties on themselves. By knowing the rules, you can also help your team be more successful. Any coach who has been around can tell you horror stories about competitions lost, or players being disqualified due to a breach of rules. If that means giving your players quizzes, attending NGA sponsored rules seminars, or some other way to enhance their knowledge, it can pay dividends. After our meets, I always ask our players if anything unusual happen in their group. Those times can lead to some great discussions. Our players have gotten into the habit that they will bring situations they saw on TV to practice and we discuss them. Nebraska is fortunate that the NGA has people who are an excellent source for rules interpretation. Craig Ames, Justin Ahrens are two people at the NGA, along with Skip Gist of the USGA, all from Omaha, who know the rules book so well. They also love working with kids. Use them as a resource. I spent a few years on the NGA Board of Directors and I can speak from experience working with these guys.

Every coach has their own practice drills they like to do and which ones they feel are useful. I would say one thing about drills and high school practices. Golf is an individual sport and not a team sport like say football or basketball. Many of us at smaller schools coach multiple sports, and I think a lot of the times we coach golf like football or basketball. We have everyone doing the same things at the same time. I believe you can get more out of your practices if you design your practice with each individual in mind and what might be best for each. I attempt to make drills fun for the players while improving fundamentals and competitiveness.

Here are some of our players' most popular drills/competitions: Three club tournament—pick any three, no woods, hybrids, or putters though. Nine hole tournament.

- My younger guys actually score better that when they use the whole set. We keep records through the years of best scores.

- Wedge Tournament—I put markers starting at hole 1—125yds, hole 2—100yds, hole 3—75yds, hole 4—50 yards, hole 5—125 yards & continue this pattern. All are Par3's. Keep score & stats (GIR's & putts). We keep records as well here. Note—next time doing this drill change holes/distances.
- Bad lie recovery—pick out bad situations and place ball. See who can hit a recovery shot. They have to describe the shot before they execute it. We don't want any luck shots, we want only shots they can picture in their minds. Your better players love this. This drill is also a teaching drill—most will not pull it off. After several “Tin Cup” attempts, you can be Romeo, and remind them in competition, “just chip it out!”
- Ryder Cup—Pick two captains, have a selection night. Get together after a practice and grill out. All the names on the board. Captains select their team. I put players into groupings for them to select so teams are reasonably equal. Have a travelling Ryder Cup trophy. Display in your classroom. You can pick a number of holes to be played. We usually play over 2-3 days. Use different formats—best ball, scramble, alternate shot, or singles.

A few more thoughts from golf: Enjoy the game, help your players enjoy the game, and you will have done your job. If you happen to win a tournament or championship along the way, consider yourself blessed. Here are my observations after being around the game for the past half century:

- No matter how bad you're playing, you can always play worse.
- Everyone replaces their divot after a good shot.
- The less skilled the player, the more likely he will share his golf wisdom.
- Nonchalant putts count the same as chalant putts.
- It is surprisingly easy to hole a 10 foot putt for a snowman (8).
- A golf match is a test of your skill against your opponent's luck.
- If you really want to get better at golf, go back and start at an earlier age.
- You will be much better off if you hit the small ball, before the big ball.
- It's a lot easier to get up at 6:00 a.m. to play golf, than 10:00 a.m. to mow.

Enjoy the game!

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UNITE & STRENGTHEN

Geoff Weller - Lincoln Southwest



Unite and Strengthen! Sound familiar? For the uninitiated, this is the mission statement of American Outlaws- a now international supporters group for the US National Soccer Teams started right here in Nebraska. The statement perfectly captures the group's focus of uniting US soccer fans worldwide to support the National Teams and grow the game. As Nebraska soccer coaches, we should be inspired by this mission

and strive to make it our own. Accomplishing this would surely lead to the betterment of the sport within our state.

But why?

While the situation is improving, divisions (real and imagined) abound within our community. Working in both the high school and club arenas, I have seen this divide between coaches at each level. A shared sense of ownership over players leads to adversarial relationships and distrust between club coaches and high school coaches. These toxic relationships, often played out through the players, run counter to some core goals of our coaching community. Goals like positively affecting the lives of student athletes, creating a positive learning environment and growing the game.

But how?

