

# nebraska COACIA DECEMBER 2025



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# NEBRASKA COACHES ASSOCIATION UPCOMING EVENTS 2026

#### January 9, 2026

NCA-NFF-Currency Football Team Academic Excellence Award Nomination Deadline

#### January 20, 2026

NCA-Currency Fall Team Academic Excellence Awards Nomination Deadline

#### February 17-21, 2026

State Wrestling Championships Hospitality
CHI Center – Omaha

#### February 19-21, 2026

State Cheer & Dance Championships Heartland Events Center – Grand Island

#### February 27, 2026

State Swimming Coaches' Luncheon
Bob Devaney Sports Center – Lincoln

#### March 4-7, 2026

State Girls Basketball Hospitality & Sportsmanship Awards Lincoln

#### March 11-14, 2026

State Boys Basketball Hospitality
& Sportsmanship Awards
Lincoln

#### April 19, 2026

NCA Board Meeting
NSAA/NCA Building – Lincoln

#### May 20 - 23, 2026

State Track & Field Hospitality Omaha Burke Stadium – Omaha

#### July 19-22, 2026

NCA Multi-Sports Clinic Week Activities
Lincoln

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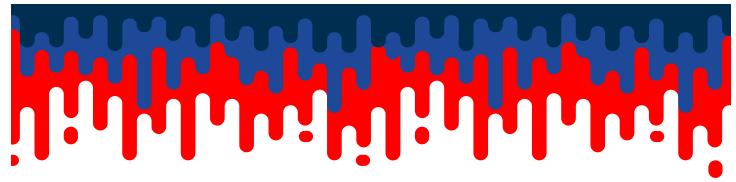
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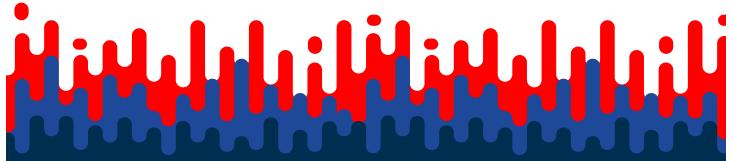


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# **Becoming a Confident Shooter**

#### Joel Hueser - Papillion-La Vista South - Boys Basketball



Becoming a confident shooter doesn't happen by accident. At Southside Hoops, we believe confidence is earned through disciplined work: mastering proper form, competing with purpose, and understanding shot selection. When players train with intent, confidence follows.

#### **Key #1: Proper Form**

Confidence starts with consistency — and consistency begins with form. Great shooters take pride in their craft. At Southside Hoops, we teach our players the **5 Essentials of Shooting** as the blueprint for proper form.

#### The 5 Essentials of Shooting

#### Footwork - Own Your Feet

Your shot starts from the ground up. Keep a hip-width stance, as if jumping rope, with a slight foot turn (10 o'clock for right-handers, 2 o'clock for left-handers). Your shooting foot slightly leads, and knees bend to Level 1—where fingertips can touch kneecaps. Land 4–6 inches forward on balance.

#### Alignment - Shoot It Straight

Alignment creates accuracy. Keep your shooting foot, knee, and elbow on the same line — your shot line. Think "dart throw" for directional focus. The shooting hand starts behind (Tuck), moves under (Set), and finishes through (Go) the ball. Keep the elbow in and under. The index and middle fingers finish through the middle of the ball (Kobe Pinch).

#### Proper Arc – Medium

The ideal arc launches around 45 degrees. On a 3-pointer, think: "Top of the board = top of the shot." Your release point determines this arc — the ball should leave your hand just before the top of your jump, with your elbow finishing eye-high or slightly above. A consistent release point creates a consistent arc. Visualize the same smooth, repeatable motion every time.

#### Focus – Back of the Rim & Down (#BRAD)

Eyes locked on BRAD — the back of the rim and down. This is your  $\mathit{Quiet\ Eye}$  — your last, steady focus before the shot. Train your eyes and aim deep; we want deep makes, not soft misses. Repetition sharpens accuracy.

#### Follow Through – 2 Seconds

Hold your finish for two full seconds. Flex and hold — elbow straight, wrist down, fingers through the rim. Snap your Kobe Pinch (index and thumb together) and let your index and middle fingers finish last. True backspin and a strong follow-through are the marks of a great shooter's touch.

#### Form Shooting Progression (Daily)

We believe in daily Form Shooting Progression. Every practice and game begins here. These simple drills reinforce habits, muscle memory, and focus—one perfect rep at a time. Why we do it: Perfect Reps. Visualization. Get Your Mind Right.

#### **Wrist Extensions**

From a kneeling position, stretch your forearms by placing your palms flat on the floor, fingers forward. Then rotate your hands so your fingers point back toward your knees and sit back on your heels. Good wrist and forearm flexibility provides a key source of force in shooting.

#### **Trace & Retrace**

Lying on your back, tuck your shooting elbow close and wrinkle your wrist to form your Perfect Shooting Platform. Trace the shot by extending your elbow and finishing with a Kobe Pinch, then retrace back to start. Visualize every rep as a BRAD—see and feel yourself making big shots.

#### **Arm Swing**

Start by owning your feet—knees bent, feet hip-width, toes slightly turned. Let your shooting arm hang naturally, then swing it forward once or twice before locking into your Perfect Shooting Platform (Set). Using your guide hand, gently push your elbow up and out into full extension. Finish high and hold for two seconds with a controlled fall forward. The arm swing replicates the natural dip in your shot—connecting the catch to the Set and Go. It builds rhythm, timing, and feel for a smooth, one-motion release.

#### **One-Handed Form Shooting**

Stand close to the rim, shooting one-handed from both sides—right hand on the right, left on the left. Emphasize vertical motion, "up and out of the phone booth." Use one hand only unless age or size makes that difficult. This drill builds touch, balance, and a clean release on both sides.

#### Two-Handed Form Shooting (Groove Your Shot)

Face the basket straight on and begin with your shooting hand only. Once the ball reaches your Set position, add your balance hand and shoot from close range. After each make, take one step back. Focus on a clean release and a "5 up / 5 down" finish—balance hand up, shooting hand down.

#### Master the form. Then master the reps.

Every confident shooter starts here—one perfect shot at a time. The goal is simple: feel great about your form, see it go

#### Key #2 - Gamified Reps

Confidence grows when training feels like competing. Great shooters don't just count reps—they compete with purpose. Every workout should simulate game shots, game speed, and game pressure. Whether you're training solo, using the Gun, or working with teammates, gamify your reps to build confidence, versatility, and game readiness.

#### **Keys to a Gamified Shooting Workout**

A well-structured workout blends a variety of shot types that mimic real-game situations:

- Spot-Up, Catch & Shoot
- Cut, Catch & Shoot
- Dribble & Shoot
- Catch & Drive includes pull-ups & finishes at the rim (Finishing School)
- Catch, Shot/Foot Fakes & Drive includes pull-ups & finishes at the rim
- Finish Through Contact use a coach or teammate when possible
- Free Throws shoot 4 FT's between drills to "rest"

#### **Workout Emphasis**

- Game Shots at Game Speed Train like it's Friday night.
- Perfect Form From your feet to your follow-through.
- Chart Your Makes Track your progress daily.
- Compete Whenever Possible Turn every drill into a challenge.
- Never Miss Two in a Row Reset, refocus, respond (Strong R's).
- "Next Shot" Mentality Stay present and move on (R.A.L.F.).
- On Finishes "Finishing School" Get to the rim AFAP (as fast as
  possible) off one foot; if you see bodies, stride stop. This controlled
  stop opens up multiple options—finish, pass, or use multiple pivots
  to create space and maintain balance.

#### **Competition Points in Practice**

We also track **Competition Points** throughout practice. Most shooting drills have a set standard or target score. When players meet or exceed that standard, they earn points. We award additional points for groups that win team shooting drills or competitions. This keeps training purposeful, competitive, and measurable.

The goal is simple: these shots should mirror game shots executed at game speed. In other words — **Gamified.** 

#### Key #3 – Shot Selection

Confidence isn't just knowing how to shoot — it's knowing when to shoot. Smart shot selection earns trust from teammates and coaches and creates rhythm for the entire offense.

#### **BPR Framework**

- Balance Are you set and in rhythm?
- Pressure Can you get it off vs. a closeout?
- Range Are you shooting from where you've earned the right?

**Time & Score** – Be aware of the situation. Smart shooters know when the moment calls for a quick one, a good one, or no shot at all.

#### Shot Rating System - Grade each shot to build awareness:

• 4 points: A layup

• 3 points: A wide-open shot

• 2 points: An okay shot

• 1 point: A bad shot

• 0 points: A turnover

#### **In-Game Shot Rating**

Coach Simpson rates each player's shot quality in real time from the bench. This immediate feedback system measures shot selection by player and by possession — not just makes and misses. We review team averages between quarters and share individual averages postgame, tracking progress across the season. Players quickly learn that good and great shots raise their averages, while poor ones drag them down. The result: accountability meets awareness.

#### 180-Guy Metric

Coach Cooley often emphasizes the 180-Guy Standard — a player whose combined percentages (2-pt FG% + 3-pt FG% + FT%) total 180 or higher (A + B + C  $\geq$  180). It's a simple, powerful way to measure allaround shooting efficiency and reward consistency across every range.

