

— Fox Cities —

OCT 24

SPORTS

**Julia
Gurholt**

**It's All About
the Challenge**



Cover photo by
Paul Stumpf,
P.S. Portraits

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Welcome to Fox Cities Sports magazine!



I have been a fan of sports for as long as I can remember. As a kid, I remember frantically searching the Monday Post-Crescent for the one or two sentences they would write about my beloved Chiefs game the day before (long before the internet made it easy).

Running track and playing football as a Kimberly Papermaker are some of the best high school memories I have. I was an assistant coach on the 1980 Kimberly Girls State Softball championship team and a WIAA softball umpire as well.

As an adult, I played broomball on the frozen waters of Tenney Park in Madison and slow and fast-pitch softball. I was bowling on TV (maybe you're old enough to remember *Strikes & Spares for Cash*) and shot 301 and Cricket in dart leagues. I even curled for six years at the Madison Curling Club with future Olympian Lori Mountford.

Professionally, I was able to meet and work with some of the best, including Michael Jordan, Brett Favre, Clay Matthews, Arnold Palmer, and NASCAR greats Dale and Jason Jarrett, Dale Earnhardt, Jr., Matt Kenseth, and the late Kenny Irwin, Jr. I even designed graphics for some racecars on the NASCAR circuit!

Sports doesn't care about your race, religion, or politics. It cares about friendships, trying your best, enjoying the act of playing, and sportsmanship. Sports has a way of galvanizing fans in camaraderie or misery over a shared team or event. The simple act of shaking hands with your opponent and saying "good game" — and meaning it! — is a testament to the best part of sports. That's what this magazine is all about!

More than three decades ago, in a 33-page feature article titled "America at Play: Sports in Appleton, WI," Sports Illustrated (August 11, 1986) took notice of what we already know: The Fox Valley loves its local sports! That issue shined a spotlight on Appleton and offered a glimpse into sports in small towns like ours everywhere.

In our debut issue, Fox Cities Sports magazine brings readers an in-depth feature on Kimberly tennis standout Julia Gurholt, one-on-one interviews with Appleton East head football coach Mark Krommenacker and Kaukauna's Braeden Jansen, and other sports news from this place we are lucky enough to call home.

All of this is made possible by the amazing businesses in this publication. They share our love of community and sports — please make sure to support them as well!

Whether you're a die-hard fan or a casual observer, a mom in the stands or a dad on the sideline, you'll find something to love in Fox Cities Sports magazine. Month after month, we will deliver the stories that matter most to the Fox Cities sports community. Grab your copy today and stay connected to the pulse of local sports!

Break, on three... Ready! ■



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— Fox Cities — **SPORTS**

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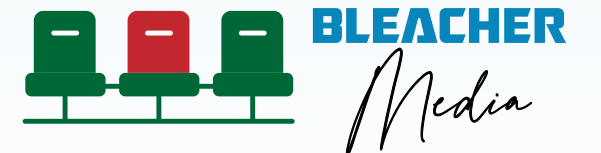
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Do you have feedback, ideas, or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 10th of each month. Email your thoughts, ideas and photos to:
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Dale with the hauler and #11 Rayovac car driven by Dale Jarrett at the Hickory Motor Speedway in North Carolina.



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Homemade Granola Cereal

BY MARY KELLEY



Would you like to make some delicious homemade granola cereal? I see you nodding your head. Then you've come to the right place. I've been making this for more than 30 years. When my youngest was in college she requested it in her care package. It's so versatile and forgiving. You can tweak a lot of the ingredients like adding different nuts (pepitas, walnuts and pecans). Swap out the raisins for dried pineapple bits or other dried fruits. Use a favorite cooking oil instead of butter if you wish. Eliminate the sugar and drizzle on some honey while it's cooling. Although I'm not sure how much, but if you're game, start with a 1/4 cup for both dishes, you can always add more if you like. You're only limited by your imagination. Enjoy hot or cold with milk or yogurt and berries. You will really like this!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 stick Butter
- 5 cups Old Fashioned Oats
- ½ cup Brown Sugar
- ¼ cup Almonds (or other nuts if you like)

- ¼ cup Unsalted sunflower seeds
- 1 cups Raisins

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350° F
2. Divide the butter evenly between two 9" x 13" baking dishes (1/2 stick in each dish)
3. Heat both dishes in the oven until butter is melted
4. Meanwhile, stir oats, nuts, brown sugar, and sunflower seeds in a bowl until blended
5. Evenly divide mixture into both butter-filled baking dishes and mix
6. Bake both dishes 15-20 minutes until golden, stirring occasionally
7. Remove from oven and stir in raisins
8. Cool
9. Store in airtight container up to 1 month

Makes 8 cups. ■



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TECH NECK

In today's digital age, a new health concern has emerged: tech neck



2024 NFL Season: Key Storylines and Predictions

BY MIKE HOGAN



We are a few weeks into the 2024–25 NFL season, and excitement is building with each passing game. Teams have revamped their rosters, star players are primed for standout seasons, and coaches face pivotal challenges. Before we get too far, let's look at the key storylines shaping this year's drama.

AFC EAST

Dolphins? Jets? I don't buy the hype. Do we forget that Josh Allen, the quarterback who has dominated the East since becoming elite in 2020, still exists? Are we forgetting that the Jets' hopes hinge on Aaron Rodgers, age 40, playing 17 games and returning to the MVP level he played at for years? Huge ifs. And are we forgetting that the Dolphins, no matter how talented, have been beaten by Buffalo and Allen time after time? At the time of this writing, Miami owns one victory over the Bills in 12 meetings since 2018.

The Bills have more question marks throughout their roster than they've had in years, mainly at receiver and safety. But they have a generational quarterback and a defensive-minded head coach who's always been able to figure it out. I'm sticking with the Bills.

AFC NORTH

The Bengals should be an angry team this season after such a disappointing 2023, during which they struggled out of the gate, got it together, and then lost franchise QB Joe Burrow for the season. Burrow, with star receivers Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins, will get Cincy back atop a division that should be hotly contested, with reigning AFC No. 1 seed Baltimore and 2023 Wild Card team Cleveland in the mix. Of course, Pittsburgh is never an easy out, either.

AFC SOUTH

The Texans are thinking big after a surprising 2023 season in which they won the AFC South and reached the AFC Divisional Round. Second-year QB CJ Stroud could be in the MVP conversation and has plenty of weapons, from Stefon Diggs to Nico Collins and Tank Dell. Second-year head coach DeMeco Ryans has constructed quite a nasty defense as well. I'll take Houston over Jacksonville.

AFC WEST

Easy. Barring an injury to Patrick Mahomes, the Kansas City Chiefs will win the AFC West again and will be one of the top seeds in the AFC as they go for a third straight Super Bowl. But expect the Chargers and Jim Harbaugh to make things interesting again in the AFC West sooner or later. Love him or hate him, Harbaugh's won big everywhere he's been.