As a colleague once told me, "If we expect our players to improve, should we not expect the same of ourselves?" Education and collaboration are two ways to meet this expectation and unite and strengthen our community.

Education - Strengthening

No matter your field, improving at your craft takes time and effort. Luckily, access to educational materials for soccer is becoming easier by the day. A simple online search will turn up countless exercises and activities. For a more in-depth, formal experience, you can turn to the two leading soccer coach education organizations in the country: the United States Soccer Federation and the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. Each has a well laid out education program designed to familiarize you with a coaching methodology and help mold your coaching philosophy. Many of the early courses are offered online and more advanced courses are held regionally and nationally. Locally, coaches can attend the Nebraska Coaches Association Clinic held each July.

The most enjoyable learning method though, is to watch the game at the highest levels. High level soccer is now readily available in person, online or on TV. When you watch, watch like a coach. Break down pieces of the game on an individual and team level. Look at specifics. How does the back line shift? Where do the midfielders pick up the ball? How does the forward play with their back to the goal? Watching the game like this can give insight into different ideas of how the game is played- ideas you might be able to apply in your own team.

Pursuing educational opportunities does take time and effort and it can be a very individualized activity. However, it is time and effort well spent. By focusing on your craft you can improve your coaching abilities and strengthen the community.

Collaboration - Uniting

Only through collaboration with other coaches can we pass on best practices, encourage further education, and see the game reach its maximum potential. This collaboration can take on many forms. It can be as simple as getting a group of coaches together on a regular basis to discuss the game, share stories or just commiserate. Meetings like this can be very cathartic. Trust

me. If you cannot gather a group of coaches, seek out a mentor for a one-on-one discussion. This person would be a more experienced coach that you can go to for advice or counsel. Nebraska college coaches are another resource. Across our state, we have numerous first class programs with top-notch coaches. Reach out to them for advice or tips. Ask if you can watch a training session or two. No doubt, most will be open to accommodating your requests.

Collaboration can also be reaching out to the coaches of shared players to find ways you can develop them together. At the very least, it can be having a conversation with their other coaches. These coaches can be a great resource to find out information on players, especially new players. You can quickly learn their take on the player's strengths, weaknesses and motivators.

Building these collaborative relationships does take time and effort. Walls may need to be broken down. Egos put aside. The potential positive impact of a coaching community united and working together towards a few common goals is extraordinary.

This is the bright future to which we should aspire. The potential is there. Youth participation numbers are on the rise. We are drawing thousands of fans to the high school state final. The game is ever present in popular culture. To realize this potential, we must resolve ourselves to the task of evolving, through educational activities and collaboration with our colleagues. We must Unite and Strengthen!

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TENNIS PRACTICE GAMES & DRILLS THAT ARE FUN & COMPETITIVE

Mariana Hurst - Papillion-LaVista High School

Photo Credit: Chris Neil



With each year of coaching, comes a year of meeting many new challenges. As a coach, you make a commitment to yourself and your players that you are going to work hard at doing the best job you can to help them develop as players

and as a team. Not only is that a great responsibility and challenge, but it is an honor. Being the best coach I can be is something I strive to do every day. I attend as many clinics and camps year round as I can. I use resources like The Nebraska Coach magazine along with many other current resources regularly. I don't hesitate to ask questions or discuss tennis with people around me. I'm often talking with fellow coaches, tennis instructors, parents, and my players (former as well as current). I enjoy hearing and learning through others about new drills or ideas they have come across. It's very important to me as a coach to always look to grow and learn more about the game of tennis.

The best advice I have to offer other coaches is to stay humble and be accepting of advice. Do your best to develop positive relationships with your players and their families and invest in them. Life is not just about them as an athlete but them as a person. Know what they are like both on and off the court. By doing this, you'll understand them better and be able to help them be the best they can be. Remember at the end of the day it's just a game/ match, and life goes on. It's not just about the players out there competing, but it's also about them keeping the bigger picture in mind. I want my girls to have fun, try their hardest, never be scared to make a mistake, and most of all be good people on and off the court. That's the bigger picture to me and what matters most in life, and that's what I try to teach my tennis ladies.