#### **The Bottom Line**

Too often, players jack up shots that have very little chance of going in. Those bad shots don't just hurt the team — they erode confidence. Some confidence simply comes from taking better shots. As simple as it sounds, it's true.

We tell our players: If you shoot and miss a good or great shot, you have nothing to fear. That confidence comes from conviction — knowing you've earned the license to take that shot, and you've maintained it through consistent performance.

Confidence is contagious. It comes from preparation, repetition, and making the next right shot — not just the last one. Every great shooter builds it through daily commitment, game-speed training, and smart decisions. Do simple better, and believe in the work you've put in. That's how confident shooters are made.



Courtesy Photograph



# Vicariously Happy Sharks Oakland-Craig Girls Basketball

Scott Guzinski - Oakland-Craig - Girls Basketball



In my 28 years in education and coaching I wonder how many times I have heard the word culture? Culture is the buzzword that everyone wants to use to talk about their programs and teams. If you log on to any social media outlet (I am a Twitter/X guy @ scottguzman) and search culture, you get an

unlimited number of descriptions and ideas of what culture is in any number of situations.

In 2020, I became the head girls' basketball coach at Oakland-Craig. I had been a head coach before in football and basketball at other schools. I had been an assistant coach the two previous years at OC. In those two years, we went 23-4 and 26-3 with two semifinals appearances at the state tourney. The OC girls' program was in a good place. We had a good nucleus of returning players in 2020 – I expected to have another great season and return to state. We did not. We finished the season 11-12 with a loss in the first round of subdistricts. I was incredibly disappointed for our players and especially our seniors. What happened? Was it me? Was it our scheme? Was it our practices? Was it my preparation? What went wrong? Did I do everything I could to make us successful? We had some solid players and coaches, and I felt like I had let them down by not leading them back to state.

During the off season I took a deep look at our program and processes. I did not realize it at the time, but what I was doing was resetting our culture. What did I need to do better? What did we need to do better as a program? I needed a focus. Our program needed focus.

We did not need drastic changes – just tweaking and some deliberate attention to what we thought was most important to success. We had good players who were willing to put in the time in the offseason. Our weights program is awesome and attendance was great. I have good assistant coaches and supportive administrators and parents. I knew we should be better. I dove deep into what we did well, what we needed to improve, and what I wanted the identity of our program to be. What evolved from that process was *Vicariously Happy Sharks*.

People who know me well would probably say I only use the word "vicariously" to make myself sound smarter than I really am— fair enough. And to be honest, I do not know that much about sharks. Seeing sharks at the zoo and while watching *Finding Nemo* ("Fish are friends, not food.") is pretty much the extent of my interactions and knowledge of them. But sharks sound cool, and we needed an

attacking identity. The *four practice indicators* we created and focused on starting in the spring of 2021 have grown into the backbone of our team and have turned us into *Vicariously Happy Sharks*.

What is a Vicariously Happy Shark? Vicarious happiness is the joy a person experiences from another's success. We have to be happy for our teammates when they do something well—GENUINELY HAPPY! When a teammate does something well (scores a point, gets a steal, gets a rebound, etc.) then the TEAM does something well. And the success of the TEAM is the goal. The traits that we want our players to have that I envision sharks having include relentlessness, fearlessness, and an attacking mentality—always, every time, no matter who, what, or where we are playing. We must play with an edge but not an ego. Fly around and bite stuff! That's what we want. In the East Husker Conference where we get to play North Bend, Pender, Howells-Dodge, etc. you have to play with an edge!

As coaches, my assistants and I have worked hard to create great relationships with our kids so we can challenge them, but also so they have the ultimate confidence in themselves. We really believe in our players, and we tell them that as often as we can. They are awesome. They work incredibly hard because we require them to work hard. (Basketball is not for everyone.) If you have confidence, you can play without ego and simply do the right thing for the TEAM. Confidence breeds humility. And humility shows the ultimate confidence in oneself.

The game is not about statistics but about giving great effort and making the right play. Some coaches call this playing your role. I think it is kids knowing that you believe in them and that all you expect them to do is what they have practiced. What have they repeatedly done in practice? Shoot the shots in the game that you make in practice. Make the passes in the game that you make in practice. Play team defense in the game that we play in practice. It sounds simple, and it should be if your preparation/practice matches your indicators.

Our practice indicators started out very simple: "EVERY SINGLE TIME."

- Good teammate! Respect each other and the team! High five!
- Transition! Let's go fast!
- **Defense!** Toughness, effort, body position, communication, no stupid fouls.
- **Shooting!** Understand what a good shot is, ball in paint, share the ball, play within yourself.

As a team we constantly talked about our indicators. We posted them in the gym, weightroom, classrooms, and on the posted practice plans each day. We put them on team shirts. What does it look like to be a *good teammate*? Good teammates show up for each other every day. If someone does something well, tell them. If someone

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struggles, help them. Give each other grace. Not everything is going to be perfect and that is ok. Be vicariously happy for each other! Have the best bench energy in the state! (Watch our bench—we have fun!) Watch our starters cheer for our subs at the end of games—it is genuine love and happiness! (These are items I look for on film). We want our players to be great teammates EVERY SINGLE TIME.

Every drill we did in practice was linked to an indicator. We dedicated ourselves to running transition EVERY SINGLE TIME! For four years in a row and over 200 practices now, the first drill we have done in practice every day after we warm up is run transition. We only do it for about 10 minutes, but if we are going to play fast, we must practice fast. Kids know it is important because we do it every day!

Defensively, we work on our presses every day. We dedicated ourselves to pressure defense EVERY SINGLE TIME! If we are going to pressure in games, we must pressure in practice. It is the second thing we do in practice every day, right after transition, for over 200 practices in a row. We work our full and half court shell drill every dayworking on body position and communication every day.

Every day we talk about what a good shot looks like. We as coaches do not tell certain players not to shoot. We teach them what a good shot is, and we demand them to shoot the same shots in the games that they make in practice in our drills. For some kids, this means they only get to shoot lay ups. For others, they have the green light to shoot ANY good shot they get. Why? Because they make them in practice. We want to get a good shot EVERY SINGLE TIME. All our shooting drills are designed to shoot shots in practice that we get in game (for us that is transition lay ups, contested half court lay ups/ putbacks, threes, and free throws).

What we do is not complicated. And that is the point. It does not matter what your indicators are as long as you dedicate yourself, your preparation, and your practice to them and give your players the confidence to believe in themselves and follow the plan. We pride ourselves on being great at simple things and being consistent. We rarely practice for more than 90 minutes but we are constantly moving and transitioning to the next drill (post your practice plan so kids can see it!). And our drills have purpose!

Our indicators have changed slightly each year but are like where we started. We have added language about being deliberate/present, practicing gratitude, and controlling the things we can control. We don't start over every year with new indicators; we adjust to the upcoming season.

We had great examples of our kids being sharks in the state championship game. Our senior point guard was a great teammate—constantly telling her teammates during timeouts and at halftime how we were going to come back and win—she believed in them (confidence!)! In the second half, we had great players making *simple* plays—running the floor in transition and making great outlet passes to get lay ups and free throws. Our kids committed to our defensive adjustment at halftime to get tough with our halfcourt pressure defense and attack the post with physicality. And, though we had struggled to make shots earlier in the game, on the game winning shot, we shared the ball to get a great shot (10 passes, ball to both sides of the floor twice, ball in paint, every player touched it). To me, it all came back to the indicators to which we had all committed; the *Vicariously Happy Sharks* we have become.





## **#BUILTDIFFERENT**

#### Cody Wintz - Battle Creek - Wrestling

A Coach Feature by Daryl LaDeaux



Courtesy Photograph

Cody Wintz started his coaching career at Norfolk Catholic when he was still in college as a "Service Learning" project. He told me "I went there expecting to complete my 15 hours and ended up staying for 5 years while I got through college." Cody knew right away that coaching was a calling for him. After his time at Norfolk Catholic, Cody moved on to Battle Creek as the Head Wrestling Coach, and has been in that role for the past 19 years where he has seen immense success including a 171-74 dual record and 13 top 10 finishes at the State Tournament, including back to back State Team Championships.

I have met Cody Wintz multiple times throughout my time as a wrestling coach in Nebraska for youth, junior high, and high school wrestling. While putting together dual teams for Huskerland duals, Battle Creek was a great resource for me. As I watched, and coached multiple wrestlers who had gone through Cody's program, I started to notice something about each and every wrestler. Each of them had an attitude when they stepped into the circle, and it was hard to explain or define. The attitude was not negative, nor was it overly confident, rather it seemed like every time I had one of the BC wrestlers on my team, as soon as their foot hit the line, they seemed to have this look which I was only able to describe as 'ready to scrap.' This didn't mean that they were going to win every match, or dominate, but it meant that, regardless of the opponent they were facing, the match was going to be a scrap.