NFC NORTH

Now, let's appease the home crowd. This division, along with the AFC East, promises to be the most fascinating in 2024. The Bears have a legit quarterback in Caleb Williams. The Lions return a solid core that reached the NFC Championship game last year. The Packers have another franchise quarterback

in Jordan Love and perhaps the most complete roster in the division. The Bears and Lions could both be playoff teams, but I like the Packers to bring home playoff games back to Lambeau after a brief hiatus. In fact, I could be convinced to pick them as my NFC Super Bowl team.

NFC EAST

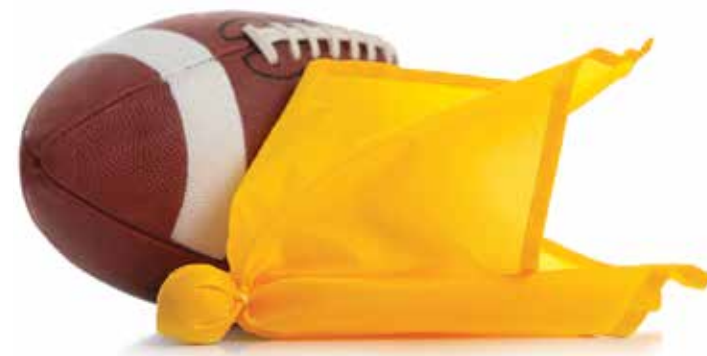
This will probably be another Dallas-Philly race, and I'll take the team with less drama. While much of the conversation around the Cowboys throughout the offseason and preseason revolved around new contracts for QB Dak Prescott and receiver CeDee Lamb, the Eagles improved an already-strong offense, adding star running back Saquon Barkley. Philadelphia endured an ugly finish last season after starting 10–1, but I don't expect that to linger. This team is too talented — QB Jalen Hurts and company will rebound in '24.

NFC WEST

Much like the AFC West, there is no reason to overthink this one. The 49ers have a strong roster from top to bottom and will be in the mix again for a top seed in the NFC. QB Brock Purdy, RB Christian McCaffrey, and a strong defense will lead the 49ers to a second straight NFC West title.

NFC SOUTH

Where does one even begin here? This is by far the most uninteresting division in football, as all four teams were merely average to very bad last season. Nobody won more than nine games; Tampa Bay won the division with that many wins. I guess I'll go with the new-look Falcons, who have the most established quarterback in the division in Kirk Cousins. They also have some intriguing weapons around him, most notably running back Bijan Robinson, a top-10 draft choice in 2023, and receiver Drake London, a 2022 first-round selection. Perhaps both will benefit from a significant QB upgrade. ■



Mike Hogan is the Athletic Communications Coordinator at St. John Fisher University. A Grafton, WI native, Mike began his professional career as a sports journalist, covering the University of Wisconsin's football and men's basketball teams for 247Sports. He also covered the Tennessee Titans as a staff reporter for AllTitans/SI.com and St. Bonaventure University's Division I men's basketball program.

Where Should My Kid Play?

BY MATT TEN HAKEN, DIRECTOR OF SPORTS MARKETING, FOX CITIES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



My role as Director of Sports Marketing for the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau allows me to have a pretty unique perspective on sports in our community. Couple that with having three daughters who are involved in a variety of activities, and I like to think I have a pretty good sense of the climate of youth sports in the Fox Cities. So, I often get asked the question, "Where Should My Kid Play?"

While that is a loaded question, the benefit that we have here is that the Fox Cities has such a rich set of sports offerings, there is literally something for all ages and skill levels. I would take the programs, teams, coaches, traditions, and venues from our YMCAs, Parks & Recreation Departments, community-based teams, and club teams over almost anywhere in the state and the country. We really have it that good here! And when kids advance into high school athletics, it's not surprising that teams in the Fox Cities are annual title contenders in essentially every WIAA sport.

Even though they are great, state championships aren't necessarily the definition of success for participation in youth sports. The process of handling challenges and successes in youth sports is hard to replicate in any other activity today, and the associated growth is truly what I believe makes having your kids in a variety of activities so important. So, where should parents look to start that path of rewarding development through sports in the Fox Cities? Here are some good options to consider:

- **All Sports Camps:** Most of the branches of the YMCA of the Fox Cities and Parks & Rec Departments around the area offer some version of a program where kids, sometimes as early as 3 or 4 years old, can try a variety of sports in short sessions for a nominal fee.

- **Summer Camps:** Whether it is through the YMCA, Parks & Rec Departments, high school teams, or club teams, there are camps in June and July for basically every activity you can think of. These are a great way to explore a new sport for a few days before committing to a full season.

- **Community Leagues:** Again, our YMCAs and Parks & Rec Departments are fantastic and offer a variety of sports leagues that allow kids to experience being on a team and growing in a sport without too much of a time or cost commitment. Also, another alternative depending on the sport and community, many high school programs have feeder teams that start as early as 2nd grade.

- **Club Teams:** When the time is right, signing up or trying out for a club team can provide a great experience at a more competitive level. Most sports have multiple club options in the area, so consider your choices by searching a listing of clubs through a state or national governing body like Badger Region Volleyball Association, Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association, or USA Swimming.

Enjoy the journey through youth sports. The days are long, but the years are short. Feel free to shoot me an email, if I can be of assistance: mtenhaken@foxcities.org. ■



Looking to plan a sporting event? *Let us help!*

Contact Matt and Abby at the Fox Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau to discuss ways we can help you plan and promote your event and possibly even help you secure grant funding support!

GREATER
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CITIES
APPLETON WI



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Your Child Has a Concussion. Now What?

BENJAMIN SIEBERT, MD, FAAPMR



When your child experiences a concussion, knowing the next steps is important to ensure the quickest recovery. Concussions, a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI), affect thousands of high school athletes each year, with up to 20% of athletes in contact sports, such as football, soccer, and lacrosse, suffering a concussion annually ^{1,2}. These injuries can have a significant impact

on the physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being of your child. It's important for parents to understand what to look for and how to support their child's recovery and return to sports.

Recognizing Concussion Symptoms

After a concussion, your child may exhibit a variety of symptoms. These symptoms often vary in severity and can last for days, weeks, or even months. Here's a helpful mnemonic device to remember key signs of a concussion:

H.E.A.D.S.

- **Headache:** Throbbing, pressure, most common symptom
- **Emotional changes:** Mood swings, anxiety, depression, or irritability
- **Attention issues:** Difficulty focusing or trouble with memory and cognitive tasks
- **Dizziness:** Balance problems or lightheadedness
- **Sensitivity:** Increased sensitivity to light, noise, or visual stimuli

If any of these symptoms worsen or persist over time, it's essential to consult a healthcare provider.

Addressing Emotional Concerns

Concussions can significantly impact your child's emotional health. Feelings of frustration, sadness, or anxiety are common. They may worry about losing their spot on the team or fear missing out on time with friends. To support your child, it's essential to maintain an open line of communication, letting them express their feelings and concerns. If emotional symptoms persist, counseling or therapy may be beneficial.

Schooling Considerations

Returning to school after a concussion may be challenging for your child, so collaborating with teachers and school administrators is important. Cognitive fatigue, or "mental fog," may hinder your child's performance, so here are a few steps to consider:

R.E.S.T.

