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coach

DECEMBER 2019

**SkyHawks Capture 5<sup>th</sup>  
Consecutive Title**

**PED Testing –  
Nebraska Coaches Weigh In**

**Winter Season Articles**

**Super-State &  
All-State Selections**

**Sportsmanship Awards**

Renee Saunders, Omaha Skutt,  
Head Volleyball Coach



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Bruning-Davenport-Shickley Head Volleyball Coach Kari Jo Alfs celebrates with her team after capturing the D2 State Championship. The Eagles defeated Humphrey St. Frances in five sets in the championship match to finish the year with a 30-4 record. – Callam Sports Photography

Cover Photo: Courtesy of Callam Sports Photography

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The Wayne softball team prepares to celebrate the game winning home run of Tori Kniesche in the Class B State Championship game. The Blue Devils defeated Beatrice 6-1 and 5-3 to capture the title. Wayne, under the direction of Coach Rob Sweetland, finished the season with a 35-4 record. – Callam Sports Photography

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## NCA STAFF



**Executive Director**  
Darin Boysen,  
darin@ncacoach.org



**Administrative Assistant**  
Saundi Fugleberg,  
saundi@ncacoach.org

## NCA CONTACT INFORMATION

*Mailing & Physical Address:*  
500 Charleston St., Suite #2  
Lincoln, NE 68508

*Phone number:*  
402-434-5675

*Fax number:*  
402-434-5689

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## NEBRASKA COACHES ASSOCIATION UPCOMING EVENTS 2020

**NCA Board of Directors Meeting**  
January 26, 2020; Sandy Creek HS

**NCA Winter Track & Field Clinic**  
February 8, 2020; Lincoln

**NCA & NSWCA State Wrestling  
Coaches Hospitality**  
February 20-22, 2020; Omaha

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February 21-22, 2020; Grand Island

**NCA & Lincoln CVB State Swimming  
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**Girls' State Basketball Sportsmanship Awards**  
March 5 - 7, 2020; Lincoln

**NCA & Lincoln CVB Girls' State  
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**Girls' Basketball All-Star Selection Meeting**  
March 8, 2020; Lincoln

**Boys' State Basketball Sportsmanship Awards**  
March 12 - 14, 2020; Lincoln

**NCA & Lincoln CVB Boys' State  
Basketball Coaches Hospitality**  
March 12 - 14, 2020; Lincoln

**Boys' Basketball All-Star Selection Meeting**  
March 15, 2020; Lincoln

**NCA Board of Directors Meeting**  
April 26, 2020; Lincoln

**2020-2021 Online Registration Opens**  
May 1, 2020

**State Soccer Sportsmanship Awards**  
May 13 - 19, 2020; Omaha

**NCA State Track & Field Coaches Hospitality**  
May 22 - 23, 2020; Omaha

**Milestone & Service Awards Applications Due**  
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**NCA Multi-Sports Clinic &  
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# Defensive Drills for Both Man & Zone Defenses

John Larsen – Head Girls' Basketball Coach – Crete



I strongly believe in teaching defensive fundamentals before teaching any team defenses. We will spend the first 5-6 days of practice doing a combination of these drills then near the end of the first week or beginning of the second week we start installing our team defenses.

Our philosophy is when

players have mastered the fundamentals they will be able to play any type of defense. We also believe in our team being able to play man defense and one zone defense.

I have listed the following drills in order that we install them and in parenthesis is the duration. We use a combination of these drills every day. We can also use of these drills as conditioning so we get double use from them.

**PARTNERS: (5)** We use the entire court so all players go at the same time. Player A has the ball and player B starts right behind her. A flips ball out forward about 8' in front, goes gets the ball and pivots so she is facing her partner, B. After A pivots B will closeout player A and mirror the ball. Then player A will shoot the ball (no basket needed) and player B checks out A. The players switch spots with player B being the offensive player and A being the defensive player.

**FOOTWORK: (5)** Zig-zag drill begins with no offensive players. The defense starts on the baseline by the side of the lane, use 2 groups for this drill. The first player shuffles from baseline to sideline at the FTL extended. She plants her outside foot on the sideline, drop steps and shuffles to the center circle. She plants her inside foot, drop steps and shuffles to sideline at FTL extended, drop steps her outside foot and shuffles to baseline. Go slow the first time and gradually have players go faster. When you believe they have mastered the footwork add an offensive player. Once again start slow and gradually increase the speed you allow the offensive player to go.

**FOOTWORK: (5)** We have 2 groups starting on the baseline and sideline of the court. The first player sprints up the sideline toward the half court line and about 10' from half court they will break down and closeout at half court. Then they shuffle to center circle and mirror the ball. We have our coaches at half court. Then they sprint to the opposite baseline closing out just below FTL to baseline, then shuffle to the same sideline they started. We have players do this twice so they end up where they started. You can make this more of a conditioning drill by having them go through 4 times.

**CLOSEOUT: (10)** We start with an offensive player on the 3 PTL and a defensive player under the basket. The coach rolls the ball to the offensive player and the defensive player closes out. We gradually allow the offensive to dribble 3 times forcing the defense to move. Then eventually we have them go 1-on-1 with a limit on how many dribbles the offense can use. We can expand this drill to 2-on-2 or we like 3-on-3. We place 3 offensive players on the 3 PTL, both wings and top, and have 3 defensive players in the lane near the basket. The coach is behind the defensive players and passes the ball to 1 of the offensive players. The defensive players must close out and be in help position if off the ball, then we play 3-on-3.

**CHASER: (10)** This is a great drill for teaching communication, how to stop the ball and how to rotate. This can be done 4-on-4 or 5-on-5. The ball starts in the backcourt with O-1 having the ball. O-2, O-3 and O-4 can be anywhere in the offensive end. D-2, D-3 and D-4 are matched up with the offensive players and D-1 is behind O-1 in the backcourt. O-1 starts at the FTL and D-1 starts on the baseline. O-1 dribbles to the offensive end and one of the defensive players must stop the ball, the other defensive players must rotate and you play 4-on-4. If you have 12 players you can make this a 4-on-4-on-4 drill. You can also keep score to make it more competitive.

**BYM (ball-you-man): (10)** We have 3 offensive players on the 3 PTL, 2 wings and the top. Defense starts under the basket and the coach rolls the ball to one of the wings. The defense must close out, mirror the ball and communicate. The offense then passes to the top and the defense must

react and get into good BYM position. The top offensive player then passes to the other wing and then defense must react and get into good BYM position. Depending on who is doing the drill and what you want you could have the original wing player cut to the ball and eventually play 1-on-1. You can also have the offense reverse the ball and play 1-on-1.