It wasn't until just recently that I was able to hear Cody speak at the NCA Multi-Sport Coaches Clinic that I realized what that look was. Cody, and his coaching staff have been preparing and instilling a program, a philosophy, and a way of life into each of the young men and women who walk into their wrestling room. There didn't seem to be anything out of the ordinary with what they were instilling in these young wrestlers until I was able to hear him talk about it at its core. There are multiple coaches in the program who have all put their own egos aside to come together as a staff for a common goal, which is the betterment of children. In the world we live in today, it is rare for people to agree on anything, but Cody

has gotten a large group of coaches, wrestlers, and community members to believe that if they do things the right way, the Battle Creek way, they will live up to Cody's high standards of being **#BUILTDIFFERENT** 

Cody Wintz is a Creighton High School graduate where he wrestled under Hall of Fame coaches Randy Kliment and Tim Nielson. I spoke with Coach Kliment about Cody at length, and he shared one of his favorite memories, "Cody wanted to be a manager really bad when he was in junior high, but his mom would not let him. So he decided to write her a 3 page essay explaining why he should be a manager, and the benefits of being a manager. In the end, Cody was one of our managers."

Coach Kliment also commented "I've always wondered if not making it to state, when he was definitely a better wrestler than several that did was a driving force for him." In the 1999-2000 Creighton Wrestling Yearbook, this is what was said about Cody: Cody just might be the best Creighton wrestler who had the hard luck to not make it to State. Coach Kliment added about Cody: "He took a struggling BC program and built it the right way, from the kids program up"

You have created a culture in Battle Creek that has seemed to take the program to new heights. Can you talk a little bit about what #Built Different is, and what it means to you.

"#BuiltDifferent is a mindset. A standard. The way we do everything. It's sometimes different from the norm, but it's better

Continued on page 13

than the average. I've always felt like wrestlers oftentimes were labeled as such (built different), so I just took that mentality and we ran with it. We owned it, and our wrestlers own that brand. I think it has certainly helped our wrestlers feel "ownership" in our program. It's been really cool for me to see the parents own that too. The culture and mantra of #BuiltDifferent was developed and built by many of our former guys. I like to tell them that they were built different before we were #BuiltDifferent. Core values of #BuiltDifferent include 1-Standard over Emotion 2-Earned, not Entitled 3-Toughness is a Choice 4-Silent Leadership and 5-We before Me. We make a point to celebrate character and toughness, not just accomplishments."

#### Who has influenced you in wrestling?

"I had two older cousins, Bryan Wintz and Jason Overholt, who wrestled for Creighton. I remember them taking me to my first practice in the old grade school and helping me get started. I didn't really enjoy it at first, but their presence and push were influential. I was then able to serve as student manager during my junior high years. I had high school guys like Dan Macke and Cory McManigal who took me under their wing and gave me rides home every day from practice. Without that, I would have missed out on some very formative experiences.

Coach Randy Kliment was an unbelievable guy to have as our high school coach. He took great pride in the program he built and it was a blessing to be a part of it at Creighton. We had a lot of great teams during those years. I took so much of what I learned under his leadership to our program in BC.

My five years as an assistant under Jeff Heimes at NC were invaluable also. He was a motivator and a worker, and he got our athletes to work hard and accomplish some great things. The combination of Coach Kliment (program structure/development, technique, and mat wrestling) and Coach Heimes (motivation, season planning, wrestling on feet, work ethic) have been instrumental in my career. Being a part of those 2 successful programs allowed me to bring some "tried and true" things to BC with me."

#builtdifferent is a trend that Cody has helped create in Battle Creek, and it seems to be more of a philosophy or a way of teaching kids to instill the fortitude necessary to compete in the great sport of wrestling. Battle Creek has had great success on the mat recently and it has to do with a program that has been built over many years from bottom to top with the same coaches preaching the same wrestling style and attitude. This motto, or slogan, that Cody has developed at BC can be seen every Saturday from December to February in gyms across Nebraska, whether it is shown in team points at tournaments, groups of moms dressed in purple bib overalls, coaches celebrating victories or consoling defeats, or just the attitude that each Brave wrestler walks on to the mat with. #builtdifferent is just a hashtag in the grand scope of things, but at its core, it has become a rallying cry for the community of Battle Creek to get

behind and support as the wrestling program is reaching new heights seemingly every year.

Current wrestler Ashton Kuchar when asked about the slogan had this to say, "To me it means a certain lifestyle we live by and by having confidence that we have worked harder than everybody else and have worked hard enough to earn the hardware that we bring back to Battle Creek." Ashton added about the BC coaching staff, "I would say that you need to have a good coaching staff to have a good team. We have a good variety of coaches, and each coach serves a purpose."

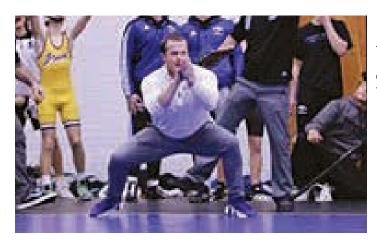
I also spoke to assistant coach Ryan Stusse, who has been with Cody for many years in Battle Creek talked to me about **#builtdifferent** and said it started slow and has really picked up in the last few years. He stated, "#BuiltDifferent is something we have been working with for years. Slowly introducing our mindset and love for wrestling to our youth and their parents at the club level." He added, "One thing that feels like it works well for us is consistency. Our wrestles see the same coaches from club, junior high and high school. The message is always the same. We have fun at all levels, which is very important, even for high schoolers, but the wrestlers also know how hard they work and that few wrestlers are training the way we do. They take a lot of pride in that and many patiently wait while training their butts off for a spot. Next one Up. . . Built Different!!"

You have quite a large and diverse group of people who help you coach wrestling, how are you able to have that many different perspectives in one room and make it work?

"I'm certainly the least qualified of our crew in terms of wrestling accolades! How it has all worked out to get the crew here that I have, I'm not sure, but I'm certainly glad it has. Coach Kreikemeier was here before I got here, and Coach Thompson came in with me. I wanted him to run the JH program and get them doing what we were going to be doing with the HS program. Coach Stusse came in a few years later, at just the right time too. I had just got the AD job and wasn't going to be able to keep running the youth club with being AD due to time constraints, and he took that and has run with it ever since. Since then, we've added Coach Lanman, one of my former wrestlers. It's awesome to have that come full circle as he was a 6th grader when I got the job in BC. And he was going to be a basketball player. Knowing you have had an impact on someone like that, not changing a sport, but impacting their career choice/etc. is very fulfilling. Coach Brummels and Coach Knull were also added later and have been great for our team. Those assistants are fantastic. They have bought into our system and approach but also bring their own personalities and areas of expertise to the room. They know they are free to coach our guys and that they have my trust. They might not always agree with me on everything, but when we get in front of our team no one knows that or can sense that. But I'm certain, if you ask them, that there was a "feel out" period. I know I can be a hard egg to crack, so there was probably some time before they truly

Coach Wintz has built a wrestling mindset in Battle Creek, and it has shown itself through individual and team accomplishments. The Braves really are #BUILTDIFFERENT! Coach Wintz's career marks include: NCA Wrestling Coach of the Year 2025, 2X-State Team Champion, State Dual Champion, 137 Individual Boys Qualifiers 67 Placers, 16 Individual Girls Qualifiers - 10 Placers, 11 Boys State Champions and two Girls State Champions.







Courtesy Photograph



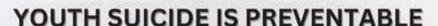




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# Growing the Game: Elevating Nebraska High School Bowling By Investing in Our Coaches

Larry Punteney - Lincoln Pius X - Bowling



In Nebraska, we have built a national reputation for athletic excellence, not just through talent but through coaching. From the early days of Terry Pettit's work with high school volleyball coaches to the programs flourishing across the state today, one thing is clear: when we invest in developing our coaches, every level of the game grows.

Coach Pettit understood something that still rings true decades later. The best way to grow a sport is to grow the people teaching it. When he took the time to mentor and train Nebraska high school volleyball coaches, he created something far bigger than a single college program. He built a network of connected, educated, and passionate teachers of the game. That grassroots investment elevated volleyball at every level, from club teams to small schools, and turned Nebraska into the epicenter of the sport.

As Pettit once said, "There is something heroic in wanting to be a coach. It requires as much ego as it takes to write a poem and there are far more risks."

That same blueprint can apply to every sport in our state, including bowling.

#### The Foundation Exist: Nebraska's Bowling Legacy

The blueprint already exists right here in Nebraska. The University of Nebraska Bowling program, led by Head Coach Paul Klempa, has set the national standard for consistency, discipline, and excellence. The Huskers' success is not accidental; it is built on decades of commitment to fundamentals, preparation, player development, and on-going education.

Before Coach Klempa took the helm, Bill Straub built the foundation of the program and a culture of excellence that still defines it today. I was fortunate to bowl collegiately under Coach Straub, and the lessons from that experience continue to shape how I coach. His emphasis on process, communication, and respect for the game created a model that every coach in Nebraska can learn from, regardless of sport.

Under Klempa's leadership, Nebraska has continued that legacy, claiming national championships and producing athletes who represent not only skill but also character and teamwork.

If we can bring even a fraction of that same intentionality, education, and collaboration to high school bowling, the growth potential across our state is enormous. We have history, talent, and pride. Now we need to build the structure that helps every coach, and every program, reach the next level.