Being the best coach I can be begins with being prepared. Running an effective practice is the key to developing your players and team. A written plan of what you want to do in practice and what you want to accomplish is a must and should be prepared on a daily basis. Have a clear vision. My vision every day is to come up with a practice plan that is fun yet challenging. I know what I want to accomplish day in and day out. I expect 100% from my athletes and know that how they practice IS how they will play. It's my responsibility to plan a great practice so they are prepared to play their best tennis in a match. At the end of practice I often have conversations with my athletes about setting goals for themselves. Most of our athletes are working both for us and outside of our presence; I try and help them stay focused by offering advice on what skills they need to continue to work on. It's important to develop a balance between developing players fundamentally and creating competition. I will be sharing with you some of my favorite drills that work on both.

Fundamental / Singles Drills:

- 1. Hit deep to win** – this is a two- player groundstroke drill with a nice rule variation. You and your hitting partner keep score with continuous out-loud counting. One point is scored for each ball that lands in the net, short, long or wide, there is no penalty: however, winning a point on a deep shot scores double. Identify what deep means and have them play until one player accumulates 50 points. This game starts by a drop feed. **Variation:** if you want to level the playing field for a rematch, you can handicap the better player by making her deep target area smaller.
- 2. No - add focus games** – this drill focuses on- no add scoring. This is a very simple drill but intense. The first person to win 2 points in any game wins that game. If the score goes to 1-all, the game is decided by 1 no-ad point with the receiver choosing the service box the server will serve into. I then play winner moves up a court and loser moves down a court. We play this on 3 courts – the one court being the top court and the 3 court being the lowest court. **Variation:** play 5- point games with no-ad point played at 2 points each. You can also play 1-point games.

Double Drills:

- 1. Champs and Challengers** – there are many different names for this drill and many different variations as well. This is a fast- paced game with four players (two on each side of the court) all starting with their rackets on top of the net. One team is the defending champion and the teams across the net are challenging to take over their spot. You can have 8 players per court rotating in teams of two to challenge the champs. To start the point, a coach or another player randomly feeds the ball to the challengers. Points are then played out in the entire doubles area. For the challenging team to replace the champs, they have to win 2 points in a row. If the challengers lose the first point, however, they move to the end of the line and the next pair steps forward to take their chances. **Variation:** Champs start on the service line. Challengers start on the baseline and are fed a short ball.
- 2. Crash** – This is a game-based drill to get players of all levels to come to the net. Start with four players (two on each side) all four players are on the baseline in a groundstroke rally with no drop shots allowed. The coach will yell “crash” to signal all four players to immediately charge the net. If an error is made before “crash” is called, the rally must start again, but no points are scored. Play games until one team wins 5 points, and then change sides or rotate partners or courts to play another doubles team. **Variation:** Assign one of the four players to call out “crash” for 3 points in a row, after which the responsibility rotates to another player. The player yelling “crash” has to run and touch the back fence before moving toward the net.



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SPRINT SUCCESS START IN THE BLOCKS

Joe Pilakowski - Papillion-La Vista



The foundation of our sprint teaching at Papillion-La Vista High School begins in the blocks. Often, this is our main focus when we watch our sprinters on race day. We can usually gauge our sprint success or lack thereof in the first 30 meters of the race. If we can get our athletes out of the blocks in the correct position in that first 30 meters, we feel we are set up for success.



Starting Point.

From the starting line, we have our sprinters measure two steps back for their right foot placement and three steps back for their left foot. Not complicating them with blocks yet, we simply use athletic tape to make these marks. We will then allow them to come to their own crude set position and start a few times. Next, we switch the front and back foot and repeat a few more starts. Usually within a few of these experimental starts with either foot as their back foot, our sprinters usually quickly develop a preferential back foot.



Adjustments.

Still without blocks, we will then have our sprinters get into their start position using their tape marks with their preferred front and back feet. Now the real coaching and adjustments begin. Beginning with our front foot and now extending to look at the entire front leg, we will adjust our front mark by looking at the angle of this front leg's shin. We want this front leg's shin to be parallel with the track so we will adjust the foot and tape mark accordingly. Usually we find this requires moving their front foot tape mark back a few more inches. Next we will look at the back foot and leg. We want the back leg's knee to rest on the track and our desired position is to have the thigh of this back leg create a near 90 degree angle with the track. Again, we usually find we are moving athletes back a few inches to create this desired angle. Moving to the arms and head, we want our arms positioned comfortably past shoulder width. Our fingers, arms, and shoulders should be directly in line with each other creating another near 90 degree angle with the track. With our head, we discourage our sprinters from bending at the neck and just want them to maintain a neutral head position that is in line with the back with the eyes looking down at the track.