**SHELL DRILL: (15-20)** We do variations of the shell drill every day in practice. The only exception is once we get close to game day we may not do this drill the day before a game. The first day we start with 4 offensive players, 2 on top and 2 near the corners. We have 4 defensive players guard the offense. We explain the difference between ball side and weak side defense and make sure everyone is in the correct position before we allow the offense to pass. We do not allow the defense to go for steals!!! After each pass we stop and make sure the defense is in proper position. We require communication, know where the ball is and all defensive players must move on every pass. Eventually we have the offense start cutting and screening and we will constantly stop and correct mistakes when the defense is not in proper position. Early in our teaching we will limit the offense to try and have the defense

be successful. Examples are; limit offensive players to 2 dribbles, offense must reverse the ball set number of times or make a certain number of passes before shooting. We will also have 1 offensive player stay in the low post if we need practice defending an excellent player. The other 3 offensive players may move around but that 1 player must stay in the low post. We will also do a 4-on-4-on-4 version of the shell drill. The team that scores stays on the court, defense is out and the new group comes in on defense. We don't wait we want to encourage communication and ability to match-up on the fly. You can add things like fouls or turnovers can send your group to the sideline, whatever you want to emphasize. We keep score to add a competitive nature to the drill.

If you have any questions about these drills or any of our team defenses you may contact me at

**Larsen.john4920@gmail.com or 402-570-8505.**

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# Creighton Prep Basketball - The Program and Expectations

Josh Luedtke – Head Boys' Basketball Coach – Creighton Prep

Photo By Bob Jensen, Huskerland Prep



I have been coaching varsity basketball at Creighton Prep for 17 years and as I look forward to my 18<sup>th</sup>, many people want to know how and why we have had so much success. What has allowed us to compete at the highest level for so many years? And, what has led us to be the program we are today?

We do not attract the D1-type players although we have had the fortune of having a few at Prep. Most of our guys are kids who work extremely hard and believe in our program and culture. Our teams have been to state 12 out of 17 years, finished runner-up in 2005 and won the state title in 2009, 2015, and 2018. During these years, we have had kids who walked on at D1 schools, a D1 scholarship kid, D2 player, NAIA type players, and kids who went to college and did not play basketball. Most of our guys could show up at the YMCA for pick up and not be selected because they do not look the part, but they sure believe and play the part well. Most importantly, they do it really well together as a team.

I believe the reason for our success lies in the area of what we call expectations, not core values. The expectations range from player accountability and a team-first attitude, to trust, respect, and competition and finally adapting to your team, your talent, and your strengths.

Matt Graves, a former Butler assistant and current Xavier assistant basketball coach, spoke to the Metro Basketball Coaches Clinic a few years back and talked about a book, *Soar With Your Strengths*. I find myself referring to the book quite often and, at times, it challenges my way of thinking. It has also allowed me to focus on what we do well and manage the things we do not do well. This has changed how we look at different situations with our teams over the years and has helped us put our teams in a position to be successful.

**Player Accountability** - Holding players accountable today can seem like a huge challenge, but in fact, most players want to be held accountable and how you approach this can make a difference in how your player responds. Most coaches fear holding the best player accountable, that he will be unhappy and maybe leave the program. But, in fact if you hold the best player accountable, he will be grateful, and his teammates will be more likely to follow suit. The major question to be asked is, "What is best for the program?". I believe holding all players accountable is the best for the program. You cannot coach in fear of players leaving the program because all players want to win and if you can provide a blueprint for winning, that is what they want. I also tell our kids that how they conduct themselves in the classroom will be the same way they conduct themselves on the court. If you work hard in the classroom, you will work hard on the court. If you can get your player to believe this, you will see better all-around effort in everything they do and they will be a whole different person on and off the court, accountability!

**Team** - The most important thing in our expectations starts with a team first mentality and this is very critical for our program. We always talk about "we" and "us" because if we are going to meet our goals, it is going to take the "we" and "us" to get it done. This includes coaches, players and managers being on the same page and working as one to make sure all of our goals are met. Off-season is the only time when we focus on the individual. This is the time when we work on trying to improve our weaknesses but also our strengths. If one player can improve his weaknesses and strengths, then when we put 12 together,



this will make us a better team. No one individual is bigger than the team and if he thinks he is bigger than the team, it is our job as coaches to make him realize we cannot accomplish anything unless we work together.

**Trust** - This is a word we use often with our players at Prep. Do you trust your teammates? Do you trust your coaches? Do you trust the process? If we can all trust one another and if we trust the process, this is going to lead us to do our jobs and if every player does his job, then we will be able to be very successful. This does not mean we will win every game, but it does mean we will put ourselves in a position to win. Trust is a must and we believe that if we trust, it makes us strong and united. Everyone must trust.

**Respect** - We talk about this every season; we talk about how we must respect our opponents but never fear them. If you fear an opponent, then you will lose and not perform to your expectations. The other important "respect" piece is motivating your team to earn their respect. You are not guaranteed anything in life, so you must earn their respect, and by playing hard and playing together, we have a better chance of earning that respect.

**Compete** - Players competing for roster spots and playing time is a good thing. At Prep, we expect our players to compete all the time. Whether it is a workout, practice or a game, we are expecting each player to compete and give it his all. We try to compete in every drill, so we get used to competing in games. We tell our players competing is good for them and will serve them in all areas of life.

**Adaptability** - As a coach, I have certainly changed over the last 17 years. I have learned when to yell and push the buttons and when to have a meaningful conversation. I find that the team appreciates this more and more every year. It also helps to have older players on the team who live our culture and do things the right way. I also believe that I have adapted our philosophy, year to year, of how to play to put our team in the best possible position to have success. I have not changed expectations no matter the team—new players or old players. At Prep, we hold all players accountable. We are a team. We respect everyone but fear no one, and we trust one another from coaches to players to managers.

Taylor Stromberg, a member of the 2009 State Championship Team, said one of his favorite drills with me

as his coach was a passing drill. You will have to imagine this, but the players continued trying to force bad passes in practice one day, and after 30 of them I had to stop practice. There were little one to two-inch cracks on the bleachers, so I attempted to throw a pass through the one to two-inch crack in the bleachers and believe it or not after 30 or so reps, I never got the pass through the crack. My point was, why try to force the play that is not there and why not take what the defense gives you and give yourself, and your team, a chance to have success. Make the simple pass, the simple play and create opportunities for success.

I believe these expectations have allowed us to build a culture of success at Prep and one that has allowed us to enjoy the game of basketball every year and represent the school we think is the best in the state. These expectations from accountability, trust, team, compete and respect have truly allowed us to focus on doing the little things well and put us in a position to have success and possibly win games. These little things have propelled us to over 300 wins, 11 district titles, 12 state appearances, 1 runner-up and 3 state titles over the last 17 years. It is a credit to all of our current and former players, coaches, managers, parents and school (students, faculty, and administration) who support us and continue to believe in our program.