#### **Coaching Development: The Next Step for Bowling**

High school bowling in Nebraska has grown rapidly since the NSAA sanctioned it in 2021. We have seen new programs emerge, competitive depth expand, and crowds fill bowling centers during the State Tournament. To sustain that growth and take the next step, we must invest in our coaches.

Most high school bowling coaches enter the sport with enthusiasm and commitment, but not always with technical training. Many of us learned by experience, observation, or trial and error. That is not criticism; it is simply reality. The good news is that Nebraska has a strong base of passionate coaches who want to get better. The next step is giving them the tools to do it.

#### Where We Can Improve and Learn Together

The modern game of bowling is evolving quickly, and our coaching education needs to keep up. A few areas stand out:

#### **Two-Handed Bowling Fundamentals**

Two-handed bowling is not the future; it is the present. Every year, more young athletes adopt this style, inspired by players like Jason Belmonte and Anthony Simonsen. However, many coaches still feel uncertain about how to teach or refine it. We need to master the same physical principles we once emphasized in traditional bowling, including timing, leverage, footwork, and balance, while also adding a stronger focus on direction and alignment. Those last two concepts are essential for helping athletes repeat shots, manage lane transitions, and reduce injury risk in the two-handed game.

#### **Understanding Lane Patterns**

Lane patterns dictate strategy as much as any defense in football or any matchup in basketball. Too often, high school

teams approach oil patterns blindly, without considering length, volume, or transition. Learning how to read and adjust to lane conditions empowers both coaches and athletes to make smarter decisions in competition, and that knowledge turns guessing into coaching.

#### **Bowling Ball Dynamics**

A modern coach must understand the science behind surface, coverstock, and core design. The ability to match a bowler's equipment to a pattern can make the difference between a frustrating day and a winning one. Coaches who understand ball motion can help their athletes prepare better, adjust faster, and gain confidence that translates into results.

#### **Making Coaching Education Accessible**

Here is the reality: advanced bowling education is expensive. The Kegel Training Center in Florida and USBC Silver or Gold certifications offer world-class instruction, but travel and cost make them difficult for many high school coaches.

So we start with what is available and affordable:

- The USBC Bronze Course now offers an online option that provides strong fundamentals.
- The Kegel YouTube Channel includes high-quality lessons on lane play, ball motion, and the physical game.
- Equipment manufacturers such as Storm, Brunswick, and Hammer publish free videos explaining surface adjustments, layouts, and strategy.
- Watching PBA Regional or collegiate matches online helps coaches learn how elite programs make adjustments frame by frame.

Every coach can take that first step, and that is how we begin changing the game across the state.

# **Creating a Culture of Coaching Collaboration Through the Nebraska Coaches Association**

The Nebraska Coaches Association has long been a leader in connecting and developing coaches across every major sport in our state. Our greatest opportunity is to fully leverage the structure we already have—and strengthen bowling's presence within it.

Each summer, hundreds of coaches attend the NCA's annual convention to learn from national coaches, sport-specific experts, and some of the top minds in athletic development. Bowling belongs in that space, and it is time for us to make it a priority.

If we want to bring in elite instructors, people like Del Warren, or technical experts from the USBC, we must demonstrate that

bowling coaches are invested, engaged, and eager to grow. Participation drives influence. Influence drives resources. And resources drive the educational opportunities our coaches and athletes deserve.

Imagine what we could build if bowling coaches across Nebraska filled a conference room the way volleyball, football, and basketball coaches already do. Imagine sessions led by national leaders in lane play, ball motion, two-handed fundamentals, and athlete development. Imagine building a shared coaching language across the state—just like Terry Pettit did for volleyball.

The NCA Multi-Sports Clinic can be the hub that transforms bowling education in Nebraska. But it starts with us showing up.

#### A Call to Action

If you are a bowling coach in Nebraska—whether you're a seasoned leader or brand new to the sport—I invite you to join me in strengthening our presence within the Nebraska Coaches Association.

#### **Our Goals Moving Forward are Simple:**

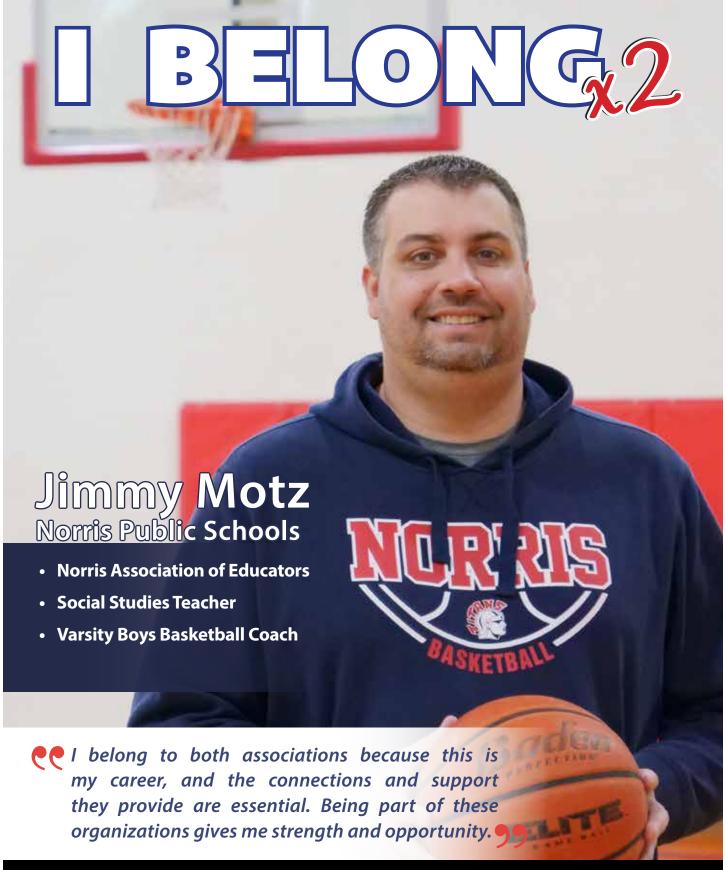
- Commit to annual attendance at the NCA Multi-Sports Clinic so we can grow together as a statewide coaching community.
- Advocate for and help recruit high-level bowling coaches for future NCA sessions, including leaders from Kegel, the USBC, and the collegiate ranks.
- Elevate the collective knowledge of our sport by participating, learning, and sharing what works in your program.

When we invest in our own development, we invest directly in our athletes.

#### **Closing Thought**

Sports do not grow because of facilities or uniforms. They grow because of people. When coaches commit to learning, they create environments where athletes thrive, parents engage, and programs sustain success. Nebraska volleyball proved it. Nebraska bowling can, too.

If we want to continue growing participation, competitiveness, and pride in our state, the next investment we make should be in our coaches. When we grow our coaches, every athlete in Nebraska wins.



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# Is Your School Experiencing the Benefits Of a Certificated Strength Coordinator In an Everyday Classroom?

Dr. Brandon Mimick, CSCS, RSCC\*D - Bennington - NSCO Board Member



High school athletics have long benefited from strength and conditioning programs—but what if the value of these programs extended beyond the weight room? What if strength and conditioning were not just an athletic resource, but a resource and opportunity extended to all students?

While some schools still operate by what some might

consider an "old model" of after-school lifting sessions and part-time coaching assignments, our future lies in integrating a full-time, certified strength and conditioning coordinator *into the everyday classroom*. Not just for athletes. Not just for performance. But for the overall well-being and development of the entire student body—and the school itself.

#### **More Than Muscle: Education Through Movement**

A strength and conditioning instructor isn't just a coach or coordinator, they're an educator. In the classroom, they teach biomechanics, human physiology, injury prevention, recovery, mental resilience, and lifestyle habits that translate to healthier, more capable students. These are life skills, not just sports skills.

Embedding this instruction into the school day makes physical literacy accessible to all students—not just athletes. Whether a student participates in competitive sports, recreational fitness, or is just looking to improve their overall health, a structured, inclusive strength program helps foster confidence, discipline, and long-term wellness.

Additionally, by providing a course led by an educated strength professional within the school day, students are provided an opportunity to learn and train under the guidance of someone during the school day, earning credit towards graduation, while also removing the need to find time—and, potentially, money—to work out on their own.

#### **Building a Culture of Wellness and Accountability**

A daily strength and conditioning presence in the school promotes a culture of health, accountability, and self-

improvement. It supports physical education standards while enhancing the mental health of students through movement and routine. While some students might not find enjoyment in typical gym-based PE courses, I have witnessed students blossom in the weight room, finding connectivity to the space and enjoyment in the work they do and pride in the results they have been able to create. Sticking to a daily workout regimen is hard, and not always the easiest challenge to navigate as a high school student. Not only does having an integrated strength and conditioning course into the school day provide students with an opportunity to consistently train, having a competent instructor provides much needed guidance, structure, and accountability, creating a safe and supportive learning environment.

#### **Supporting Coaches, Protecting Athletes**

Coaches benefit from the consistency, expertise, and shared responsibility a full-time coordinator provides. Through unified movements and verbiage, athletic programs become more unified and efficient, maximizing all stakeholders' time while also eliminating silos that may exist with your programs or school. This also potentially reduces time and responsibility-as well as stress-for other coaches in the building by providing inschool, direct access for students to a certificated teacher with specific knowledge and experience in strength and conditioning. Coaches already juggle countless responsibilities. A strength and conditioning instructor takes a vital piece off their plate, allowing those other coaches on staff to focus on technical, tactical, and relational aspects of their specific sport. At the same time, they know their athletes are getting consistent, professional-level physical preparation. Through this preparation, coaches-and athletes-should expect lower Injury rates, reduce injury timeframes, and improved performance indicators.

