

NOV25

— Fox Cities — SPORTS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

AUTUMN CROWE
ST. MARY CATHOLIC
GIRLS' BASKETBALL

MODESTE ROUAMBA
XAVIER BOYS
SOCCER COACH

ABBIE HINTZ
APPLETON EAST
SWIMMING

**In Every Game,
I'll Either Win...
or Learn**

Xavier John

Menasha High School
and Power 5 AAU
Basketball

Cover photo By
Paul Stumpf,
P.S. Portraits

FREE!



NOVEMBER 2025 PROMO SCHEDULE

*ALL TIMES AND PROMOTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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SATURDAY NOVEMBER 1 6:05PM

Kids Trick or Treat / Family Night / Skate With

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 14 7:05PM

TBD

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15 6:05PM

Heavy Metal Night / Bud Night / Post Game Concert
with Master of Puppets

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 26 7:05PM

Whiteout Night / Bud Night

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 28 7:05PM

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SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29 6:05PM

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From the Editor



Happy November, readers! It's my favorite month of the year ... and not only because it's my birthday month! November is all about giving thanks, and we have MUCH to give thanks for here at *Fox Cities Sports* magazine.

We are, for example, thankful for our new partnership with the Appleton Historical Society, whose volunteers will be writing our new Sports Replay column. See the first installment on page 29, written by Laura Kostelnik Biskupic, daughter of Ron and Peggy Kostelnik. Our more seasoned readers may recognize Ron as a Super Bowl champion with the Packers in the 1960s. The new football exhibit at the Historical Society Museum features a replica of his locker!

We're also thankful for reader Tammy Ebben, who offered to write an article on the college recruiting process that she and her daughter are going through. See Tammy's helpful article on pages 30 and 31—and be sure to let us know if YOU have ideas for stories we should include in future issues! Contact Publisher Dale Ver Voort at dale@foxcitiessports.com, and he'll follow up.

This month's featured student-athlete, Xavier John of Menasha Bluejays basketball, recounts a life lesson that we can all appreciate: "[T]here are things that I can control and things that I can't—and I should have my focus on the things that are within my control." This 14-year-old is definitely wise beyond his years!

Our 20 Questions student, the appropriately named Autumn Crowe, plays basketball for St. Mary Catholic. Her dad, Brian, offers a Parent's Perspective. We also shine a spotlight on Appleton East swimmer Abbey Hintz.

As editor of *Fox Cities Sports*, I am especially thankful for our talented photographer, Paul Stumpf; our two excellent writers, Nicole Campuzano and Greg Seubert; advertising rep Mike Howell; and our advertisers. This magazine would not be possible without their hard work and support.

For this issue, Nicole profiles 74-year-old Carlos Munoz, who is chasing after a big goal: to run a 5K in every state! And Greg introduces us to the Waupaca Learn to Hunt program, which aims to offer first-time hunters a positive and educational turkey hunting experience.

Finally, I'm thankful to Dale for giving me this opportunity, and especially to you, our readers, who have welcomed *Fox Cities Sports* so warmly. The community's support for high school athletics is something we can all be proud of ... and thankful for. ■

Diane

NOVEMBER 2025

—Fox Cities— SPORTS

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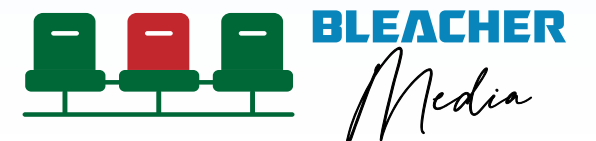
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Have feedback, ideas or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of each month prior. Email your thoughts, ideas and photos to:
dale@foxcitiessports.com.

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HOMES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

MLS #	STATUS	LISTING TYPE	LIST PRICE	ADDRESS	MUNICIPALITY	SCHOOL DISTRICT
50305990	Active - No Offer	Single Family Home	\$799,000	N4455 Dorothy Jane Ct.	Kaukauna	Kaukauna
4 bed, 3.5 bath, 3 car, 4668 sq ft, 3.03 acres, built 1995						
50306466	Active - No Offer	Commercial	\$249,900	21 W Arndt St.	Fond du Lac	Fond du Lac
Commercial listing - 15,000 sq ft, built 1918						
50313225	Active - No Offer	Single Family Home	\$250,000	7621 Widgeon Ln.	Larsen	Winneconne
2 bed, 1 bath, 0 car, 480 sq ft, .14 acres, built 1955						
50313959	Active - No Offer	Single Family Home	\$379,000	2530 Grassy Ln.	Neenah	Neenah
4 bed, 3 bath, 2 car, 2070 sq ft, .18 acres, built 2005						
50314487	Active - No Offer	Single Family Home	\$394,900	W6506 E Steamboat Ln.	Appleton	Appleton
3 bed, 2.5 bath, 2 car, 1809 sq ft, .34 acres, built 2024						
50315033	Active - No Offer	Single Family Home	\$309,900	750 Wanda Ave.	Neenah	Neenah
3 bed, 2 bath, 2 car, 1362 sq ft, .37 acres, built 1976						
50315839	Active - No Offer	Single Family Home	\$300,000	1025 W Roberts Ave.	Appleton	Appleton
3 bed, 1 bath, 1.5 car, 1397 sq ft, .15 acres, built 1969						
50315995	Active - No Offer	Single Family Home	\$294,900	521 W Seneca Dr.	Appleton	Appleton
3 bed, 2 bath, 3 car, 1378 sq ft, .33 acres, built 1962						

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Photo by Paul Stumpf



12-15 XAVIER JOHN

"There are a lot of people who try to build themselves up by cutting others down. It's unfortunate, but some people would rather do that than put in the work that it takes to make themselves into the players that they would like to become."