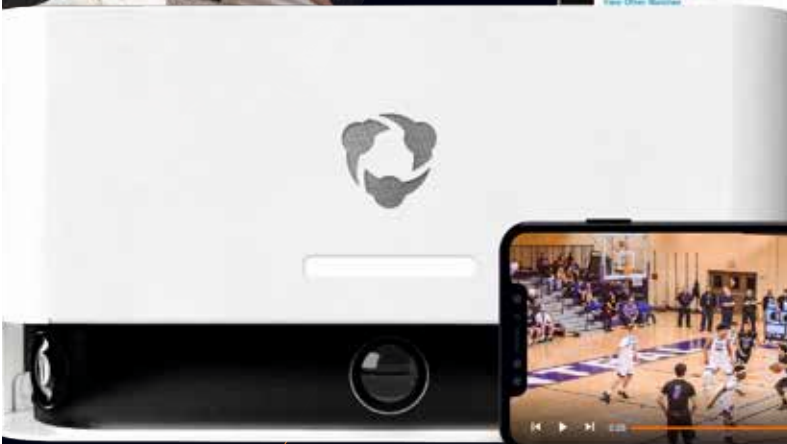
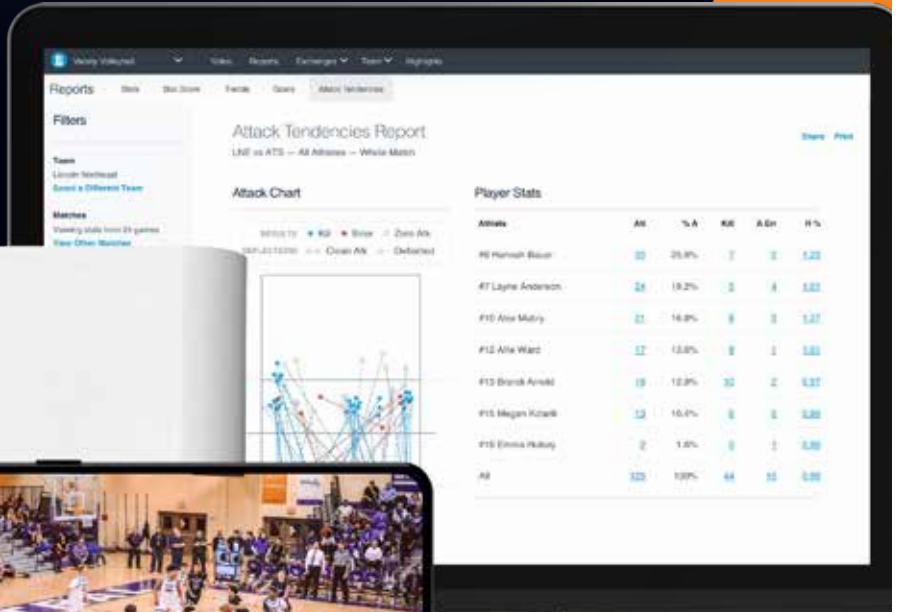
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# Seasonal Plan for a Rewarding Swimming & Diving Experience for All

Doug Krecklow – Head Swimming & Diving Coach – Omaha Westside

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Developing a seasonal plan for a high school swimming program is a unique opportunity to blend the experience of veterans with the exuberance of incoming freshmen. Whether the experiences are high school only or some combination of USA club, summer league, YMCA or other past connections, high school age girls and boys typically find that participating on their high school team is one of the most rewarding of their sports experiences.

Over the past 40 years it's been my honor to work with young people who have diverse interests and abilities and I believe it's important for high school teachers and coaches to remember that our task is to provide our participants with an environment where they can learn new skills, improve techniques, adapt to new fitness levels, glean a better understanding of self and most importantly have fun working hard to achieve a common team goal while meeting personal life changing attitudes and accomplishments.

To establish this course of action for each of my athletes, I start with the basic premise that swimming requires both aerobic and anaerobic metabolism for success. When looking at the high school swimming event list, three factors become clear. There are three events where the 50's dominate, the 200 Medley and Free Relays and the 50 Free. There are 5 events in which the 100's dominate, the 100 Butterfly, Free, Backstroke, Breaststroke and the 400 Free Relay. And, the final 3 events are the 200 Free, IM and 500 Free. Recent training strategies have suggested that only anaerobic forms of training are needed for swimmers to be successful and that aerobic training is unnecessary because it doesn't train muscles fibers to contract at the correct speed. Perhaps this might be true, but in a recent presentation from London's St Mary's University studying some of the world's best athletes, including US Olympian Abbey Weitzeil, the researchers found that while races involving the 50s only involve 4% aerobic metabolism, the

100 events require as much as 40% aerobic activity. The 200 and 500 events could require as much as 50-75% aerobic metabolism depending on the individual involved. The focus therefore cannot just be on the 50's since that only accounts for 3 of the 11 events. A combination of training therefore must exist and must include enough aerobic training to meet the demands of the other events. Furthermore, since the high school teams tend to have varied groups of boys and girls, I've tried to make a training plan that will allow for different types of training to occur according to the needs of the swimmers involved, but that both aerobic and anaerobic metabolic training will be included.

To ensure that the above takes place I use the following four concepts to drive the seasonal, monthly, weekly and daily plans. These concepts are structure, function, capacity and power. Each of these concepts helps me create the best possible program that gives me the opportunity to mold an individual's technique, build a strong physiological system, improve the force that can be exerted and most importantly, have the ability to remain focused on the repetitive requirements against the constant resistance of the water.

Building structure refers to creating the required elements for muscle contraction, blood circulation, O<sub>2</sub>/CO<sub>2</sub> exchange and energy manipulation. These elements all take place during aerobic metabolism. Building structure includes increasing muscle fibers. In order to swim faster, more force must be applied to the water in the correct line of pull in order to drive the body forward. Muscle fiber development is process that takes time. For example, a 125-pound person may not be able to lift 3 sets of 3 at 125 pounds on day 1. However, after a few weeks of lifting at lighter amounts of weight and perhaps with more redefinitions this same person may certainly develop the ability to not only lift his own body weight but perform it multiple times. It takes time to build muscle fibers and therefore strength, which ultimately leads toward improved force application possibilities.

Improving blood circulation and lung function are also important elements to improved physiological capabilities. To improve O<sub>2</sub> utilization, the development of more

*continued on page 12*

capillaries, particularly in the working muscles including the heart and the development of more Red Blood Cells (RBC'S) are needed. Aerobic activity drives this process. If you consider that capillaries are like highways and that oxygen which is transported by the RBC's are like trucks, then increasing both of these avenues for delivering O2 and removing CO2 as quickly as possible makes this part training essential to the development of all high school swimmers.