#### A Win for All Stakeholders

By adding a full-time, certified strength and conditioning coordinator, administrators gain a strategic partner in shaping student health initiatives. Teachers find stronger, more focused students in their classrooms. Parents see their children engaged, healthy, and confident. And students—regardless of athletic identity—gain a deeper understanding of their own bodies and minds.

Continued on page 20

#### **Final Thought**

A strength and conditioning instructor in the classroom isn't about building better athletes. It's about building better humans. It's time we start treating this role not as an optional extra, but as an essential part of every high school's educational mission. It's time to invest in a professional who can guide our athletes every day—not just in the weight room, but in the classroom, where education and performance intersect.

However, this "investment" does not necessarily mean we have to negotiate to add a position to our staff or do an endless search to find a qualified staff member—but if you have the means to do so, great! No, all it takes to add this strength and conditioning specialist to your teaching staff is equipping and supporting one staff member with the resources

necessary to become educated and/or certified. Whether it is providing access to the National High School Strength Coaches Association's (NHSSCA) High School Strength Coach Certified (HSSCC) program, the National Strength and Conditioning Association's (NSCA) Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS), a college or university with a program designated by the Council on Accreditation of Strength and Conditioning Education (CASCE), or a Nebraska Strength Coaches Organization (NSCO) event, there are a multitude of access points with varying levels of challenge and commitment to foster growth, passion, and purpose from within your staff. This current staff member deserves this support, your staff deserves this expertise, and your students deserve this teacher.





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# **Team Leadership and Swimming Strength**

BJ Christiansen - Omaha Marian - Swimming



In my younger days as a coach I commonly asked the greatest coaches "What makes your program so successful?" However, they always felt it was a very difficult question to answer. There is no "secret sauce," no magical thing(s) a program specifically does to become great. After a decade at the helm of the Crusaders, I have learned mostly things, many by trial and error. What I do know is that great program culture is a collection of thousands of different choices, actions, and ideas. Over the course

of this decade our program has evolved into what it is today. It has needed this time to shape and change to fit what is best for our girls and the sport. I will continue to learn, try new things, and work towards creating a program which can continue to be successful.

#### **Team Leadership**

Regardless of the sport, establishing good leadership can be crucial to the culture and success of the program. In my early years as head coach I used the position of captain as a way to establish leaders on the team. It is a time honored tradition of many teams across nearly all sports. However, using captains has never reaped the most benefits for our program.

Although not always the case, many issues arose from having team captains. First, the process of selection. Do we send out surveys to team members about captain traits? Is it a popularity contest? Do the coaches select? Will that cause bad feelings for those not selected? It became a point of contention more times than not.

I also noticed a heavy burden placed on those given the title of captain. They felt as though they needed to do everything and be everything for all of their teammates. For some it ended up being too much. They struggled with their teammates and mental fatigue from stress grew as the season wore on. This was exacerbated by the fact that some girls were hesitant to offer support, not wanting to overstep since they were not captains.

After a couple years of struggle, I broke away from tradition and did away from using captains in our program. Our program has developed into a Team Leadership Model. Each athlete is encouraged and given opportunities to use leadership skills. From freshman to senior, the girls are encouraged to speak their mind, help their teammates out, and step up to help when the team needs it.

The strongest benefit of this model is having many different leadership styles shine. If a girl is great at motivation, she can use those skills to get her teammates excited and ready for practice. Another girl may have the confidence to call out teammates who are distracting the team from our goals. Another helps to keep training fun and lighthearted even as we enter the cold, grueling month of January. By encouraging each girl to use her individual strengths and skills, the team receives more support overall.

The burden of leadership becomes more manageable with the Team Leadership Model. Day to day, week to week, each girl can be in a different mindset, stress load, or energy level. By encouraging each team member to be a leader, a teammate can step in and hold the mantle of leadership while another is struggling, stressed, or worn out. Both athletes gain benefit as the struggling athlete can recharge and reset while the leader gets experience leading the team.

Throughout all of this we see the confidence of the girls grow, not just as athletes, but as a person. By using the skills, she is confident with, each swimmer feels comfortable to lead and feel valued when she sees it benefiting her teammates. The girls are also called to drift outside of their comfort zone by testing out leadership skills they might not be as comfortable with. With their enhanced confidence from using their other leadership skills, they are more willing to step up and practice leadership skills they may not have otherwise approached. The growth in confidence of being a leader from freshman to senior year has been incredible to witness.

Establishing the Team Leadership Model will take time to develop. As I mentioned before, it took several years with thousands of different choices, actions, and ideas before it could become a reality for my team. Over the course of the journey to a Team Leadership Model there are a couple ideas which stand out amongst the many.

Every fall leading up to our season, I hold one-on-one meetings with each girl looking to try out for our team. I use these meetings to get to know the athletes, see how the offseason has gone, and discuss goals for the year ahead. I always include a piece on leadership. I will explain to the girls about our Team Leadership Model and how each girl is encouraged to be a leader on our team. Each year I encourage a specific leadership skill for class to work on. It is meant as a

Continued on page 23

challenge for them to step a little out of their comfort zone and work on building a leadership characteristic.

During our season I hold weekly team meetings. Coaches and athletes use this time to share ideas, give feedback, and discuss the week ahead. In this space each girl is encouraged to stand up and speak to the team. Every meeting includes at least one girl from each class speaking. What is said isn't a grand speech or special moment. It represents an opportunity to stand up in front of the team and speak their mind, share their knowledge and experiences. These moments give them small steps to becoming a better leader. As freshmen they may not be as confident to say the hard things but in time, with practice, I see that confidence grows.

Teams looking to change to the Team Leadership Model; be patient. It will not happen overnight. Some years will be better than others. This model has done wonderful things for our program. I don't think I will ever go back to the captains' model, adopting the Team Leadership Model may be one of the best decisions I have made as a coach.

#### **Swimming Strength**

In the technical aspect of coaching, the last few years our program has put an emphasis on building strength in the water. Stronger swimmers are able to create more force and, in turn, create more speed. The weight room plays a huge role in developing overall strength. To build on the strength gains in the weight rooms, I looked into finding methods to make it sport specific and develop this strength in the water.

Our main method of building strength in the water is using parachutes. These are attached around the waist like a belt and extend back behind the swimmer. Parachutes are attached to the end of the straps and come in various sizes. Larger parachutes create more resistance than smaller parachutes. The idea is what it sounds like, the parachute holds onto the water creating resistance for the swimmer to swim against.

This type of training can be very taxing on the body. It is important not to overuse this type of training. Adequate rest is needed between sessions with the parachutes. I routinely have a low-medium intensity endurance, video technique, or active rest type of workout on the day after parachute training. I would also advise not using them the day before competition. Having the buffer day will allow the muscles to recover properly. In general, we stick to two days of parachute training a week.

I have been expanding our use of parachutes in our training. In the beginning the focus was on slower swimming with great technique. It is not helpful to just muscle against the parachute. The parachute is meant to encourage the swimmer to put more effort behind the motions she is already doing, NOT to change the motions. As the years have gone by, I have challenged the girls more by increasing the speed and implementing timing with parachutes. The emphasis is keeping proper technique, if technique falls apart, they need to slow down, reset, and

increase speed from there. Below are a couple examples of sets we do.

A fun type of set we use are broken swims. This helps them get a feel for what their races will feel like.

An example is: **6x** [**1** x **25** from a dive, **1** x **50** @ **1:15** parachute – swim, **1** x **50** Timed, **1** x **25** ez] Notice that the swimmers need to put on and take off the parachute for different portions of the set as it is only needed for the 50 in the middle of the set. The objective for this set is to fatigue the body then go right into a 50 timed without the parachute, this gets the girls in the mindset of swimming fast while tired.

Another type of set is meant for them to be aggressive against the parachute: 6x [4 x 25@:40, #1 kick with parachute, #2 swim with parachute, #3 attack with the parachute, #4 no parachute, timed]. The value of this set is to work hard against resistance. Ending the round without the parachute is meant to encourage them to keep the same intensity they had on the previous 25 but without the resistance. This is a set designed to encourage speed development.

A new type of set I want to try for this coming season is using parachutes for technique and drill sets. The added resistance can be used to show deficiencies in your stroke technique. In freestyle, the goal is to keep momentum moving forward. The resistance will bring the swimmer to a stop if she loses hold of the water through the pull phase. An example is: 8x [1 x 50 @ 1:30 parachute, one arm freestyle, switch at halfway; 2 x 25@:30 no parachute swim low stroke count]. This allows the swimmers to get a feel for maintaining a hold of the water throughout the pull phase as they take the parachute off for the 25.

There are many ways to develop better athletes. A coach should NEVER stop learning. Keep asking questions, keep reading articles, and learn from other sports. Learn as hard as your athletes' work. This commitment to continued learning shows athletes that excellence is a habit, not an accident. When a coach grows, the entire team grows with them.