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Set Position.

Still keeping it simple and without blocks, we will then teach the proper set position. We teach raising the hips with purpose and control. So many sprinters want to pop or spring quickly and we continually discourage this. Once we raise to our set position we teach that we want to see a 90 degree angle created with the thigh and calf of the front leg and a roughly a 110-120 angle with the back leg's thigh and calf. Once we have practiced and mastered the proper raise of the hips to the set position, we will have our sprinters re-measure their tape marks and this will be their marks when they set their blocks.



The Start.

We discourage our sprinters to think about anticipating the start. We want them to listen to heats ahead of them for the starter's cadence from the set call to the gun, but we preach reaction to the gun not anticipation. In terms of positions and cues once the gun goes off, any sprinter we have had in the past few years has ingrained in their minds the cues we use that we think are crucial for start success: *BIG ARMS* and *PUSH, PUSH, PUSH*. The arm on the side of the front leg is driving out toward the finish line. We don't like to teach up, but out and punching toward the finish line, as an up arm drive may tend to have the sprinter come up too soon. The arm on the side of the back leg is driving back away from the finish line. For our better and stronger sprinters our back arm drives not only back, but we teach them to open up the arm's angle to an almost straight arm position. We want both of these "*BIG ARM*" actions to be big and wide because we teach that big arms will equate to more powerful pushes and higher knee drive off the block pads into the first few strides. The angle of

our posterior chain - head and back - coming out of the blocks should form an angle just past 45 degrees with the track. We teach our sprinters patience with the start and gradually coming to a tall top end speed position after about 30 meters. We do not want to have them tall nor see their eyes looking at us in this first 30m acceleration phase. Next, usually breaking it down on an iPad, we like to check the feet positioning out of the blocks and the first few strides. With each foot off of the pad, we want to see a full extension and push of the foot off the pad. After this full extension push off from the pads, we want to see each foot dorsiflexed while it is off the track preparing for the next foot strike and a new strong "push" off the track. After the cue of *BIG ARMS*, we teach our kids to think, *PUSH, PUSH, PUSH* with driving knees and dorsiflexed feet.

Final Points.

Routine is important. From the time the starter says, "Runners to your marks," we teach our sprinters to create their own routine akin to preparing for a free throw attempt in basketball. Like a player doing two dribbles before every free throw, we have our sprinters find a consistent approach to back into the blocks. This approach is something they must do before every start, every time. Finally, make blocks fun! Usually, once a week out of the two to three times per week we do block work, we have 30m competitions. In this competition we incorporate block work and proper acceleration techniques. Best wishes on your season's success!



HE PLAYED THREE GAMES FOR US

Steve Throne - Millard South



I attended the funeral of one of my former players. Kyle was 27 years old and was killed in a motorcycle accident. I was unable to attend the visitation or wake so I made sure to attend the funeral.

Kyle was a senior who played on my first basketball team at Millard South. He was an interesting young man that had a birth defect that caused his shoulders to roll forward which in turn caused him

to have a noticeable hump on his back. He was listed in the basketball program as 6'1 but without the hump he would have been 6'4, easily. Two years after high school he had the hump corrected and he looked fantastic - 6'4 and athletic.

He was an athletic guard who we were counting on. The only problem was that Kyle failed a first semester class which made him ineligible second semester of his senior year. He and I were both devastated. The plan was that he would play the first three games of the season and then his career would be over at Millard South. He averaged 16 points a game through the three games.

He played three games for us.

Kyle and I kept in touch over the years as we crossed paths at various events. Funerals sometimes can serve a dual purpose. The obvious one is to mourn the passing of a loved one. The other is a chance to see people you only see at weddings and funerals. There were a ton of Kyle's former classmates and teammates at the funeral. It gave me the opportunity to connect with a lot of my former students and players. The church was packed to the rafters so I didn't get a chance to speak with the family before the funeral. After the funeral, everyone went out to the front of the church to release a balloon in Kyle's honor. One of the pallbearers was also a senior on the same team as Kyle so I went over to share a moment with him before he left for the cemetery. I walked past Kyle's family who was already in the hearse ready to leave the church. I didn't feel that was a good time to share my condolences so I continued across the parking lot. I was about 20 feet from the hearse when I heard Kyle's father Gene say "Hey, Coach. . ."