To train the concept of function requires more anaerobic metabolic work. Function refers to neuromuscular sequencing, muscle contraction speed, and force application sensitivity. Muscle structure must come first, fiber development, capillary bed expansion, RBC proliferation all must preexist if sequencing, speed, and sensitivity are to be effective.

Sequencing refers to the junction that occurs where the muscle and nerve make connection and then are asked to fire in a specific order on a repetitive action. Each stroke cycle is designed to follow the

same neuromuscular sequencing path, repeating until conclusion. Speed of contraction work refers to training at performance speeds This type of work requires more rest between repetitions and more recovery before this type of work is repeated. Swimmers are very unique in their feel for the water and it's what makes them special. Sensing the correct force on the hands, forearms, feet, ankles, and legs when swimming at the correct speed of contraction is crucial to building the functional element of racing.

Developing capacity and power are components of both aerobic and anaerobic metabolism. Capacity refers to the amount of energy available and power refers to how the

energy is going to be used. When developing a training program to include both of these concepts, I believe that creating the capacity to do work comes first for most swimmers. This can involve repeats of any distance, 25, 50, 75, 100, 200, 500 or more depending on the individual. The stroke and number of people in the lane may require caution. Injuries are something that should be avoided whenever possible and in swimming most injuries are a direct result of poor technique coupled with fatigue. Power-oriented activities should actually be done throughout the season increasing as the season progresses. These also can be at any distance, but will require more rest between repetitions and more recovery between days of implementation. Once again, stroke choice hinders

how this type of work is done but it is difficult to do multiple people doing different strokes in the same lane and at the speed necessary to accomplish the intent of the power output desired.

In conclusion, my seasonal plan includes aerobic and anaerobic training and is based on the concepts of structure,

function, capacity and power. I've spent years learning from the best coaches around the world and tried to implement a program that will benefit all swimmers I'm charged to work with. It's been an honor to serve as a high school coach at Westside High School since that first year in 1979-80 and to have been a part of Nebraska swimming for over 50 years. I welcome questions if you have any and I'm willing to share sets or ideas with all interested coaches.





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# Tools for a Successful Wrestling Program

Cody Wintz – Head Wrestling Coach – Battle Creek



Coaching can be rewarding, exhilarating, exhausting. It's daunting, requiring relentless effort and energy. When you're ready to give up, you give it one more day, one more meet, one more kid. I believe the tools for a successful program are your coaches, your youth program, your schedule, and above all, a solid coaching philosophy.

to try it. They need convinced. To me, this is the absolute most difficult job of a wrestling coach. There are too many instances of kids who we knew could be great wrestlers and could benefit from the demands of the sport, but we were unable to reach them enough to get them to stick it out. I always took this personally, and it still wears on me when we miss out on getting kids who have potential. Part of that, I think, are the excuses they come up with. Just tell me it's too hard!! To talk to them a few years after they graduate and have them tell me they regret not going out or sticking it out really makes it worse for a coach, including me.

With all that being said, coaches need to do everything they can to recruit people who can draw and connect to kids for their program. If you as the head coach are not a dynamic personality, you better have an assistant coach or two that are! You have to have people on your staff who kids want to be around, who are fun, and who help bring the best out of them. Kids need to be inspired. I've been fortunate with this in Battle Creek. From the day I was hired in 2006, the administration allowed me to include people on my staff who fit this description. As with a lot of schools, this forced me to have to go outside the school walls to find my staff. Coaches Toby Thompson, Neil Kreikemeier, Bo Brummels, and Corey Knull are all dynamic guys on our staff from outside the school system who are great role models for our kids. Find the person for the job, not the job for the person.

## Promoting your program:

How do you make it cool to be a wrestler? Definitely a tough question, especially when everyone has a different version of cool. To me, being known as a wrestler is a great source of pride. A badge of honor so to speak. But the majority of kids don't necessarily think that. The ones who've been through it do, but how do you get the kids in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grade to think that? You don't see wrestling on the 24-hour sports networks. It's a sport that kids aren't exposed to on TV very often. You can find it on social media, but you have to look for it and follow it to get exposure to it. Plain and simple, it's not as easy to promote as other sports, but we knew that when we signed up for the gig. If you try to use that as an excuse, you're taking the wrong path. What can you do in your school building to promote it? How can you use social media to spread information about what's going on in your program? Do you find ways to get your elementary students exposed to your high school wrestlers? You can find a way, or you can find an excuse. But you can't do both.

## Coaches:

I believe there has been a dynamic shift in culture over the last 25 years regarding participation in programs, especially wrestling. Kids today are less likely to come out for the sport just for something to do. No, they have plenty of things that they can be doing that are easier and less humiliating (in their eyes) than working their tails off, and oftentimes getting it kicked in the practice room every day. Kids today, in general, need more of a reason

## Youth Program:

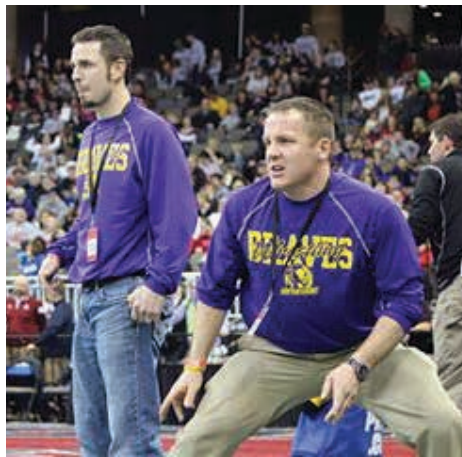
You have to put a huge priority on your youth program. This is known by all, but not done by all. In my early years of serving as head coach, this was run by myself with the help of my assistant coaches. After seven years of that, the addition of activities director was added to my plate, thus ending my ability to run wrestling practices from 3:30-8:30 two to three times per week. We went back to the drawing board and looked at ways to raise funds as a club to be able to pay someone to be in charge of our youth program, including all practices, duals, and tournaments. We've been fortunate to have Coach Ryan Stusse running our youth program for a few years now. My assistants and high school wrestlers also do a good job with helping, as well as many dads. But it's clear-cut who is in charge. You absolutely have to have someone in this position who

makes it fun and who knows that winning now isn't the biggest priority.

Questions that we've faced and that you'll have to decide for your youth program: Do you allow kids in your youth program who don't attend your school? (Yes!) When do you start to push kids to enter tournaments? (Individual basis, but always better to be late than pushing too early) What time of year do you start practices, how often do you practice, and how long are your practices?