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# Building a Positive & Strong Cheer Program In Small Town Nebraska

Casey Clements - Elmwood-Murdock - Cheerleading



Elmwood Murdock High School represents the Villages of Elmwood and Murdock with a combined population of roughly 1000. Our high school has somewhere around 100 students in it - and they are all highly involved in multiple sports and activities. We have amazing student athletes that play sports but also sing in choir, participate in One Act & Speech, FBLA, FCCLA and FFA just to name a few. Building a Cheer Program can be difficult with numbers like these. . . let alone a program that is in season 10-11 months a year.

Cheerleaders are more than just student athletes; they are the bridge between school and community. The spirit they bring to games and community events helps to unite everyone from kindergarten to grandparents. Building a Cheer Program isn't easy, but building a strong cheer program in a small town can sometimes feel almost impossible. Limited numbers, varying skill levels and no budget money makes it very challenging to create a program that is both competitive and community centered. However, with the right focus, leadership and culture, small town cheer programs can thrive and make just as much of an impact as the large teams in Lincoln and Omaha.

#### **Focus on Squad Culture**

This is my 10<sup>th</sup> season coaching at Elmwood Murdock. During that time, I have coached a lot of girls and only one of them came to me with previous cheerleading experience. Everyone else was new to cheerleading and that was ok! I can teach skills, but the biggest impact came from the culture that developed as the program developed. Establishing a team culture and what we stand for made all the difference.

Teamwork, positivity, respect for each other and having each other's back. We have created traditions out of community events that help us fundraise for all our expenses. Fall and Winter Little Cheer Clinics help us engage with our elementary students – we show them what being a cheerleader means to us. And trust me, those kids are always watching - they see what we do, and they want to grow up to be on cheer too. I cannot even begin to count the number of hugs I receive from our Little

Cheerleaders when I see them around school or town. This goes for our cheerleaders too. When they come running up to you – it can make your entire week! We volunteer for local races like Market 2 Market and The Good Life Halfsy so that we can be a part of something bigger than ourselves. We take pride in how we represent our community.

#### **Teach Skills with Patience**

Our athletes don't have easy access to tumbling gyms or dance studios, so when you make our team we need to start focusing on building a strong foundation of the basics. Sharp motions, strong jumps, timing and being confident in ourselves. If you make a mistake, learn from it and move on. Progress over perfection.

As we move into our competition season, we will gain experience by going to area cheer competitions and inviting alumni to practices to evaluate and give tips on improving. Talk to other schools in your area to see if they want to have combined practices to help critique routines. I have become good friends with several cheer coaches in Nebraska, and it means the world to me. Knowing that I can bounce ideas off them and ask advice has been a huge help. Small steps add up, and it can build lasting confidence in the members of your squad that reach so much further than just their life at cheer.

#### **Leadership & Communication**

Over the last couple of seasons, I started working more towards a Leadership Team Model as opposed to a Cheer Captain and/or Co-Captains. We meet monthly to go over pros and cons since our last meeting, ideas they came up with that they would like to implement – that could be leading a practice and having a plan for it or bringing new material to teach at a practice. and This helps them share responsibility instead of falling on one person.

I encourage open communication and emphasize accountability. We only have two practice sessions a week that last two and a half hours, we simply cannot cover everything we need to do in that amount of time. That's where accountability comes in. They must work on material, stretch and jump outside of practice. Their communication is just as important. Their voices do matter, even if we don't use their idea, I still want to hear from them. If they are having a rough day – come talk to me and get it off your chest. I want to hear the silly stories from that day – the laughter and the tears are always worth it.

Continued on page 26

#### **Celebrating Progress Over Perfection**

Every season we have new and different challenges. Our high school students are BUSY. They work hard in the classroom and in their various extracurricular activities. We deal with juggling schedules, homework, injuries, the list can go on and on. It can be so easy to focus on the negative. Yes, it's hard to juggle these

things, but the biggest positive of all of it is you have a squad that is willing to show up, work hard and represent their school and community. Our squad cheers for 90% of our home and away games for football, volleyball, girls and boys basketball. They show up for their fellow students and that is a huge positive!

I always want to recognize progress over perfection. Our students already put a lot of pressure on themselves to

"be perfect" or "get everything right". That's just not how life works for most of us. Showing them that you recognize their progress, not just perfection, makes a huge difference. Celebrate those victories! A stunt that finally hits, a new crowd cheer or an athlete that hits her stride in mid-season. Growth builds momentum and that can build a legacy.



#### **Keep our Small Town Spirit Alive**

At its core, cheerleading in a small town is about connection with each other – with our students, community and school. When your athletes know how much you care about them as people, not just as cheerleaders, they will feel that deep connection with the program. They know you are there for them,

even after they graduate. That energy and enthusiasm is how we continue to recruit for the following season. They want to share that with their friends. I absolutely love hearing from former cheerleaders. Seeing them grow into the person that you saw in them. . . it's immeasurable.

The most successful small town programs don't necessarily have the crazy stunts, tumbling passes (our team doesn't tumble at all!) or flashiest

routines. They are teams that inspire pride in their school and community. They have lasting memories and friendships – both on and off the mat or floor.

It is not the size of the town or squad that defines how strong your program is – it's the love you pour into these kids. It's the heart and hustle they show when they practice and perform. It's the pride they have for their school and the smiles behind every cheer, chant and stunt.





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# The Elkhorn South Dance Team: Cultivating Excellence #AboveAll

Jessica Fauss - Elkhorn South - Dance



The Elkhorn South
Dance Team (ESDT)
defines its culture
through intentional
principles. Annually,
the new seniors select
a unifying theme for
the season; this year,
they chose the hashtag
#AboveAll. When asked

to articulate the meaning behind their selection, they presented five core pillars: Trust, Commitment, Balance, Talent, and Legacy. These five tenets perfectly encapsulate the operational philosophy and sustained success of our program.

#### **Trust: The Foundation of Success**

Trust is not an inherent trait within a team; it is a deliberate organizational pillar that must be continually built. This process begins early, with tryouts in March, where we require the trust of various stakeholders:

- Coaches must trust the objectivity and competency of the judging panel.
- Parents must trust the coaching staff, the integrity of the new team, and the developing responsibility of new leaders.
- Returning members must trust the capabilities and integration of new dancers.

Our initial team gathering is designed to forge this bond immediately. Creating trust from the outset is crucial to the success of ESDT. We foster a culture of belief—a process where dancers trust the journey and the system, even when the destination is not yet visible. This mutual respect allows our athletes, captains, and coaches to operate under a unified and effective mandate, leading to #AboveAll Trust.

#### **Commitment: Driving Accountability**

The high degree of trust within the team seamlessly translates into unwavering commitment. Dancers commit fully to the standards and requests set by the coaching staff. Whether it is timely submission of skills videos or mandatory summer morning practices, the expectation is met without the need for micromanagement. We have intentionally replaced a traditional demerit system with a Commitment System. Tracking demerits and imposing individual suspensions often detracts from team cohesion. Instead, dancers are held accountable by their peers. We utilize "clean groups"—mixed-age, mixed-skill ensembles—

that build respect and strive for collective excellence. The whole team acknowledgement given to the first group to complete a task encourages positive internal competition and peer-to-peer encouragement, fostering #AboveAll Commitment.

#### **Balance: Sustaining Peak Performance**

Given that dance is a year-round activity, maintaining a healthy balance between athletics, academics, and personal life is essential. We prioritize the long-term enjoyment of dance while actively pursuing our seasonal performance goals. We provide a comprehensive, accessible date calendar and enforce strict deadlines for conflict reporting, allowing us to proactively manage schedules. Our typical week includes morning and afternoon practices, but we remain flexible, recognizing that our dancers are multi-sport athletes (including Varsity Softball and Track) and are often involved in various private studios, music programs, and school clubs. Our objective is to ensure our athletes are well-rounded individuals who can enjoy the full high school experience, which promotes #AboveAll Balance.

#### **Talent: Leveraging Collective Strength**

ESDT is fortunate to attract a roster of highly skilled and technically proficient dancers. We do not adhere to a fixed roster size, resulting in teams ranging from 17 to 24 members over the past six years. This flexibility ensures that every member meets our high standard of technical ability. Every dancer is encouraged to push personal limits and challenge their teammates. Our strength is derived from our collective unit; we are only as strong as our weakest performer. When an individual masters a new skill, they are expected to mentor those still developing it. This approach ensures practices are rigorous and technically focused, translating directly into strong, high-level routines. This is our ongoing commitment to the development that fosters #AboveAll Talent.

#### **Legacy: Shaping the Future**

Last season's achievements have been officially etched into the records of ESDT. However, Legacy extends beyond a mere record of past accomplishments. It is the foundation laid for future teams. The character built, the lessons learned, and the collaborative teamwork forged in the program are the defining elements of the legacy we establish. We do more than just make history; we contribute to something greater by inspiring the teams that follow and helping to shape the future culture of ESDT, thereby creating an #AboveAll Legacy.

# 2026 Nebraska State Cheer & Dance Championships February 19-21





#### Heartland Event Center, Grand Island

The order of sessions per day will be: Times per session will be determined by the number of schools registering per classification.