- **Reduce workload:** Lessen assignments and give extra time for tests or homework
- **Educate teachers:** Inform them about your child's condition so they can offer accommodations

- **Schedule breaks:** Allow for frequent breaks during school hours to avoid overstimulation
- **Track progress:** Keep an eye on your child's cognitive improvements and adjust their schedule accordingly

Approach to Concussion Recovery

Treatment for concussions should focus on a balanced approach that treats each child as an individual. The latest research suggests a mix of rest and gradual reintroduction of activities after the first 48 hours or sooner if activity is tolerated. During the initial rest period, children should avoid activities that could trigger symptoms, such as screen time or vigorous physical activities. Make sure they get plenty of sleep, which is crucial for brain recovery.

After the 48-hour period, gradually increase activities, but avoid those that cause any resurgence of symptoms. Experts no longer recommend the outdated practice of waking up a concussed child every hour. Instead, allowing uninterrupted sleep is essential for healing. Slowly returning to regular physical and mental activities, including school, should be based on tolerance, paying close attention to how the child feels.

It is also important to balance rest with rehabilitation therapies, like physical or vision therapy, if symptoms persist. These personalized treatments, paired with common-sense monitoring of progress, are key to a child's full recovery. ³

Throughout your child's concussion recovery, holistic care is essential. You should collaborate with healthcare professionals and teachers to monitor their progress, adjust daily routines and schoolwork as needed. Pay close attention to your child's emotional well-being, offering support and understanding throughout the recovery process. Ensuring a healthy diet and adequate hydration are vital, as both significantly influence the brain's healing. By focusing on physical, emotional, and cognitive recovery, you can help your child get back to the activities they love. ■

1. <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/specialties/sports-medicine/sports-medicine-articles/concussions-in-sports-article>
2. <https://www.upmc.com/services/orthopaedics/conditions/concussion>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/guidelines/index.html>



Download this free reference guide, Concussions in Kids, to learn more.

Dr. Siebert is a fellowship-trained Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation physician. He leads the Summit Concussion clinic at Neuroscience Group and is an expert in concussion and Traumatic Brain Injury. He has built a comprehensive clinic with a team of skilled therapists and the latest technology. He tries to help patients focus on what they can achieve and is grateful for the unique opportunity to be involved in the lives of his patients at all stages of their conditions.

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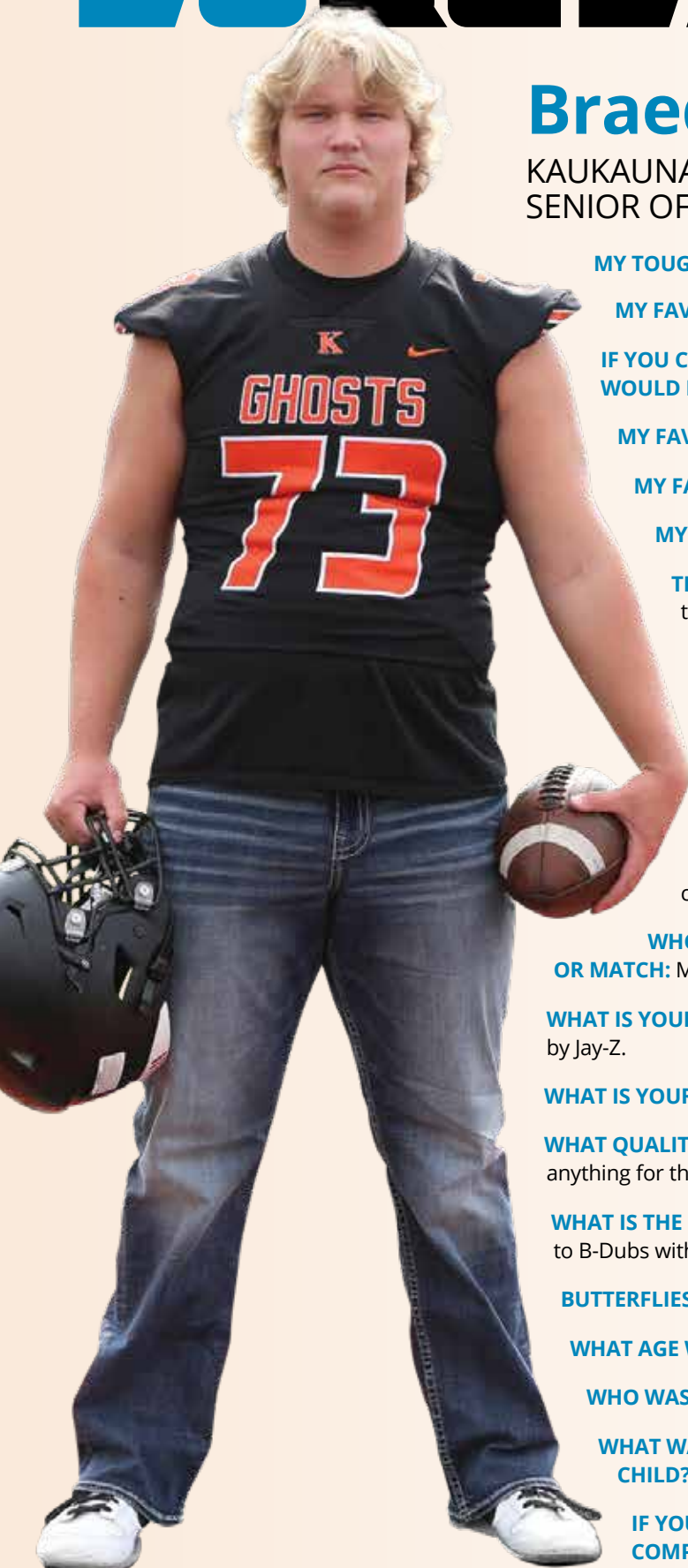


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20 QUESTIONS

Braeden Jansen

KAUKAUNA HIGH SCHOOL
SENIOR OFFENSIVE LINEMAN



MY TOUGHEST RIVAL IS: Kimberly or West De Pere.

MY FAVORITE HOME-COOKED MEAL IS: Pepper steak with onion.

IF YOU COULD PICK ONE ANIMAL TO HELP YOU WITH A FIGHT WHAT WOULD IT BE? A polar bear.

MY FAVORITE ATHLETE IS: Sean O'Malley.

MY FAVORITE TEAM IS: Green Bay Packers.

MY FAVORITE TEAM TO ROOT AGAINST IS: Chicago Bears.

THE BEST THING ABOUT MY SPORT(S) IS: The friends I've made and the adrenaline on Friday nights.

I PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE TO: Minnesota Duluth.

IN 10 YEARS I WILL BE: An engineer.

WHAT ARE TWO REASONS YOU LIKE BEING PART OF A TEAM SPORT: The connections made with teammates and the energy during games.

HOW DO YOUR TEAMMATES MAKE PRACTICE FUN: The competition everyone brings to practice everyday.

WHO DO YOU WISH WAS WATCHING YOU PERFORM AT EVERY GAME OR MATCH: My Family.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SONG TO LISTEN TO PRIOR TO COMPETING: Encore by Jay-Z.

WHAT IS YOUR SPORTS MOVIE: Southpaw.

WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A TEAMMATE A GOOD TEAM CAPTAIN: Willing to do anything for their teammates and the people around them.