### **Schedule:**

One of the unique things about wrestling is the amount of control you have over your schedule. Tournaments are fairly easy to change around, and while duals may be more difficult to maneuver, there are generally plenty of options to look at in filling your eight dual dates. You have to be proactive in the difficulty of your schedule in relation to your team. When I first started at Battle Creek, we were not good but had a couple of talented freshmen with somewhat limited experience, but the eighth graders we had coming in the next year were fairly talented with quite a bit of youth experience. As we were trying to shift the culture we felt it was important to get out of some of the long-standing tournaments they had attended for years that saw the same teams week after week. Those first two years we needed some tournaments where we could find some success for the majority of guys on the team. We needed kids to get some wins, some confidence in themselves, so that we could build from that. After a couple years, and more talent in our program combined with a shift in mindset, we started to add tougher tournaments. If you want to compete for state championships, top-five finishes, or even top-ten finishes at the state tournament, your best kids have to be challenged, repeatedly. Coach to your best kids, but keep a keen eye on your young kids who can develop into tough wrestlers for you with the right management.



### **Coaching Philosophy:**

If you haven't identified what you stand for as a coach, you need to. With so many different variables that go into the success of a coach and a program, a philosophy is something that you can always fall back on to help you in

making decisions. When I was younger I'm not sure I fully grasped this concept, but I was confident in establishing our program at Battle Creek in large part because of the experiences I had prior to my first job at BC. Having gone through the youth program at Creighton and wrestling for Coach Randy Kliment through high school, I learned from one of the best. He cared for us as people, had a great knowledge of technique, and showed me what it was like to be an avid fan of the sport through his record-keeping and promotion of the sport. From there I joined Coach Jeff Heimes' staff at Norfolk Catholic while attending college. I learned a lot from him and made many connections that have been extremely beneficial to me in my coaching career. Coach Heimes was a motivator. I learned a great deal from him about practice design, scheduling, and peaking. He showed me how to make kids work hard and how to get the best out of them. Without these two men and the experiences they gave me, I would have been lost, and ultimately unsuccessful, in taking over a Battle Creek program that was in need of youth, energy, and a culture shift.

My personal coaching philosophy is simple and was greatly influenced by author Jon Gordon. That philosophy is *Love Tough*. I believe you must love tough to bring out the best in your wrestlers, or any athlete you coach.

If your athletes know you care about them, they will be more receptive to you pushing them. I've seen many coaches who put the tough before the love and they face resistance. They lose kids. A lot of times, they fail. The best coaches love their athletes and their athletes know it and work harder and are more loyal to that coach.

The sport of wrestling needs you. We know the long-term benefits of wrestling on confidence, work ethic, and a variety of other factors for success in life. Do your part to get kids involved, keep kids involved, and make a difference in their lives.

Love Tough.

# Nebraska Coaches Participate in PED Testing Study Findings & Recommendations

Dr. Joseph Greco Ed.D. – PED Study Researcher & PED Testing Recommendations

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Being a professional athlete is a very lucrative career path. However, with limited roster spots only a small percentage of athletes are able to advance to the professional ranks, resulting in immense pressure to perform. Society's expectations on winning, and the goal of obtaining

college level scholarships, causes some athletes to rely on Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs) to accelerate these processes.

When professional athletes are caught using PEDs, it gives the appearance that cheating is the only way to get ahead and may impact high school and collegiate athletes striving to participate at the professional level. Many professional athletes are considered role models and celebrities in society. If they are experiencing high level success using PEDs, the rewards may seem to outweigh the risks for an average 17-year-old high school athlete. Professional athletes are often slapped on the wrist for PEDs usage while media outlets focus on their record-breaking accomplishments. This mixed message blurs the lines of right and wrong for young athletes and may further persuade amateur athletes to sample PEDs. While many laws deter people from drug use, the same is not true for all levels of athletics. High school athletics depend on individual state's laws to test for PED usage with many states having no testing, even if an athlete is suspected of usage.

My lifelong experiences in athletics gave me access to multiple accounts of PED usage. From chewing tobacco to the amount of over-the-counter-drugs available at nutrition stores, abuse of PEDs comes in many forms. While the topic of PED usage in athletics is commonplace, previous studies show a lack of input from high school athletic coaches whose knowledge of PEDs, and time spent with high school athletes, would allow for a broader ability to detect abuse.

A survey of high school athletic coaches provides a starting ground regarding the establishment of PED testing in states where no such rule exists. Although there have been multiple examples of PEDs throughout history, there is currently greater attention placed on forms, types, and usage due to increased regulation and definition of associated punishments. However, what is considered a PED may be open to interpretation. While the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) list is extensive and accepted worldwide, it has not been recognized in many American professional sporting leagues. Instead, these organizations create their own list of substances and testing procedures, through collective bargaining, which creates varying procedures and punishments. Particularly at the high school level, testing is dramatically reduced, if not completely obsolete. The possible lack of policing may lead some high school athletes to abuse PEDs as there is often an inability to detect usage combined with an absence of consequence issued by the district.

On-field punishments may be the least of players' concerns as the long-term effects on their physical and mental health may be debilitating. While parents may ultimately be responsible for monitoring their child's wellbeing, high school athletic coaches often spend more time with these students, have more of an impact on their lives, and may be more responsible for their safety, mentally and physically, than their parents. Therefore, the importance of establishing a baseline of opinions from high school coaches regarding implementation and testing of high school athletes is significant.

To determine this baseline, an electronic survey was sent to all registered members of the Nebraska Coaches' Association (NCA). This was sent with permission from the NCA and gathered demographic information of high school athletic coaches and their opinions regarding the classification, testing, and punishment associated with PED use by high school athletes.

## **From the total population of 3,565 NCA active coaches that were sent the survey:**

- 664 completed the electronic survey (18.6%)
- 528 males (79.5%)
- 136 females (20.5%)



- 16.63 average years in coaching
- 466 (70.2%) endorsed in coaching
- 645 (97.1%) were paid coaches
- 637 (95.9%) involved at the varsity level
- Football, track & field (boys and girls), and basketball (boys and girls), were the most commonly selected sports (65.4%)
- Swimming/Diving (boys and girls), soccer (boys and girls), and tennis (boys and girls) were the least selected sports (4.52%)

**The electronic survey aimed to address the following questions:**

- Q1:** What do high school athletic coaches, of certain demographic categories, consider a PED?
- Q2:** Do high school athletic coaches, of certain demographic categories, wish to implement drug testing on high school athletes?
- Q3:** Are there differences among high school athletic coaches' views, based on demographic categories, on punishments for a student athlete's positive PED test?

**The first research question asked participants to identify what they consider a PED from a list of multiple responses selected from a combination of seventeen PEDs on the WADA banned list and my personal observations.**

Regardless of demographics, the top three chosen PED's were "Anabolic Steroids," "Human Growth Hormone (HGH)," and "Blood Doping." The high response rate for these items may be due to increased media coverage of these three PEDs in the last 20 years. "Sports drinks" and "tobacco" were the least selected items on the PED list. Both items were added from personal observations and did not appear on the WADA list. Their lack of selection speaks to the culture of sports where certain drugs, like tobacco, are viewed as dangerous and are outlawed at most levels, but are not considered a PED by coaches. Finally, although "none of the above" is not considered a PED, the fact that it had the lowest selection rate (0.45%) provides hope that PED awareness is high within the NCA. In addition, athletes from specific sports may also be associated with certain drugs (i.e. baseball and tobacco), but their social association would not necessarily indicate a correlation for this study.