I turned and met Gene halfway between the hearse and where I was standing. We gave each other a huge hug. I tried to express my feelings - I was at a loss. He said two things to me during our embrace: "Kyle loved you Coach! He loved playing for you."

He played three games for us.

As I made the walk back to my car, I took a minute to reflect on what Gene had said to me. "Kyle loved you Coach. . ." Tears were running down my face. At that moment I realized that I never knew how much of an impact I had on Kyle and his family.

He played three games for us.

Coaches, never forget the impact you have on the young people you are working with and their families. My guess is that 95% of the time we coaches never receive a formal thank you or are told personally the impact we have made on our students lives. With that said, never underestimate the influence you have on young peoples' lives. Students need teachers and coaches more today than ever before. Whether these young people play their whole career for you or for three games as Kyle did for us. . .Never forget you are making an IMPACT on the lives of young people!

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AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE PERSPECTIVES OF NEBRASKA COACHES ON SPORTS NUTRITION

Crystal Zabka Belsky, MS, RD, CSSD, LMNT – Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics

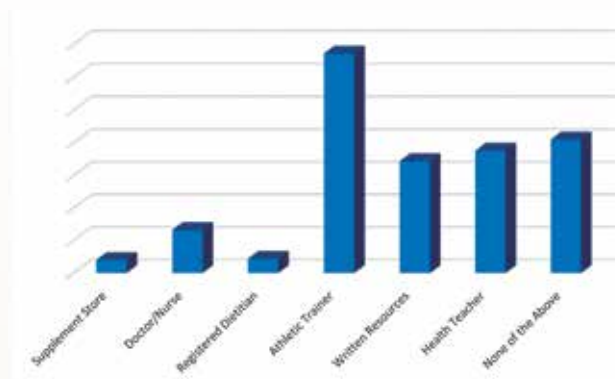


Following participation by over 700 Nebraska coaches in a recent sports nutrition survey, I was able to get a closer look at perspectives on sports nutrition. Thank you to everyone who participated in this survey in an effort to promote increased sports nutrition education, resources and support for Nebraska coaches. It appears that sports nutrition information

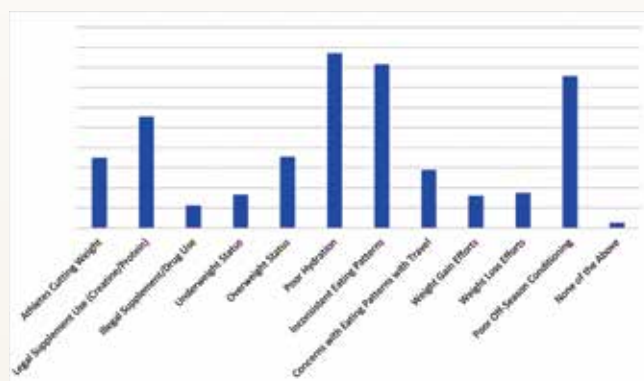
comes primarily from athletics trainers, written resources and health teachers, though a large number of coaches also reported an absence of resources for obtaining sports nutrition information and guidance. The most common sports nutrition concerns expressed by Nebraska coaches included poor hydration, inconsistent eating patterns, poor off-season conditioning and legal supplement use, including creatine and protein. In looking at athletes' eating patterns, though eating hot meals at school was most prominent, I was surprised to see how many athletes are leaving school to eat out and relying upon concession stand food. The majority of Nebraska coaches collectively define both their athletes' and their athletes' parents' awareness of sports nutrition recommendations as fair to good. It was great to hear more about the services that Nebraska coaches feel would be most beneficial to serve athletes, parents and coaches, which included a variety of approaches such as on-campus education, webinar education, off-campus education and on-campus individual evaluations and counseling. In an effort to reach athletes, parents and coaches across the state, special consideration will be made for the reported most convenient locations for clinics to be held, including Lincoln, Omaha, Grand Island, North Platte, Norfolk and Scottsbluff. I am so excited to continue working with Nebraska athletes, coaches and parents to promote optimal sports nutrition across the state. Please don't hesitate to contact me directly with any questions, concerns or requests. I have started a Sports Nutrition webinar series, with the first focus being Sports & Hydration. Please watch for email notifications of continued educational opportunities as this series evolves.