WHAT IS THE ONE THING YOU ALWAYS DO AFTER A GOOD PERFORMANCE: Go to B-Dubs with my friends.

BUTTERFLIES WHILE YOU COMPETE: I pray before the game and on the sideline.

WHAT AGE WERE YOU WHEN YOU STARTED YOUR SPORT? 15.

WHO WAS YOUR ACTOR/ACTRESS CRUSH? Megan Fox in Transformers.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE HALLOWEEN COSTUME YOU WORE AS A CHILD? Captain Jack Sparrow.

IF YOU WERE AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE, WHAT SPORT WOULD YOU COMPETE IN? Curling.

A Parent's Perspective

BY JASON JANSEN



Watching High School sports can bring out a wide variety of emotions in people. It can be the queasy, anxious feeling just before the start of a big game, the excitement of a big play going your way, or the disappointment of losing to your biggest rival. But being the parent of a High School athlete will take all those emotions to a new level and makes the

experience even more memorable.

Our son Braeden is a High School Football athlete. My wife and I ride the roller coaster of emotions every time he steps on the field, but we are not alone. We've become friends with many of the players' parents over the years and enjoy the time spent together in the stands cheering on the team. It's great to be on this roller coaster together, which makes for unmatched enthusiasm when the game is progressing in our favor, as well as immense support when one of the athletes makes a slipup on the field.

Being part of a High School sports team can help create life-long lessons, such as accountability, commitment, and teamwork to mention a few. It takes hard work and dedication to play at a high level, which means putting in extra time outside of scheduled practices and open gyms. The extra trips driving to and from these training classes can be challenging to fit into our work schedules, but the time spent together in the car on those early mornings and late nights is a great time to reflect on what goals he wants to accomplish. Seeing Braeden find time to put in all the extra training while still succeeding in the classroom shows us his commitment to his academics and to his team.

An athlete will eventually need to deal with adversity at some point in time. Trying to restore Braeden's confidence in his own abilities and using the mishap as a learning tool are the end goals of the conversation, but being able to actively listen to what he has to say after a tough game/loss, without judgement, is a big part of how he can get that confidence back and help him learn what to do when the next opportunity arises.

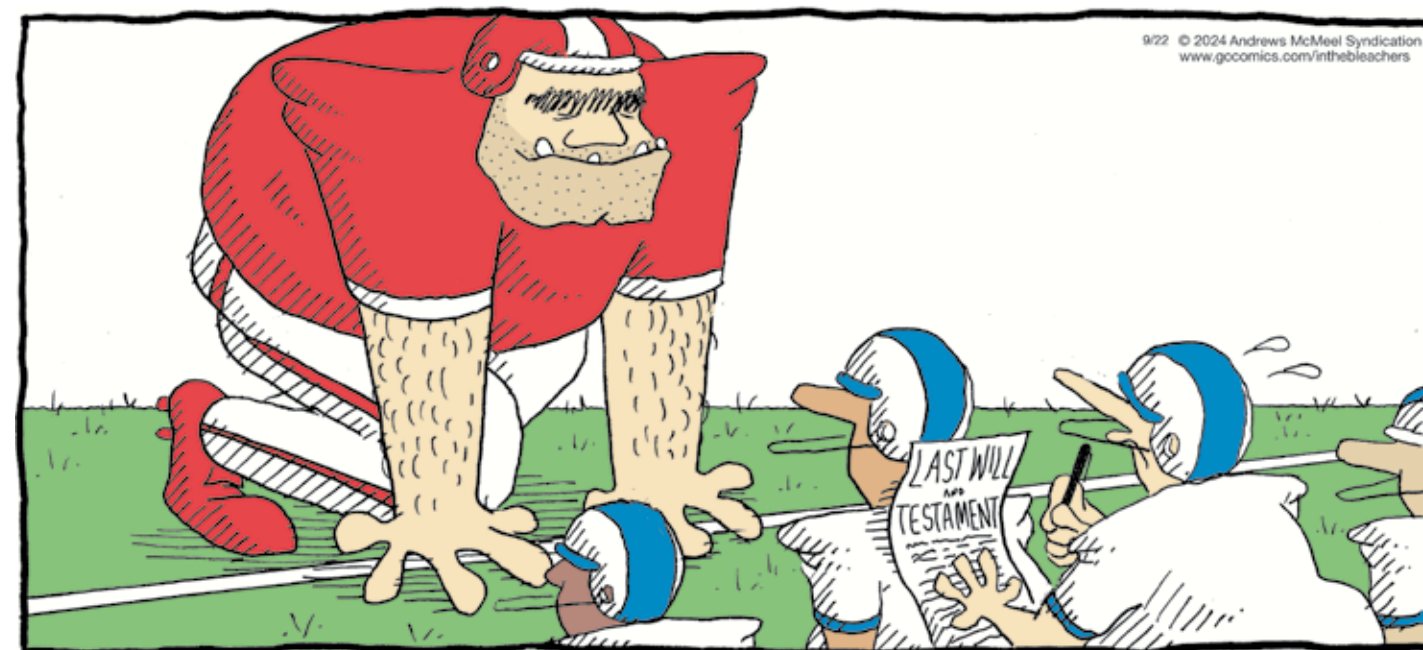
On the flip side, celebrating big victories has been so rewarding, and to see his dedication and hard work pay off is indescribable. Not so long ago there was doubt in our minds if Braeden would even be able to play any sport again.

Braeden was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of Leukemia when he was a young boy. His fight to beat this disease has shown us his will and determination to face whatever is in front of him head-on. The decision to let him play football was a tough one, and we finally gave in to his wishes Sophomore year. And we are glad we did. Seeing him interact and compete with his fellow classmates has built a lasting relationship that he will have for a lifetime and is something we will cherish as the years go by.

It has been amazing watching Braeden play football in High School and pursue his dream of playing at the collegiate level. More importantly, seeing firsthand how being part of a High School team has given him the tools for a successful future, both academically and athletically, has been rewarding in itself. My wife and I are confident that Braeden's decision to play a High School team sport has given him an advantage out in the real world, and we are excited to ride the emotional roller coaster as he continues his journey and following his dreams. ■

IN THE BLEACHERS

BY BEN ZAEHRINGER



It's All About the Challenge

BY DIANE BAST | PHOTOS BY PAUL STUMPF

Kimberly High School senior and tennis star Julia Gurholt is quick on her feet ... and just as quick to give credit to others for her success.

"I've had so many coaches and players in my life that have played a huge role in my tennis career," she says. But "I would not be where I am today without him" — "him" being her dad, Phil.

"My father taught me how to play tennis," Julia explains. "He did not play on a tennis team growing up, but he became a student of the game by watching hundreds and hundreds of hours of tennis instruction on YouTube. He was a teacher and basketball coach, so he had the skill to be my father and coach.

"He knows when to challenge me and when to listen," she continues. "He has been there for me to set up matches, work with me, and help me grow a passion for the game. It has been a lot of great Dad – daughter time to learn valuable lessons for life."

Julia has been playing tennis for 13 years, including four years at Kimberly High School. She's also played for United States Tennis Association (USTA) teams. She was on the high school track team as a freshman, but tennis is definitely "her sport."