**The second research question asked participants to identify if they wish to implement drug testing on high school athletes.**

Participants were allowed to select one of four choices: "yes," "no," "unsure," and "prefer not to say." Regardless of demographic variables, the most selected response was "yes" and the least selected response as "prefer not to say." Just over one half of respondents wish to implement drug testing and less than one fifth of respondents did not want to implement. Results indicate a majority are interested in the idea of high school athletic drug testing.

**The third research question asked participants to identify a level of punishment associated with three separate positive PED tests.**

For each positive test, participants were allowed to select one of five choices on a Likert-type scale: "warning," "one game suspension," "multiple game suspension," "season suspension," and "lifetime suspension." Regardless of demographic variables, the majority of participants responded with "one game suspension," "season suspension," and "lifetime suspension" for first offense, second offense, and third offense respectively. The largest changes occurred between first offense and second offense "season suspension" which jumped 41.5% and second offense and third offense "lifetime suspension" which jumped 49.2%. Results indicated the level of punishment increased with each positive test.

**Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for high school athletic coaches, administrators, and parents in order to increase awareness and limit misconceptions about PED usage in high school athletics. Based on past high school legislation, if drug testing is desired, a school or district must:**

1. determine a need for the testing,
2. organize a committee to formalize a plan,
3. acquire acceptance for the plan,
4. implement low level testing initially,
5. gather evidence,
6. report results without identifying students to the public,
7. determine consistent punishment options.

Specifically, high school athletic coaches should attend a preseason seminar based on the information gathered in this study. This seminar could also count for educational

training hours required by states each year for teachers to maintain their certification.

Based on the number of participants who responded to the electronic survey, this study showed an area of need in high school athletics. If high school athletic coaches have a desire to be informed regarding PEDs, many would benefit from having the knowledge gained in this study. While the results indicate that a majority of high school athletic coaches in the NCA wish to implement drug testing, this study will provide an initial means of discussion within the high school athletic community regarding awareness of PED usage.

The information gained from this study can also be implemented as part of preseason coaching seminars. Guest speakers who are knowledgeable of PEDs would be able to provide useful information to high school athletic coaches regarding the results of this study, thus increasing awareness at the front lines. Even if PED usage is low in a specific sport, saving one high school athlete from a life altering choice is worth the increased training for high school athletic coaches.

The results of this study provided a new perspective of all high school athletics and coaches. The evidence that high school athletic coaches from sports not traditionally associated with PED usage have an interest in drug testing, suggests the need for increased education and awareness. Administrators and coaches can utilize the findings of this study into all applicable areas of athletics by becoming more cognizant of PED usage and following past legislation if drug testing is needed in their school or district.

Regardless of your participation in this study, your service to student athletes is greatly appreciated. To view this study in its entirety, please contact **Joe Greco** at [jgreco6436@gmail.com](mailto:jgreco6436@gmail.com) or view online at: [https://www.csm.edu/sites/default/files/Joseph\\_Greco\\_Revised\\_Dissertation.pdf](https://www.csm.edu/sites/default/files/Joseph_Greco_Revised_Dissertation.pdf).





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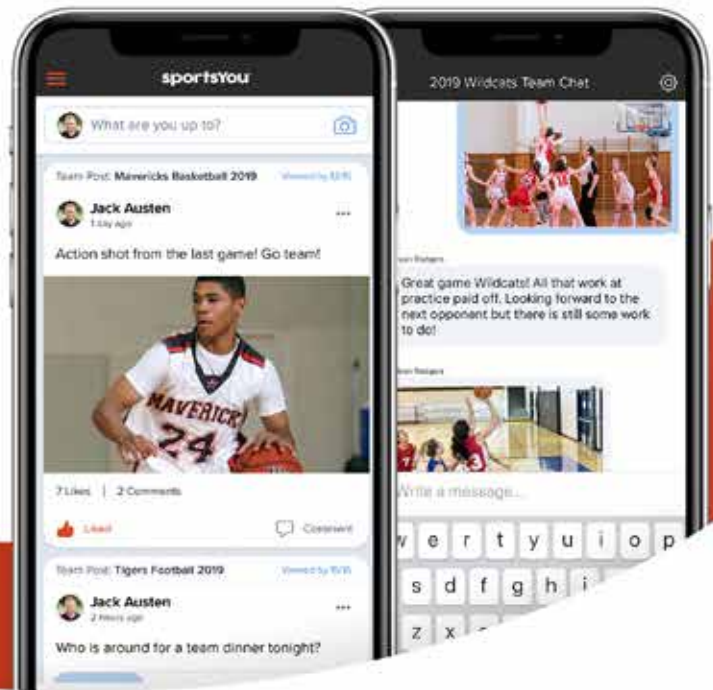
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## 2019 Boys' Cross Country Super-State & All-State Teams



Photo by Callam Sports Photography

### Super-State

#### Class A

Liem Chot, Lincoln North Star  
Tyler Boyle, Lincoln Southwest  
Adam Murphy, Millard West  
Thomas Oliver, Lincoln East  
Evan Caudy, North Platte  
Dillon McNeill, Papillion-La Vista South  
Trevor Acton, Lincoln Southwest  
Juan Garcia, Grand Island  
Kellen McLaughlin, Gretna  
Jack Nolley, Lincoln Southwest  
Jacob Kosmicki, Grand Island  
Gavin Skorupa, Lincoln Pius X  
Gabriel Hinrichs, Elkhorn South  
Daniel Pierce, Lincoln North Star

#### Class B

Zachary Vanbrocklin, Norris  
Ryan Zavadil, Skutt Catholic  
Samuel Lueders, Blair

#### Class C

Carson Noecker, Hartington  
Mason Sindelar, Pierce

#### Class D

Payton Davis, Aquinas Catholic

### All-State

#### Class A

Top 14 Super-State

#### Class B

Top 3 Super-State  
Yanni Vasquezgarcia, Lexington  
Blake Manternach, Skutt Catholic  
Jaydon Welsh, Hastings  
Isaac Richards, Skutt Catholic

#### Class C

Top 2 Super-State  
William Anderson, Gothenburg  
John Swotek, Malcolm  
Dylan Riley, Aurora  
Daniel Bashtovoi, Sidney  
Kane Fiala, Aurora

#### Class D

Top 1 Super-State  
Lincoln Trent, Axtell  
Jeremiah Arndt, Centura  
Jaron Bergstrom, Axtell  
Connor Arens, Crofton  
Rylan Cheney, Shelton  
Ty Schlueter, Ainsworth