Contact Information:
 czabka@omnibehavioralhealth.com
 402-730-6190

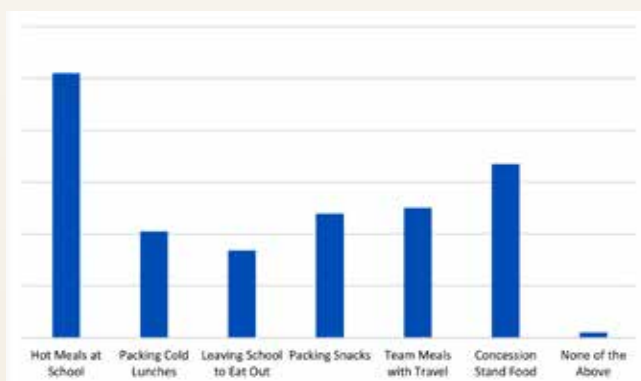
1. Do you currently utilize any sports nutrition services for your athletes?



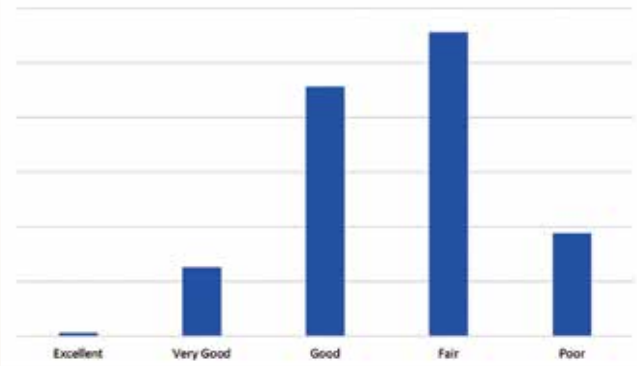
2. What sports concerns do you see most often?



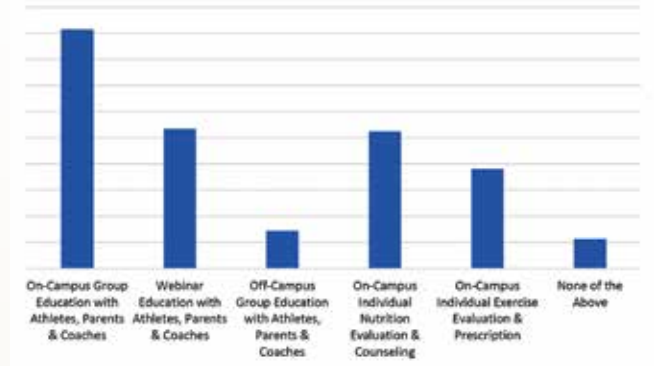
3. Which of the following best describes your athletes' eating patterns?



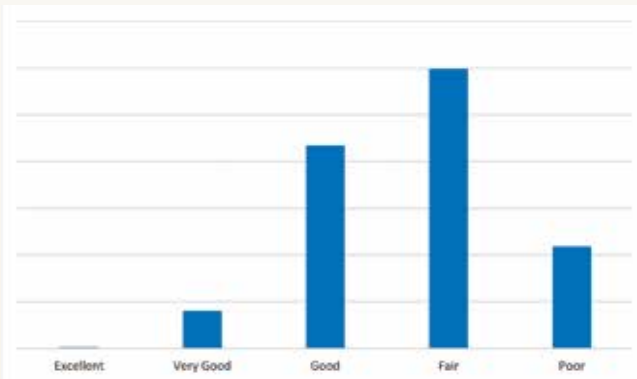
4. How would you define your athletes' awareness of sports nutrition recommendations?