#### **Daily Schedules**

Class A & B Cheerleading & Unified Cheerleading – Thursday, February 19 (One ticket all day)

Class C1, C2 & D Cheerleading – Session 1, Friday, February 20 (One ticket all day)

Class C2 & D Dance – Session 2, Friday, February 20 (One ticket all day)

Class A, B Dance - Session 1, Saturday, February 21 (One ticket all day)

Class C1 Dance – Session 2, Saturday, February 21 (One ticket all day)

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# 2026 Nebraska State Cheer Registration Requirements Checklist

All Items Must Be Completed, Paid For, And Received By December 12th



- 1. Join 2025–2026 NCA as a PAID member by registering Online REQUIRED AS A HEAD COACH.
- 2. ALL head coaches must complete the **Online NFHS Cheer & Dance Safety course** (\$85) by December 12<sup>th</sup>. This is good for 4 years if you completed the course after February 19, 2022 you are up to date. (Scan & Email a copy of Certificate)
  - Head Coaches of Unified Cheer Teams will need to complete the NFHS Online Coaching Unified Sports course (no fee) by December 12<sup>th</sup>. This is good for 4 years, if you completed the course after February 19, 2022 you are up to date. (Scan & Email a copy of Certificate)
- 3. Register and Pay for team registration. If using a credit card, payment must be made when registering OR you will need to call the office if paying later. (NOTE: There is a 4% convenience fee). You cannot go back in to pay later, you will have to call the office. DO NOT REREGISTER! Please plan ahead if your school requires pre-approval for check payments. Check payments MUST be received on or before December 12<sup>th</sup>. Mail to NCA, 500 Charleston, Ste 2, Lincoln, NE 68508. Online Team Registration OPENS NOVEMBER 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 4. Liability Release and Waiver Form (page 20-21) Form **MUST** be completed on both sides by each participant/alternate and the parent.
- 5. Rules, Music & Safety Course Acknowledgment Form (page 22) Form **MUST** be signed by Athletic Director and Coach.
- 6. A copy of Music Proof of Purchase & License if mixing music.
- 7. Submit items 3, 4, 5, and 6 ALL TOGETHER AS ONE SCANNED DOCUMENT. Scan and email them to staff@ncacoach.org. PHOTOS OF DOCUMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED. MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 P.M. DECEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **NOTE**

Your registration will not be complete until all the above items are completed and received by the NCA Staff.

No payments, registrations, or forms will be accepted after 5:00 p.m. December 12<sup>th</sup>.

# 2026 Nebraska State Dance Registration Requirements Checklist

All Items Must Be Completed, Paid For, And Received By December 12th



- 1. Join 2025–2026 NCA as a PAID member by registering Online REQUIRED AS A HEAD COACH.
- 2. ALL head coaches must complete the **Online NFHS Cheer & Dance Safety course** (\$85) by December 12<sup>th</sup>. This is good for 4 years if you completed the course after February 19, 2022 you are up to date. (Scan & email your certificate)
- 3. Register and Pay for team registration. If using a credit card, payment must be made when registering OR you will need to call the office if paying later. (NOTE: There is a 4% convenience fee). You cannot go back in to pay later, you will have to call the office. DO NOT REREGISTER! Please plan ahead if your school requires pre-approval for check payments. Check payments MUST be received on or before December 12<sup>th</sup>. Mail to NCA, 500 Charleston, Ste 2, Lincoln, NE 68508. Online Team Registration OPENS NOVEMBER 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 4. Liability Release and Waiver Form (page 16-17) Form **MUST** be completed on both sides by each participant/alternate and the parent.
- 5. Rules, Music & Safety Course Acknowledgment Form (page 18) Form **MUST** be signed by Athletic Director and Coach.
- 6. Printed copy of Music Proof of Purchase/License if mixing music.
- Submit items 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 ALL TOGETHER AS ONE SCANNED DOCUMENT. Scan and email them to staff@ncacoach.org. PHOTOS OF DOCUMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED. MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 P.M. DECEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **NOTE**

Your registration will not be complete until all the above items are completed and received by the NCA Staff.

No payments, registrations, or forms will be accepted after 5:00 p.m. December 12<sup>th</sup>.

## **Fall 2025 State Honor Roll of Coaches**

#### **NCAA Member Coaches Capturing State Championships**



#### **Boys Cross Country**

Class B - Bill Rice - Lincoln Pius X
Class C - Joe Manley - Lincoln Chirstian

Class D - Corey Hatt - Doniphan-Trumbull

#### **Boys Tennis**

Class A - Chris Stock - Lincoln East

#### **Football**

Class B - Reed Manstedt - Waverly

Class C1 - Chad Fox - Wahoo

Class C2 - Joe Pavlik - Bishop Neumann

Class D1 - Andrew Kuta - Sandy Creek

#### **Girls Cross Country**

Class A - Roger Wright - Omaha Marian

Class B - Jordan Fuglestad - Elkhorn North

Class C - Troy Hauxwell - Chase County

Class D - Ryan Underwood - McCool Junction

#### **Girls Golf**

Class A - Robert Davis - Omaha Marian

#### Softball

Class A - Mitch Ohnoutka - Lincoln Southwest

Class B - Mitch Sadd - Northwest

Class C - Matt Rossow - Hastings St. Cecilia

#### Volleyball

Class A - Katie Tarman - Papillion-La Vista South

Class B - Christina Boesiger - Norris

Class C1 - Emily Restau - Milford

Class C2 - Lexi Holland - Freeman

Class D1 - Jonie Fader - Amherst

Class D2 - Tristen Wieseler - Wynot

# FUNDRAISING UNIVERSITY IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF THE NEBRASKA COACHES ASSOCIATION HELPING NEBRASKA COACHES "DREAM BIG" BY RAISING OVER \$42 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THEIR SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS SINCE 2009!



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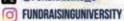
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# 2025 Boys Cross Country Super-State & All-State Teams



Photos Courtesy of Callam Sports Photography

#### Super-State Class A

J'Shawn Afuh, Lincoln North Star Elijah Bickley, Millard West Josiah Bitker, Lincoln North Star Aiden Gehring, Papillion-La Vista South Liam Gonzalez, Norfolk Zachary Petzet, Kearney David Protzman, Norfolk

#### Class B

David Krier, Lincoln Pius X
Joseph Majerus, Lincoln Pius X
Isac Portillo-Munoz, Lexington
Derek Rieck-Capellan, Elkhorn North
Samuel Schlautman, Lincoln Pius X
Jared Schroeder, Waverly
Axton Stone, Gering
Trevor Zurn, Alliance

#### Class C

Tyler Hetz, Gothenburg Trevin Opp, Lincoln Christian

#### Class D

Elijah Goodell, Perkins County Colton Ham, North Platte St. Patrick's Kaser Johnson, Doniphan-Trumbull

#### All-State Class A

Top 7 Super-State

#### Class B

Top 8 Super-State

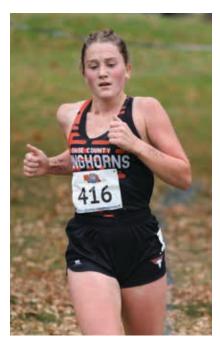
#### Class C

Top 2 Super-State Avery Carter, Milford Nolan Gartner, Syracuse Trevin Huskey, Johnson County Central Samuel McQuistan, Holdrege Bryson Neels, Gothenburg

#### Class E

Top 3 Super-State
Jaiden Anderson, Archangels Catholic
Hector Bonilla, Wood River
Samuel Holsing, Tri County
Jacob Swanson, Nebraska Christian

# 2025 Girls Cross Country Super-State & All-State Teams



Photos Courtesy of Callam Sports Photography

#### Super-State Class A

Ashlyn Carter, Papillion-La Vista South Abbigail Durow, Millard South Maya Freyer, Omaha Marian Emily Hegge, Papillion-La Vista South Dawson Kreycik, Kearney Kori McClain, North Platte Tatum Neilson, Bellevue West Sydney Wendt, Lincoln High

#### Class I

Amalia Doty, Omaha Gross Catholic
Haylen Holliday, Seward
Cecilia Kramper, Omaha Duchesne Academy
Jenna Polking, Elkhorn North
Sophia Reynolds, Hastings
Kathryn Roberts, Elkhorn
Leah Robinson, Elkhorn North
Emma Steffensen, Waverly
Malia Woosley, Lincoln Pius X
Lucy Zabloudil, Gretna

#### Class (

Scout Bell, Gothenburg

#### Class D

Avery Arens, Crofton

#### All-State

Top 8 Super-State

#### Class

Top 10 Super-State

#### Class C

Top 1 Super-State
Macie Carter, Milford
Addison Hauxwell, Chase County
Hailey Hengtgen, Palmyra
Tayla Hurner, Wayne
Emma Williams, North Bend Central
Jaelyn Witter, Kearney Catholic

#### Class D

Top 1 Super-State
Kayleigh Betka, McCool Junction
Rarity Cournoyer, Gordon-Rushville
Sage Holtmeier, Tri County
Reagan Moody, Ainsworth
Delani Runnels, Niobrara/Verdigre
Madison Shaw, Sandy Creek