As a senior, she's looking at colleges now. High on the list of schools she'd like to attend — and play tennis for — are Nebraska-Omaha, Northern Iowa, Winona State, Minnesota State University Mankato, Lewis University, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Indiana Wesleyan University, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

"In the near future," she says, "I will be making a decision to pursue tennis at a college that is right for me!"



SUCCESS TAKES TIME ... AND A VILLAGE

Over the years, the Valley Tennis Center (part of the Ogden YMCA) and Fox Cities Racquet Club have developed many local high school tennis players. Julia spent most of her early tennis time playing at Valley Tennis Center and Erb Park. Her dad, Phil, reports she "literally would play anybody." Julia says all those opponents helped her to become a better player, something she really appreciates.

Julia is the only female to have ever participated in the men's 4.5–5.0 (highest league) at the Valley Tennis Center ... and the last two years, she has won that league's spring season tennis tournament.

When Julia was six years old, instructor Kelly Scott — "Miss Kelly" — was instrumental in developing her interest in tennis. She also appreciates the coaches at Kimberly High School. Phil says coaches Lindsey Heinz, Rob Henshaw, Dylan Meyer and Sasha Zwiefelhofer "have gone out of their way to help Julia become a better player and person. They taught her how to be mentally tough and have been with her every step of the way in her high school tennis career."

Kris Gurholt, Julia's aunt, is the head varsity girl's tennis coach at Appleton West. She played at state in tennis and girls basketball for the Terrors in 1975–76. Kris made the first basket in the first-ever girls D1 state tournament basketball game during the inaugural girls state tournament in 1976. Julia and her Aunt Kris have spent many hours playing tennis on the hard courts of Appleton over the past 10 years.

Julia practices tennis during the summer months with brothers Aiden and Colin Meixl. The two play on the Kimberly High School boys tennis team. The boys provide great competition for

Julia: Aiden was the fifth seed at state last year and Colin, as a freshman, made it to the 16th round at state.

Julia has taken tennis lessons for several years from the boys' dad, Scott Meixl, who is a pro at Valley Tennis Center. "His sons and I grew up playing on a USTA Team Tennis team for numerous years, as long as I can remember," Julia says, "with Scott being our coach. Team Tennis memories are some of my favorites. We've even had chances to play in Indianapolis," where the Midwest USTA championships are held.

"I'm extremely grateful for my supportive family," Julia says. "My mom, who doesn't know too much about sports, has been along for the process and is always checking in on me and my wellbeing. My Aunt, grandma, and brother are always coming out to watch me play, and other family have invested lots of time supporting me." Julia says she appreciates every one of them.

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS AT LAST

Julia plays for Kimberly High School, part of the Fox Valley Association (FVA), where girls tennis started in 1974. For the first 48 years, the Kimberly girls tennis team had never won an FVA conference title.

That streak ended in 2022, Julia's sophomore year, when the Papermakers won the first of their two consecutive conference championships. Both years they were co-champions with Neenah. Although the Papermakers graduated six tennis team seniors last year, they hope to win their third conference championship in a row this fall.

Being part of a team is important even for someone who plays singles tennis.

"Although tennis is an individual sport, being on a team is such a game-changer," Julia says. "As a singles player, I'm alone with myself on the court; my only company is the mindset I have. When I hear my teammates rooting for me and others from the sidelines, I'm reminded that I'm supported, and I'm uplifted by their positivity. It takes some of the pressure off knowing I have caring teammates on my side.

"It's important to celebrate the successes of your team and teammates as your own, even when you don't win yourself," Julia says. "The best a teammate can do is be supportive and respectful of the hard work everyone puts in."

INSPIRING SUCCESS

Always supportive of her teammates, Julia is ready to take on an even stronger leadership role as a senior on the team.

"As a freshman I had a model of great leadership on the team from the seniors. Now, going into my senior season, I'm carrying forward what they did for me. I'm thankful for all the inspiring teammates I've had in my life.

"I've met so many great friends through tennis and shared unforgettable memories with all past teammates," she says.

Julia was FVA All-Conference second team at #1 singles her freshman year, then became the first tennis player in Kimberly High School history to be named two years in a row to the FVA



(Left to right) Kris Gurholt (Aunt and current Appleton West Girls Tennis Coach), Yvonne Gurholt (grandma), Julia, Phil Gurholt (father), Melissa Gurholt (mother) and Sam Gurholt (brother and current Appleton West JV Tennis Coach).



Julia posing with 95-year-old Grandma Yvonne.

All-Conference first team at #1 singles. She'll be trying for her third this year.

She is also the first tennis player in KHS history to reach the girls singles state tennis tournament as a freshman, sophomore, and junior. She was the fourth seed at last year's state tournament but lost to Lexie Hankel of Janesville Craig in the quarter-finals. Julia had defeated Hankel during the regular season, handing her her only loss besides the state championship final.

Going into her senior year, Julia's overall record is 80-18 for matches played. She has a 22-match winning streak in FVA conference play. And she's pursuing her fourth state tournament in four years.

Julia says her personal goal is simply "to be the best I can be. If I put full effort and drive into my matches, then I'm proud of whatever happens.

"My goal for this season," she says, "is to go into every match controlling my controllables, like staying focused and loose, and having a positive mindset.

"I want to appreciate and enjoy my last year of high school tennis with my teammates and friends. As a team, we are looking to pursue our third conference championship team title for the third year in a row! And I'm looking to achieve a third first team All-Conference honor at #1 singles and hoping to podium at State this year" — that means she hopes to finish in the top 6.

REACHING THE TOP

Julia admits she's "a little superstitious" as she attempts to reach her goals. "I have to use the same towel each match and wear the same socks, black hat, and wristbands ... even if it means not washing my hat for a criminally long time.

"I usually talk with my dad or coach for any last advice they have for me," she says. "I'll go for a quick jog to shake off any nerves, listen to 'Don't Stop The Music' by Rihanna, and keep positive affirmations running through my head."

She explains tennis "is a mental game more than anything. You have to learn to have confidence in your abilities, otherwise you have a slim chance at reaching your full potential. You have to learn how to not self-sabotage and stay positive.

"If I start filling my head with doubt and negativity, she says, "that's when I start missing shots and feel the pressure."

Not that pressure is an entirely bad thing.

"It's important to use pressure and treat it like a privilege," Julia says. "It shows that I'm passionate about what I'm doing. I manage the pressure and negativity by slowing down, taking deep breaths, not letting bad play affect my mindset, and reminding myself of my 'why' — meaning, why I play tennis."

OCTOBER 2024



11-year old Julia getting Grigor Dimitrov's autograph at the 2018 Rogers Cup in Toronto. Rafael Nadal is in the background.

ONE POINT AT A TIME

Sometimes, Julia admits, "I doubt myself.

"There are times when I've gone into a match initially expecting to lose, and that's one of the worst things you can do as a competitor. It's important to remind myself that in every match situation I'm put in, I'm not there by chance — it's because of the work I've put in to get there.

"I belong in every big match I play," she tells herself, "and I have just as much of a chance at winning as my opponent does. I should go into every competition believing that I can win.