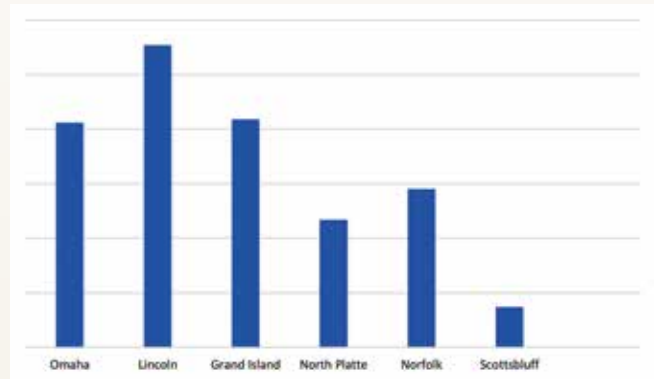
What services would you be interested in having available for your athletes?



5. How would you define your athletes' parents' awareness of sports nutrition recommendations?



6. Which locations would you be willing to travel to?



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Class A – Bellevue West



Class B – Norris



Class C1 – Pierce



Class C2 – Crofton



Class D1 – Dundy County-Stratton



Class D2 – Wynot



2015 BOYS BASKETBALL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS



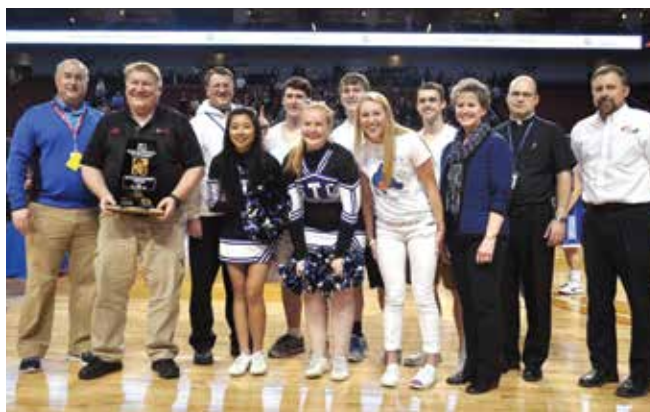
Class A — Omaha South



Class B — Sidney



Class C1 — Winnebago



Class C2 — Hastings St. Cecilia



Class D1 — Bruning-Davenport-Shickley



Class D2 — Riverside





2015 WINTER STATE CHAMPION COACHES

Wrestling

Class A	Doug Denson	Millard South
Class B	Brad Hildebrandt	Skutt Catholic
Class C	Bryan Corkle	O'Neill
Class D	Tyler Herman	Amherst

Wrestling Duals

Class A	Doug Denson	Millard South
Class B	Brad Hildebrandt	Skutt Catholic
Class C	Tahner Thiem	David City
Class D	Tyler Herman	Amherst

Swimming

Girls	Pat DiBiase	Omaha Marian
Boys	Tom Beck	Omaha Creighton Prep

Girls' Basketball

Class A	Steve Clark	Omaha Westside
Class B	Bill Rice	Lincoln Pius X
Class C1	Darren Sindelar	Pierce
Class C2	Aaron Losing	Crofton
Class D1	Traci Berg	St. Mary's
Class D2	Luke Santo	Falls City Sacred Heart

Boys' Basketball

Class A	Josh Luedtke	Omaha Creighton Prep
Class B	Alex Bahe	Elkhorn South
Class C1	Jeff Berridge	Winnebago
Class C2	Kevin Asher	Hastings St. Cecilia
Class D1	Cameron Hudson	High Plains
Class D2	Dean Filipi	Exeter-Milligan

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NCA Award Programs Benefit Coaches & Students

Jerry Stine Family Milestone Awards – Presented by Baden Sports: (Deadline June 1)

This program recognizes different levels of coaching achievement in both individual and team sports. The Level I, II, and III certificates will be presented at the NCA Multi-Sport Clinic in July. The Level IV winners receive a plaque presented at the NCA Award Banquet on July 19th in Lincoln.

More information regarding the NCA Milestone Award program, including the application form can be found at:

<http://www.ncacoach.org/milestone.php> . This web page also includes a newly formatted search for coaches that have achieved any level within the program.

NCA Service Awards – Presented by Nebraska National Guard: (Deadline June 1)

The NCA Coaches Association Service Award is designed to recognize and honor coaches who have achieved 25, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years of coaching service. This is a self-nominating award.