## **2025 Boys Tennis All-State Teams**





Photos Courtesy of Callam Sports Photography

#### Class A First Team

Hunter Nelson, Senior, Lincoln East (Captain) Owen Brown, Sophomore, Lincoln Southeast Samarth Sajeesh, Senior, Lincoln East Simon Johnson, Senior, Lincoln East Alex Liu, Junior, Creighton Prep Kayden Le, Senior, Lincoln East

#### **Second Team**

Rowan Lunning, Senior, Creighton Prep Jackson Mu, Junior, Millard North Blake Gocken, Junior, Creighton Prep Benjamin Clausen, Senior, Creighton Prep Brad Bobaru, Junior, Lincoln East Max Kline, Junior, Lincoln Southwest Daniel Ji, Junior, Lincoln East

#### Class B

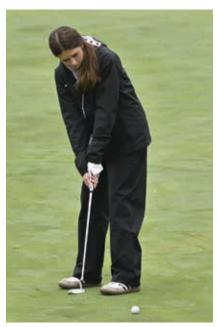
#### **First Team**

Connor White, Senior, Lincoln Pius X (Captain)
Jack Holbrook, Senior, Omaha Skutt Catholic
Noah Stricklett, Senior, Mount Michael
Patrick Killeen, Junior, Mount Michael
Andrew Shada, Junior, Elkhorn North
Ace Calfee, Junior, Lincoln Christian

#### **Second Team**

Andrew Pentel, Freshman, Mount Michael Grant DeHaan, Senior, Lincoln Christian Benjamin Mooss, Senior, Lincoln Christian John Krueger, Senior, Mount Michael Holden Kutash, Senior, Mount Michael Connor Chen, Senior, Mount Michael

# 2025 Girls Golf Super-State & All-State Teams



Photos Courtesy of Callam Sports Photography

#### Super-State

Addison Benge, Omaha Westside Ellen Bode, Elkhorn South Maddilyn Fineran, Norfolk Molly Goc, Columbus Peyton Hartman, Adams Central Mia Hiebner, Heartland Allie Jones, North Platte Naryn Kim, Lincoln Southwest Daleni Knust, West Holt KayLynn Jorgensen, Minden Macy Jorgensen, Minden Eden Larson, Lincoln Southwest Julia Messere, Aurora Lauren Murnan, Omaha Marian Lucy Peterson, Omaha Marian Delaney Schmitz, Omaha Marian Leah Wisdom, Omaha Marian

#### All-State

#### Class B

Annabelle Bang, Elkhorn Ellie Henn, Gretna East Addison Peck, Scottsbluff Avery Peter, Elkhorn North



Preseason Presentations
Parent Meetings
Special Events

# THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETICS

PRESENTED BY DARIN BOYSEN, NCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Outstanding information, well delivered. There were times I thought he was talking directly to me, which is a sign of a great communicator. I personally feel I'm better today than yesterday as a sports parent because I was able to listen to this message." – Parent & School Board Member



#### Before the Season

What do Athletes/Kids Really Want?

Releasing Your Son/Daughter to the Experience

Parental Red Flags



#### **During the Game/Event**

Modeling Appropriate Behavior

Big Picture

One Instructional Voice



#### After the Game/Event

Time & Space

Confidence Building

Relationship Building

Six Powerful Words

#### **NEBRASKA COACHES ASSOCIATION**

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#### **Endorsed by the Following Education Associations:**









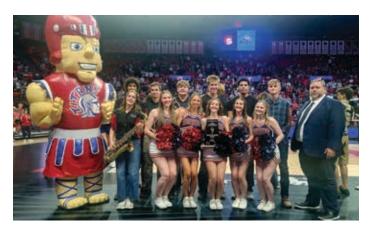




# **Volleyball Sportsmanship Awards**



Class A – Lincoln North Star



Class B – Norris



Class C1 - Malcolm



Class C2 – Johnson County Central



Class D1 – Southwest



Class D2 – Dundy County-Stratton











#### **GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM**

As a membership benefit, coverage is provided by the Commercial General Liability Policy issued to the National Organization of Coaches Association Directors. This policy will provide general liability coverage to the Nebraska Coaches Association and its members.

#### **CARRIER**

**HDI Global Specialty (A Rated)** 

#### **POLICY PERIOD**

August 1, 2025 - August 1, 2026

#### **LIMITS OF INSURANCE**

| \$1,000,000 | Each Occurrence                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| \$2,000,000 | General Aggregate (per Member)       |
| \$1,000,000 | <b>Products/Completed Operations</b> |
| \$1,000,000 | Personal & Advertising Injury        |
| \$ 300,000  | Fire Damage                          |
| \$ 50,000   | Sexual Abuse (per Member)            |
| Excluded    | Medical Payments                     |

#### **COVERAGES**

- Educator Professional Liability
- Participant Legal Liability for insured members
- Liability assumed under insured written contract
- Defense Cost outside limits

#### **EXCLUSIONS**

- The use of automobiles, buses, watercraft and aircraft
- Property of others in the care, custody, and control of the insured.
- This insurance does not apply to members that coach at an All-Star game that is not approved by your state coaches association.
- This insurance does not apply to any loss, cost or expense arising out of infectious or communicable disease.

#### **CAMP INSURANCE**

Today, most Coaches are involved in some type of sports camp. Please note that our General Liability Program follows insured members while working at camps and/or conducting their own personal camp.

In addition, Participant/Accident Coverage is required for coaches and/or participants. Should an accident occur during a camp, clinic or event, this secondary coverage helps offset the loss suffered by families affected by such accidents.

#### PROCEDURE FOR CAMP INSURANCE

As a member benefit of your state coaches association, all members in good standing have a \$1,000,000 per occurrence General Liability policy limit that provides coverage for their coaching activities. In order to protect the General Liability policy from potential claims, the insurance company has mandated that all coaches must obtain signed waivers and provide Participant/Accident insurance for their participants.

In order to obtain a certificate of insurance showing proof of insurance or naming an additional insured, the following must be in place:

- ❖ Waivers: Signed waivers showing indemnification language
- Participant/Accident Insurance: You must have Participant/Accident coverage in place for all participants attending sports camps.

#### **PURCHASE INSURANCE**

Camp Insurance Request form is available on our website: <a href="https://www.loomislapann.com/page/camp-insurance-2.html">https://www.loomislapann.com/page/camp-insurance-2.html</a>

#### **INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR**



<u>www.loomislapann.com</u> (P) 800-566-6479 | (F) 518-792-3426

Greg Joly gjoly@loomislapann.com
Lori George lgeorge@loomislapann.com

Disclaimer: This is an insurance overview for summary purposes only; for complete policy terms and conditions please refer to the NOCAD Master Policy.

# 2025-2026 NCA Membership Registration

| Name:  Gender:  Date of Birth:  NSAA High School:  Middle School/  | Male Female                             | Individual Payment With Check: Print completed form & mail to: NCA 500 Charleston St, Ste 2 Lincoln, NE 68508 |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|--|---|---|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| College/Youth Org/Club:  |   | <del></del>   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| Home Address:  |   | (P  | 'lease do | not enter s                      | school addr | ess)     |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| City, State Zip:   |   | <u>],                                    </u>   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| Phone: ( )   | E-mail:                                 |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | орорт                                   | HS VA   | RSITY     | HS NON-                          | VARSITY     | MIDDLE   | SCHOOL                  | YOUTH    | /CLUB           | COLI    | LEGE    |
| Enter # of years in coaching/<br>administration through 2024-2025: | SPORT                                   | Head  | Asst      | Head                             | Asst        | Head     | Asst                    | Head     | Asst            | Head    | Asst    |
|  | Boys Cross-Country                      |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | 2025: Girls Cross-Country               |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| Г  | Football Football                       |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| L  | Girls Golf                              |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Softball                                |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Boys Tennis                             |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| oaching Assignments 2025-  | Volleyball                              |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| For each sport you are coac  | Dava Baakathall                         |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| 2025- 2026, indicate in the table                                  | to the Girls Basketball                 |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| right if you are the Head Co<br>Assistant Coach as well as whic    | Boys Swimming                           |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| you are coa  | Cirlo Curimmina                         |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| ,  | Boys Wrestling                          |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Girls Wrestling                         |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Baseball                                |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Boys Golf                               |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Boys Soccer                             |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Girls Soccer                            |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Girls Tennis                            |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Boys Track and Field                    | d 💮   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Girls Track and Field                   |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Unified Track & Field                   | d   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Cheer/Dance (Circle 1                   |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Boys Bowling                            |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Girls Bowling                           |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Unified Bowling                         |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Strength & Conditioning                 | 9 😡   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  | Unified Bowling Strength & Conditioning | administration  | Activi    | ositions youties Direct waived). | ou hold for | 2025-202 | 26 for this<br>Assistan | high sch | oool.           | Superir | ontende |
| Additional Option:   | NCA Gold Card\$25 (Mu                   | st be P   | urchas    | ed by 10/1                       | 1)          |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
| Total Amount Due:  | \$                                      |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          |                 |         |         |
|  |   |   |           |                                  |             |          |                         |          | _               |         |         |
| Credit Card Number:  |   |   |           |                                  |             |          | piration [              | ate: (M  | <sub>0/Yr</sub> |         | 1/1     |