"I do have to remember however, that tennis is played one point at a time. I can't worry about the final outcome as I'm playing the match."

Julia says it's important to have high goals for yourself and believe that you are capable of achieving far more than you expect. "Coach (Rob Henshaw) told me the other day, 'Be great, not good.'"

ADVICE TO SUCCEED WITH

"It isn't about the wins and losses," Julia says, "it's about trusting in yourself that you have put in the work. All the matches and competitions are opportunities to show what skills/progress I have made and enjoy doing what I love.

"It's not the losing you remember in your future, it's the lessons you take away from the losses. No matter the outcome," she reminds herself and others, "it's important to note that the people in your life are still proud of you and care about you even when things don't go your way."

The lessons she's learned through tennis carry over to all other parts of life, Julia says.

"Be yourself and stick to your ethics, regardless of others' opinions. Be who you are and you'll draw loved ones into your life who respect you for being your true self.

"It's not others' opinions that make up who you are," she says, "it's your actions and interactions with people that matter. Be conscious and empathetic for what other people are experiencing and respect who they are as well."

IS THERE LIFE OFF THE COURT?

For Julia, there is definitely life off the tennis court.

She's the senior president of KHS Student Council and one of four Link Crew Coordinators — Link Crew is a club that helps acclimate all freshmen to the high school. She was selected as one of five National Honors Society officers. She is a manager for the boys tennis team, a member of the school's Culture Crew, and a member of HOSA-Wisconsin, an organization that encourages and supports future professionals in the health care industry.

"I'm usually pretty busy during the school year," Julia says. "But when I'm not doing anything school-related, I enjoy spending time with my 95-year-old grandma. She loves going to different restaurants with my Aunt Kris, especially Uncle Mike's. I consider her to be the team's biggest fan — she comes to every match!"

Julia also enjoys spending time with friends, playing pickleball or spikeball, going thrifting, and hanging out at picnics. She likes to go "on different excursions, finding new places to eat, hike, and shop."

BUT IT ALL COMES BACK TO TENNIS

Just what is it about tennis that Julia loves so much? A lot, actually.

"It's different everyday. Whether it be the opponent's playing style, the weather, the emotions you feel, or the lessons you learn, tennis is unpredictable," she explains.

She thinks "it's cool how the result and the other person's play may not be in your control, but the effort and tenacity you put



Photo by Alyssa Sachs Photography.

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into each point is. Your mindset can change the course of the whole match. I could be down a set and a half and still have a chance to dig in/focus and come back to win the match — it is literally not over until you shake hands.

"As I watched the Boys Singles State Tennis Final this year, both singles players were exhausted and cramping. In the end, it came down to who really wanted it the most. The perseverance it takes to close out a match is so unique to tennis, and the challenge is the reason why I love the sport so much."

And then, of course, there are the relationships. "I've formed so many relationships through tennis. I've talked with and learned from many different opponents, other players at camps, coaches and other adults. It's fun going to tennis events and being able to reconnect with everyone in the tennis community.

"Because of tennis I have gained opportunities," she says, "such as going to Florida for a camp and meeting players from all around the world, going to different tennis clubs around the Midwest and playing completely different players every time, going to Indianapolis for Team Tennis Tournaments, talking to college coaches and touring colleges to continue my tennis career, teaching tennis as a counselor at camps/classes, etc."

ANY FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM?

"Dad taught me from a young age to be disciplined and if I want something, I need to work for it. If you really want to achieve something, it has to be self-drive, not from other people telling you what to do, and that's a lesson I'm very grateful to have learned from him." ■

After 35 years as senior editor for the Illinois-based Heartland Institute, Diane Bast returned to the Fox Valley and now enjoys with her husband, Joe, a retirement of bicycling, kayaking, long walks, and tennis.



ONE ON ONE



WITH APPLETON EAST HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

MARK KROMMENACKER

Mark Krommenacker has been coaching football “in some fashion,” he says, for 15 years – pretty much straight out of high school. Seven of those coaching years have been at Appleton East High School, where he was named head coach in 2018 to replace Pat Schwanke. Krommenacker is also a leadership teacher, technology coach, and track coach.

The Patriots are ranked 113th in the state by MaxPreps. The team opened its 2024–25 season with a 28–21 win over 246th-ranked Green Bay Southwest.

What is your coaching background? I have always loved football, but I tore my ACL before my senior season in high school, so I got into coaching even sooner than I planned. I pretty much started coaching right after graduating high school. I was helping coach the 8th grade team in Wisconsin Rapids. I coached JV football in Wisconsin Rapids, then on to Rib Lake/Prentice with their JV team, and then I became the varsity coach there, taking over from Kevin Weiss for three years.

In 2018 I came to Appleton East, taking over for East Hall of Fame Coach Pat Schwanke. I’m obsessed with football because it’s fun, and there’s no other opportunity to gain the leadership and toughness real-life skills that football teaches. The guys I played football with are still my best friends today. It’s hard to build those types of bonds anywhere else.

What is your coaching philosophy? Everything starts with leaders. The leaders create the culture on a team. My philosophy is to maximize the genetic potential of our players mentally and physically. I

BY DIANE BAST
PHOTOS BY PAUL STUMPF

want to create relationships, memories, and experiences that they will remember forever. I’ll do anything to try and create positive experiences for our players, even if that means dressing up as Stone Cold Steve Austin and dishing out Stunners to our coaches.

Being Uncommon is one of our core beliefs. We have a system for winning every day. It’s not going to be easy, but we want to be elite. We define elite as “the best version of yourself.” That’s something that is totally within our control.

You can either be better than, less than, or different than, and because a lot of those things are out of our control, we choose to be different than.

What does the team do in training that are keys to success? I love speed training. I help out coaching the sprinters for East’s track team, so I carry that over to football: We do a lot of sprinting, timing with our laser system, and recording and ranking their times. We give shirts and stickers as recognition for our Fast Catz.

Football is a contact sport, so we also do a lot of “contact prep.” That’s why wrestlers are always such good football players, because they use their body and leverage so well.

This summer we had a unique opportunity while our weight room was being torn down and built back up into one of the best in the area. We created our own “Iron Paradise” outdoor weight room. There’s no better way to start your day than the sun coming up while you’re getting after it with

Coach K. with his daughter Hadley.

your brothers in the squat racks. We look forward to continuing to use the IP this fall.

How do you encourage the team after a disappointing loss? There are so many things we can’t control in life. If we could completely control all our outcomes in life, things would be pretty easy; we’d have all the money and we’d win every game. But that’s not how life works.

We play in the Fox Valley Association, the toughest football conference in the state. We can control our Response to whatever happens to us. We can choose to WIN every day. For us, WINning means we do What’s Important Now. It’s up to us if we go to bed at night a WINner. That’s why we don’t make goals involving the scoreboard or having a certain record, because that would mean you’re a loser if you don’t reach that goal. We do not allow losers here. We CAN control being the best version of ourselves.

What was your proudest coaching moment? I like seeing our guys use the skills and behaviors we talk about so much in football in their life off the field. Whether it’s becoming a leader in a different area, excelling in other sports, seeing them become coaches themselves, seeing them get into reading good books on their own, or watching them serve others – all of these describe what leadership is.