Service Award Criteria:

NCA member for at least 10 years

75% of coaching and/or athletic administration must have been in Nebraska including the last 5 years

More information regarding the NCA Service Award program, including the application form can be found at:

<http://www.ncacoach.org/service.php>

Nebraska Coaches Association/Country Inn & Suites Scholarship: (Deadline April 17)

This fully funded scholarship program, will award eight recipients \$1,000 after successfully completing one semester at an accredited college or university. Districts I & II will have two scholarships awarded within each district. Districts III – VI will have one recipient in each district.

More information regarding the NCA/Country Inn & Suites Scholarship including the application form can be found at:

<http://www.ncacoach.org/lincolnninsuites.php>

Scholarship Criteria:

- 1) Upper 25% of class –OR- 3.75 Cumulative GPA
- 2) Must be at least a 2 year participant in 2 sports
- 3) Must have earned varsity letter in 2 sports
- 4) Must include at least one letter of recommendation from a high school coach
- 5) ACT minimum score of 24

Scholarship winners will be announced in early May.

Ed Johnson Scholarship (Deadline April 11)

The award is given to a senior boy who is a member of a high school varsity basketball team in the State of Nebraska. A medal and \$300 cash award will be presented to the recipient at the halftime of the NCA All-Star Boys' Basketball Game (July 20, 2015), and a travelling plaque will be presented to the recipient's head coach. For more information: <http://www.ncacoach.org/edjohnson.php>

Scholarship Criteria:

Excellence in Scholarship Leadership Sportsmanship Loyalty Citizenship.

The student athlete nominated need not be a starter on the team, but must be a senior boys' basketball player. Coaches are encouraged to nominate a player or players who they feel would qualify for this award. When submitted, the nomination form should include any letters of recommendation from counselors, teachers, administrators, etc. that the coach feels would help with the selection of the recipient of this award. *The nominating coach must be a current NCA member.

Career Sport Specific Awards & Career Junior High/Assistant Coach Award (Committees Select Finalists in April, Board Selects Winner at April Board Mtg.)

More information regarding each award can be found at: <http://www.ncacoach.org/awards.php>

Binnie & Dutch Award (Track & Field)	Ed Johnson (Mike Heck) Award (Basketball)	NCA Girls Basketball Award
Guy Mytty Award (Wrestling)	NCA Volleyball Award	Skip Palrang Award (Football)
NCA Cross Country Award	NCA Golf Award	
Jim Farrand Award (Jr. High Assistant Coach of the Year Award)		

Special NCA Awards (Deadline April 1)

More information regarding each award can be found at: <http://www.ncacoach.org/awards.php>

Friends of High School Sports Award Media Person of the Year Award

The Nebraska Coaches Association award programs are available for members of the NCA. Some deadlines for the programs are approaching. We encourage you to explore the various award programs as a membership benefit. If you have questions visit the NCA website or contact the NCA office at (402) 434-5675.

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Tumbling • Millard West
Sideline • Millard West

Class B Cheer

Non-tumbling • Gross Catholic
Tumbling • Elkhorn South
Sideline • Gross Catholic

Class C1 Cheer

Non-tumbling • Cozad
Sideline • Broken Bow

Class C2 Cheer

Non-tumbling • Omaha Christian Academy
Sideline • Weeping Water

Class D Cheer

Non-tumbling • Minatare
Sideline • Meridian



Class A Dance

High Kick • Fremont
Hip Hop • Millard West
Jazz • Millard North
Pom • Millard North

Class B Dance

High Kick • Scottsbluff
Hip Hop • Elkhorn South
Jazz • Skutt Catholic
Pom • Skutt Catholic

Class C1 Dance

High Kick • Lincoln Lutheran
Hip Hop • Grand Island
Central Catholic

Jazz • Grand Island Central Catholic
Pom • Wahoo

Class C2 Dance

High Kick • Centura
Hip Hop • Lutheran High Northeast
Jazz • Lutheran High Northeast
Pom • Archbishop Bergan

Class D Dance

Hip Hop • Pender
Jazz • Shelton
Pom • Friend

Spirit Award Winners

Class A • Lincoln Northeast
Class B • Elkhorn
Class C1 • Kearney Catholic
Class C2 • Hastings St. Cecilia
Class D • Parkview Christian

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