## 2019 Girls' Cross Country Super-State & All-State Teams



Photo by Callam Sports Photography

### Super-State

#### Class A

Elli Dahl, Fremont  
Berlyn Schutz, Lincoln East  
Kaylie Crews, Papillion-La Vista South  
Kylie Muma, Lincoln East  
Hannah Ray, Lincoln Northeast  
Olivia Rosenthal, Papillion-La Vista South  
Allison Louthan, Millard North  
Elizabeth Kramer, Lincoln Pius X  
Taylor Searcey, Lincoln East  
Mara Hemmer, Fremont  
Anna Jennings, Papillion-La Vista South  
Brianna Rinn, Lincoln Southwest  
Abigail Schmidt, Lincoln East  
Jenna Muma, Lincoln East  
Lucy Dillon, Fremont  
Madeline Yardley, Elkhorn  
Isabelle Hartnett, Millard West

#### Class B

Chelsey Espinosa, Hastings

#### Class C

Danie Parriott, Conestoga

#### Class D

Alayna Vargas, Hastings St. Cecilia

### All-State

#### Class A

Top 17 Super-State

#### Class B

Top 1 Super-State  
Tukker Romey, Gering  
Shailee Patton, Gering  
Madison Seiler, Gering  
Keegan Beisel, Seward  
Brooke Holzworth, Scottsbluff  
Raquel Skerston, Ralston

#### Class C

Top 1 Super-State  
Logan Thomas, Malcolm  
Jordan Soto-Stopak, Boone Central/Newman Grove  
Laura Hasemann, Wayne  
Zoe Christenson, Wahoo  
Tandee Masco, Milford  
Mackenzie Butts, Chadron

#### Class D

Top 1 Super-State  
Rylee Rice, Ainsworth  
Madison Gerken, McCool Junction  
Kacey Dethlefs, Ravenna  
Julianna Maxfield, Fullerton  
Ladelle Hazen, Red Cloud / Blue Hill  
Ashlei McDonald, Johnson County Central

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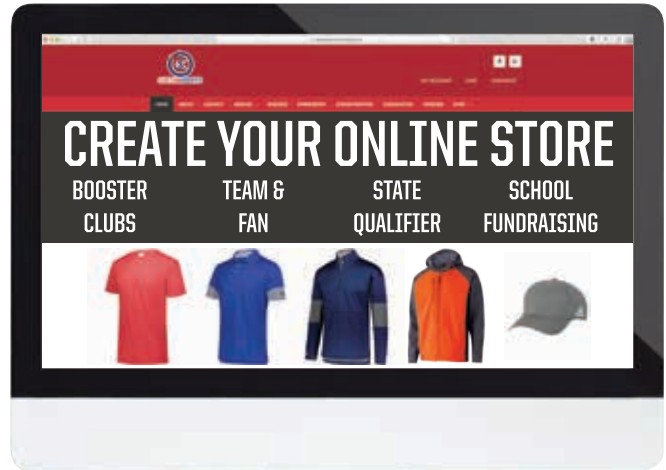
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## 2019 Boys' Tennis All-State Teams



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### Class A

#### First Team

Ethan Neil, Junior, Papillion-La Vista (Captain)  
Mason Warner, Junior, Lincoln Pius X  
Nick O'Shea, Senior, Lincoln Southwest  
Zachary Kuo, Sophomore, Elkhorn  
Grady Works, Junior Lincoln Southwest  
Joseph Harris, Senior, Lincoln Southwest

#### Second Team

Will Ulrich, Junior, Lincoln Pius X  
Alexander Bigsby, Junior, Fremont  
Joseph Plachy, Junior, Lincoln Pius X  
Samuel Johnson, Junior, Lincoln Southwest  
Will Olson, Senior, Lincoln Pius X  
Jacob Balfany, Junior Lincoln Southwest

### Class B

#### First Team

Isaac Gart, Mount Michael (Captain)  
Hayden Royal, York  
Hunter Royal, York  
Logan Barenberg, McCook  
Ty Schneider, York  
Mason Michaelis, McCook

#### Second Team

Eli Fox, Grand Island Central Catholic  
Zion Moyer, McCook  
John Esser, York  
Isaac Hinze, McCook  
Connor Barrett, Omaha Skutt Catholic  
Matt Mittman, York

## 2019 Girls' Golf Super-State & All-State Teams



Photo by Callam Sports Photography

### Super-State:

Neely Adler, Lincoln Southwest  
Danica Badura, Aurora  
Lynzi Becker, Cozad  
Abbigail Broderson, Boone Central  
Lauren Goertz, Omaha Duchesne Academy  
Kaitlyn Hanna, Omaha Westside  
Harley Hiltibrand, Ogallala  
Anna Kelley, Scottsbluff  
Madilyne Kleich-Schlaepfer, Gering  
Nicole Kolbas, Lincoln Pius X  
Karsen Morrison, North Platte  
Katelyn Ruge, Millard North  
Baylee Steele, North Platte  
Kate Strickland, Lincoln Southwest  
Brynn Sundquist, Lincoln Southwest  
Payton Wise, Kimball

### All-State:

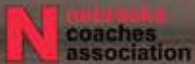
Brook Diekemper, West Point-Beemer  
Taylor Van Ostrand, Lincoln Christian



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## Boys' Cross Country

A	Ryan Salem	Lincoln Southwest
B	Steve Carroll	Omaha Skutt Catholic
C	Tony Sigler	Aurora
D	Joe Philippi	Axtell

## Girls' Cross Country

A	Brian Kabourek	Lincoln East
B	Rick Marez	Gering
C	Justin Harris	Boone Central/Newman Grove
D	Jared Hansmeyer	Ainsworth

## Boys' Tennis

A	Nolan DeWispelare	Lincoln Pius X
B	Dan Malleck	York

## Girls' Golf

A	James Danson	Lincoln Southwest
B	Brock Ehler	Scottsbluff
C	Mark Clanton	Lincoln Lutheran

## Softball

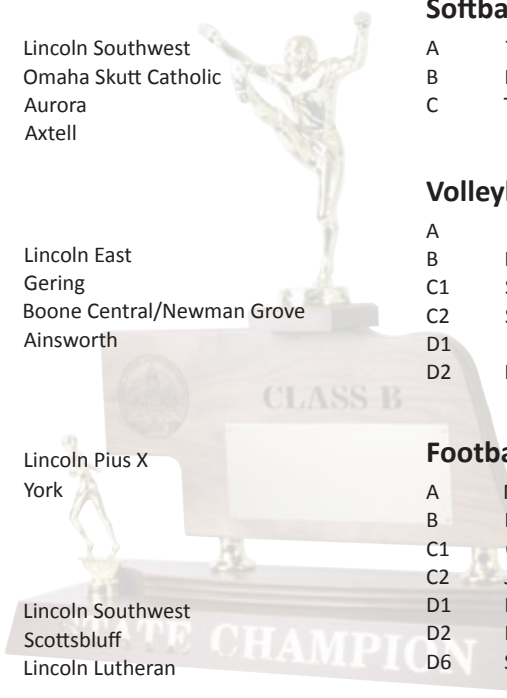
A	Todd Petersen	Papillion-La Vista
B	Rob Sweetland	Wayne
C	Taylor Biehl	Fairbury