I get the chance to impact more than 100 guys each season, playing a role in turning them into real men. If we can build skills

in discipline, leadership, and toughness, they are going to make Appleton East High School, and beyond, a better place.

What is the biggest life lesson you’ve learned from being a coach? Something I learned up in Rib Lake was from a guy named Tim Kight, who just passed away this year after battling cancer for several years. After working with teams like Ohio State football, he would still lead a conference in Westboro, Wisconsin at Camp Forest Springs.

Tim introduced me to E+R=O. Event + Response = Outcome. We can’t control events, and we can’t completely control the outcomes, but our Response is always up to us. It’s not always fair at times. But especially for those who want to be leaders for their peers, students, or family, the most important choices and Responses will be made after the toughest events.

We call it “the Edge,” when our talent runs out and adversity hits. It’s inevitably going to happen, so it’s up to us to build the skills and make the choices that win.

What legacy do you hope to leave as a coach? Legacy is something we talk a lot about at East. Our mission every day is to “leave this place better.” I don’t care if that means picking up a granola bar wrapper in the hallway, or being the example of what hard work looks like in the weight room, we are defined by our actions. Life is about choices. We just want to be the best version of ourselves and choose to WIN every single day. ■

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Movie Reviews

Sports Movies That Score Big on Heart and Action

◀◀ Wimbledon

"Wimbledon" (2004) serves up a delightful mix of romance and sports, with Paul Bettany and Kirsten Dunst delivering charming performances. Bettany plays Peter Colt, a once-promising tennis star struggling with the twilight of his career. When he meets Lizzie Bradbury, played with infectious energy by Dunst, a rising star in the tennis world, their worlds collide in a blend of romance and competition.

The film's strength lies in its ability to balance the high-stakes tension of tennis with the heartwarming elements of a romantic comedy. Bettany's portrayal of Peter is both endearing and relatable, capturing the vulnerability of a fading athlete with wit and sincerity. Dunst's Lizzie, on the other hand, brings a fresh, competitive spirit to the screen, creating a dynamic chemistry between the two leads.

While the plot follows a predictable trajectory, the charm of "Wimbledon" lies in its execution rather than its originality. The film delivers a feel-good narrative with a satisfying mix of humor, romance, and sports drama. It's a pleasant watch for anyone who enjoys a lighthearted love story set against the backdrop of competitive tennis. Overall, it's an engaging, heartwarming romp that hits all the right notes for a romantic comedy. ■

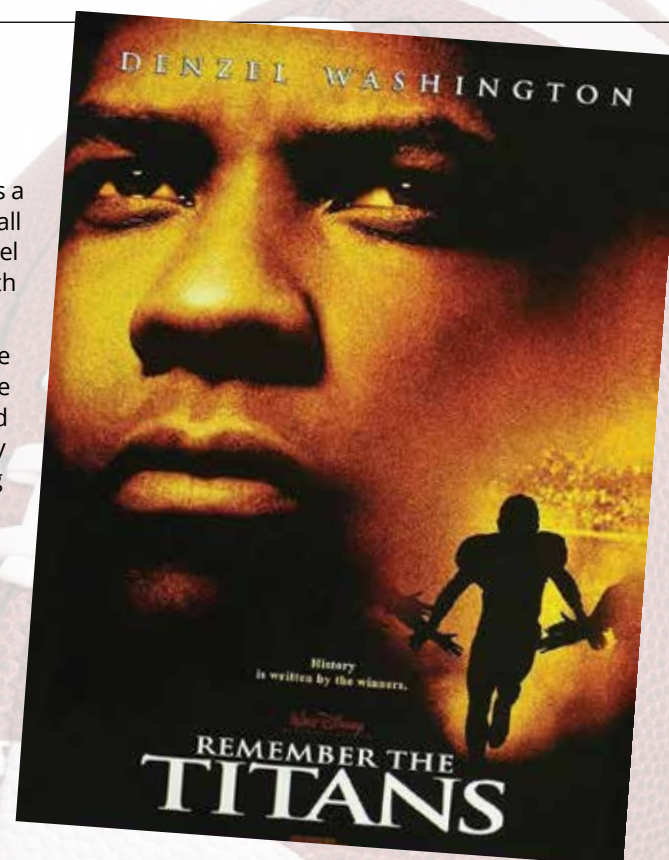


Remember the Titans ▶▶

"Remember the Titans," directed by Boaz Yakin and released in 2000, is a powerful sports drama based on the true story of a high school football team in Alexandria, Virginia, during the early 1970s. The film stars Denzel Washington as Herman Boone, an African American coach tasked with leading a newly integrated team at T.C. Williams High School.

The film explores themes of racism, teamwork, and leadership as Boone and his assistant coach, Bill Yoast (played by Will Patton), navigate the challenges of integrating their squad amidst a racially charged atmosphere. Despite initial resistance and tension, the team gradually overcomes their prejudices and learns to work together, culminating in a successful and emotionally charged football season.

"Remember the Titans" is acclaimed for its inspiring message and strong performances, particularly from Washington, whose portrayal of Coach Boone is both commanding and empathetic. The film not only highlights the transformative power of sports but also serves as a poignant reminder of the societal shifts occurring during the era. Through its blend of historical context and dramatic storytelling, "Remember the Titans" remains a resonant and uplifting film that continues to engage and inspire audiences. ■



THIS MONTH IN SPORTS HISTORY

OCTOBER 1, 1960 14th NHL All-Star Game, Montreal Forum, Montreal, QC: All-Stars beat Montreal Canadiens, 2-1

OCTOBER 2, 1920 Cincinnati Reds and Pittsburgh Pirates play first and only MLB triple header in the 20th century; Reds win the first two games, 13-4 and 7-3; Pirates avoid the sweep in the finale, 6-0

OCTOBER 3, 1919 Cuban Dolf Luque becomes first Hispanic player to appear in Baseball World Series; pitches 1 inning of relief in Cincinnati Reds' 0-3 loss to Chicago White Sox

OCTOBER 5, 1950 Boston Celtics owner Walter Brown and coach Red Auerbach draw lots out of hat for 3 members of defunct Chicago Stags franchise; hit jackpot with future 6-time NBA champion, Bob Cousy

OCTOBER 7, 1962 LPGA Championship Women's Golf, Stardust Country Club and Las Vegas: Judy Kimball wins her only major title by 4 strokes ahead of runner-up Shirley Spork

OCTOBER 11, 1923 A pair of Babe Ruth home runs in the 4th and 5th innings is the difference; NY Yankees beat NY Giants, 4-2 at the Polo Grounds to tie World Series, 1-1

OCTOBER 15, 1917 Baseball World Series: Chicago White Sox beat NY Giants, 4-2 at Brush Stadium to clinch series, 4-2 for their second World Series triumph

OCTOBER 18, 1964 Australian swimmer Kevin Berry sets world record 2:06.6 to beat American Carl Robie by 0.9s and win the men's 200m backstroke gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics

OCTOBER 19, 1974 Australian tennis star Evonne Goolagong wins her first WTA Tour Championship; beats Chris Evert 6-3, 6-4 in the final at the Los Angeles Sports Arena



OCTOBER 21, 1956 Billy Howton of the Green Bay Packers catches seven passes for 257 yards and two touchdowns in a 42-17 victory over the Los Angeles Rams

OCTOBER 24, 1857 Recognized by FIFA as oldest existing club still playing football in the world, Sheffield FC is founded in Yorkshire, England; now based in Dronfield, Derbyshire

OCTOBER 27, 2022 Emmitt Smith became the NFL's all-time leading rusher, breaking Walter Payton's record 16,726 yards

OCTOBER 28, 1950 Pat Brody, the punter for the University of Nevada, etched his name into NCAA history by launching a punt that traveled an astonishing 99 yards, setting an NCAA record that remains an impressive feat to this day

OCTOBER 30, 1945 Branch Rickey signs Jackie Robinson to a contract with the Montreal Royals, the top minor league affiliate of the Brooklyn Dodgers

OCTOBER 31, 1988 First Monday Night NFL game played in Indianapolis; Colts beat Denver Broncos, 55-23 ■

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Pain In the Neck?

BY STEPHANIE OGDEN, DPT



What's that new pain in the neck you've had lately?

In today's digital age, where screens dominate our daily lives, a new health concern has emerged: tech neck. This term refers to the neck pain and discomfort that result from prolonged use of digital devices.

As technology continues to advance and integrate into every aspect of our lives, understanding tech neck, its risks, and ways to manage it is crucial for maintaining our overall well-being.

What Is Tech Neck?

Tech neck, also known as text neck, is a condition characterized by discomfort or pain in the neck and upper back caused by the prolonged forward head posture associated with using smartphones, tablets, and computers. This posture typically involves tilting the head forward and down while staring at screens, which places excessive strain on the cervical spine (the neck region) and surrounding muscles. Symptoms may include pain, stiffness, muscle tightness, headaches, or numbness and tingling in one or both hands.

The Dangers of Tech Neck

The risks associated with tech neck are multifaceted and can have both immediate and long-term effects on health:

- 1. Musculoskeletal Pain:** According to a 2019 study published in BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine, an estimated 79% of adults report experiencing musculoskeletal pain related to their device use, with the neck being one of the most commonly affected areas (Garg et al., 2019). The constant strain on neck muscles, ligaments, and vertebrae can result in stiffness, soreness, and tension. This can extend to the shoulders, upper back, and even down to your fingers.
- 2. Postural Changes:** Over time, tech neck can lead to poor posture habits. The forward head position can disrupt the natural curvature of the spine, contributing to a condition known as "kyphosis," where the upper back becomes excessively rounded. Research published in the Journal of Physical Therapy Science found that prolonged forward head posture can lead to significant changes in spinal alignment (Kim et al., 2017). This misalignment can lead to further discomfort and complications down the road.
- 3. Increased Risk of Disc Problems:** The excessive pressure placed on the cervical discs from a forward head posture can contribute to herniated or bulging discs. A 2020 review in The Spine Journal found that repetitive strain from poor posture significantly increases the risk of cervical disc degeneration (Wipperfman & Goerl, 2020). This can result in nerve compression, leading to pain radiating down the arms and into the hands. Over time, this issue can become serious and require surgical intervention.
- 4. Decreased Mobility:** Chronic tech neck can reduce the flexibility and range of motion in the neck. According to a 2021 study

published in Frontiers in Neurology, individuals with tech neck report decreased cervical spine mobility, which can affect daily activities and reduce overall quality of life (Kumar et al., 2021). Imagine trying to check your blind spot while driving with a head that turns only halfway—sounds like a recipe for disaster, right?



- 5. Impact on Mental Health:** Persistent pain and discomfort can also have psychological effects. A study in The Journal of Clinical Psychology highlighted that chronic pain, including that from tech neck, can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and depression (Hoffman et al., 2021). It's not just your neck that's feeling the strain; your mood might take a hit as well.

How to Treat Tech Neck

Fortunately, tech neck is manageable with the right approach. Here are some effective strategies to treat and prevent this condition without surgery:

- 1. Improve Posture:** One of the most effective ways to combat tech neck is to be mindful of your posture. When using digital devices, try to keep the screen at eye level to reduce the need to tilt your head forward or down. Sit with your back straight, shoulders relaxed, and feet flat on the floor. Channel your inner statue—minus the marble, of course.
- 2. Take Frequent Breaks:** Implement the 20-20-20 rule to reduce strain. Every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away. This helps to relieve eye strain and reminds you to adjust your posture. It's like setting a mini alarm to remind yourself to live life beyond the screen.

- 3. Exercise and Stretch:** Incorporate neck and upper back exercises into your daily routine. Gentle stretches and strengthening exercises can alleviate muscle tension and improve flexibility. Some beneficial exercises include neck stretches, shoulder rolls, and chin tucks. Think of that forward flexed posture, then focus on stretching those tight muscles by stretching them in the opposite direction: head back, chin back, shoulders back.

- 4. Ergonomic Adjustments:** Ensure your workstation is set up ergonomically. Use a chair with proper lumbar support, position your screen at eye level, and use a keyboard and mouse that allow your arms to rest comfortably. An ergonomic setup reduces the strain on your neck and shoulders.

- 5. Heat and Cold Therapy:** Applying heat or cold packs to the affected area can provide temporary relief. Heat helps to relax tense muscles, while cold packs can reduce inflammation and numb pain. It's like giving your neck a warm hug—or a frosty kiss, depending on what you're in the mood for.

- 6. Professional Help:** If tech neck persists despite self-care measures, professional help might be necessary. A physical therapist can provide targeted exercises and treatments to address the specific issues related to tech neck. In more severe cases, a chiropractor or orthopedic specialist might be consulted.

- 7. Mindfulness and Stress Management:** Since stress can exacerbate pain, practicing mindfulness techniques such as meditation or deep breathing can help manage the

psychological aspects of tech neck. Picture yourself on a serene beach—without your phone, of course.

Tech neck is a growing concern in our tech-centered world, but understanding its causes and taking preventative measures can significantly mitigate its impact. By improving posture, taking regular breaks, engaging in physical exercise, and making ergonomic adjustments, individuals can reduce their risk of tech neck and maintain better overall spinal health.

As technology continues to evolve, remaining vigilant about our physical well-being is essential for ensuring a healthier, more balanced lifestyle. And remember, no matter how tempting it is, your neck will thank you for occasionally looking up from your screen! ■

Stephanie Ogden is a home health physical therapist in Pennsylvania. Like most others in her field, she found her passion for physical therapy after having an injury during her childhood that required PT for rehabilitation. She earned her bachelor's degree from Slippery Rock University in Exercise Science. Then attended graduate school at Gannon University, where she received her Doctorate in Physical Therapy. Stephanie has worked in a variety of settings, including outpatient, inpatient rehab, and skilled nursing facilities, but ultimately fell in love with the home health setting. Her daily life is hectic, raising two kids with her husband. In her free time, she enjoys home renovation projects and lives by the motto if you don't use it, you lose it!

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~ Phil Jackson

Rayanna Jenkins, Menasha Bluejays volleyball celebrates with her teammates

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PARTING SHOTS