## Volleyball

A	Katie Wright	Papillion-La Vista South
B	Renee Saunders	Omaha Skutt Catholic
C1	Sue Ziegler	Lincoln Lutheran
C2	Sharan Zavala	Grand Island Central Catholic
D1	Kandice Jurgens	Diller-Odell
D2	Kari Jo Alfs	Bruning-Davenport-Shickley

## Football

A	Michael Huffman	Bellevue West
B	Matt Turman	Omaha Skutt Catholic
C1	Chad Fox	Wahoo
C2	Joe Anderson	Oakland-Craig
D1	Bob Fuller & Greg Wood	Osceola-High Plains
D2	Eric Kessler	Humphrey St. Francis
D6	Scott Trimble	Harvard



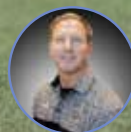
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- Coaches high school football and wrestling.
- Head negotiator for the Grand Island Northwest Education Association.

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# Volleyball Sportsmanship Awards



Class A – Papillion-La Vista South



Class B – Omaha Duchesne Academy



Class C1 – Lincoln Lutheran



Class C2 – Grand Island Central Catholic



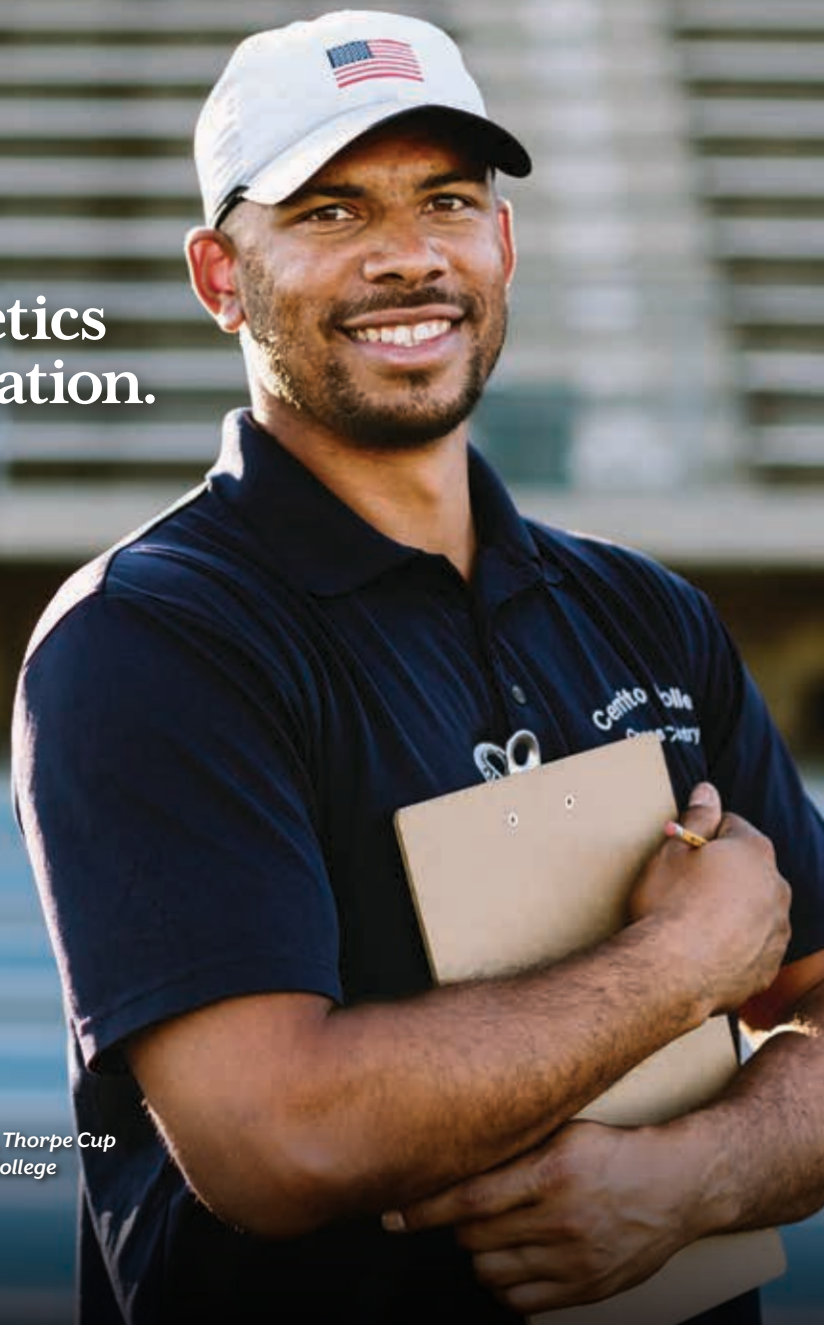
Class D1 – Diller-Odell



Class D2 – Bruning-Davenport-Shickley



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# TEAMS

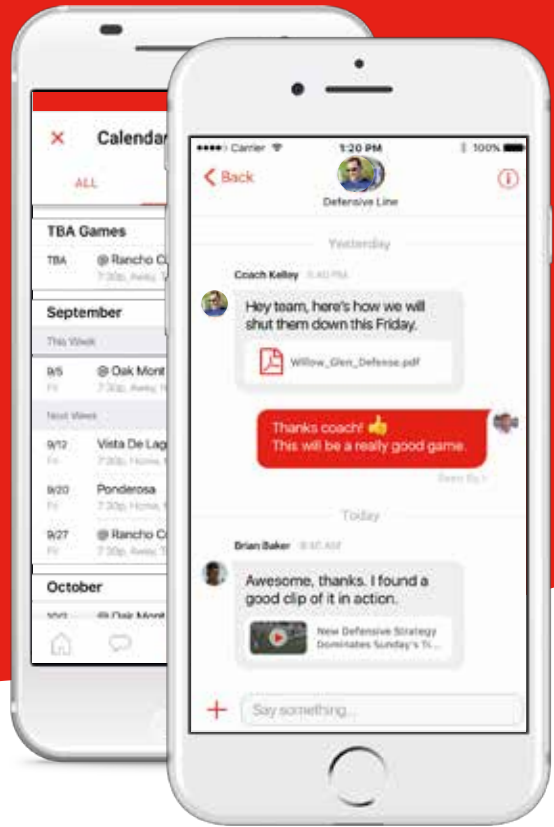
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