SPORTS IN THE FOX CITIES: SO MANY REASONS TO BE THANKFUL

With the quantity and quality of venues, sports programs, and most importantly people we have here in the Fox Cities, we have so much to be thankful for.



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ONE ON ONE WITH MODESTE ROUAMBA

"Above all, I want players to remember that I cared about them as individuals."

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18-19 CREATING MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENTS THROUGH THE STS FOUNDATION

Exchange students who come to America gain many cultural experiences regarding our traditions, foods, the arts, language, and of course, sports.



Invest in Muscle Mass for Your Future Self

BY PAULA BRUSKY, PHD | PHOTO BY DEBBIE DAANEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Unless you've been living on Mars, you've probably heard that exercise is critical to your health. You know that you "should" work out. You've been told that endorphins are a better anti-depressant than pharmaceuticals. You've been told that exercise improves cardiovascular health by lowering blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels, decreasing your risk of heart attack and diabetes. During covid you were told often that exercise improves your immune system and reduces your risk of illness. There are so many health benefits to exercising and you know you "should" do it ... but you just don't have the time or money or time or interest or time.

The problem with not exercising, according to the newest research, is you are robbing your FUTURE SELF of

time. The length, as well as the quality, of your future will be partially decided by what you do today. Exercise now—specifically strength training—will give your body muscle mass to start with as natural attrition begins. Just like your retirement accounts, what you put into it today is what you will be able to draw from in the future. Either you make time today for strength training or you diminish the quality of time in your future.

As the owner of two fitness studios for women, I've researched extensively longevity in women and the effects of exercise on both your current health and long-term health. For women, after the age of 35ish (yes, 35ish, so for most readers, it's already started) your body starts to shed muscle mass naturally; up to 5% per decade of muscle mass loss occurs naturally if no active counteracting happens. It is CRITICAL that in your 30s, 40s, and 50s you consciously build muscle mass to offset the natural loss and hopefully gain muscle mass to change the curve shape. Your actions in these critical years will decide if you are a 70-year-old woman with a hunch back who needs assisted living or a 70-year-old woman who is independent and able to play on the floor with your grandkids.

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If you're like most women reading this, you've probably heard about the weighted vest craze and the need for weightlifting, but you push back because you don't want to lift weights. You don't want to go to the gym to pick things up and put them down next to some dude whose grunting makes you wildly uncomfortable. The good news is that this isn't the only way to build muscle; find an activity that is weight-bearing, like pole or aerial, and build muscle mass through an activity that is enjoyable to you.

For women, finding an activity that builds consistent strength is critical to long-term health. We aren't talking about doing the new fitness trend class for a year and then looking for something else to entertain you. Exercise isn't entertainment; it can't be a quick fix and fad-chasing activity. We are talking about finding an activity that will be part of your life long-term; an activity that will challenge you and keep moving the bar up so you keep stressing your body and growing muscle year over year. If you are switching fitness activities frequently, you are chasing a quick result rather than building a foundation to keep building on.

In your hunt for a body weight activity that adds proper consistent stress to create muscle, don't discredit the importance of community. You need to like the activity enough to keep showing up, but in my opinion, the more important aspect is finding an environment and the people there who you like enough to keep showing up for. Finding a studio or gym where you look forward to seeing your friends serves as a social connection as well as a muscle-building time, and that will make you 1,000% more likely to stick with your workouts for the long term. As our culture becomes more and more reliant on AI and screens, we need human interaction; exercise should be a space where you can super-charge your health by gaining connection and muscle at the same time. When you look at exercise through that lens, you may find it easier to make the time and invest the money to consistently show up to a studio for years.

"Years" sounds daunting. But according to research, a consistent life-long strength program is your best ally in creating a healthy old age, an active old age, an old age that you actually want to live in. Every day you deposit now into your muscle health fund gives you the option to survive and thrive through the biological withdrawals in your future.

Make the effort to find an activity and community that will do life with you. By investing the time now to create the habit of strength training and develop the lifestyle that includes consistent exercise with a group of people you enjoy, you are giving your future self the best chance to be healthy and active. Right now, today, tomorrow, you are deciding what health your future self will have. As hard as it is to make the time and spend the money, your future self is counting on you to make big investments in your muscle mass in your 30s, 40s, and 50s so she can enjoy her 60s, 70s, and 80s. ■



Paula Brusky, PhD is the founder of Aerial Dance. With locations in Appleton and De Pere, this sanctuary for adult women offers Pole Fitness, Aerial Hoop, Aerial Hammock, Aerial Silks, and group fitness classes as well as social activities like Book Club. For more information go to www.AerialDanceWi.com or call 920-750-1441.

Sports in the Fox Cities: So Many Reasons to Be Thankful

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



Sporting activities generate so many emotions within us. Whether as a player, coach, or fan, we have all felt the tidal wave of emotions that can come from tournaments, games, and even practices. But, during this month of November, I would like to take a step back from the highs and lows of sports and write about thankfulness.

With the quantity and quality of venues, sports programs, and most importantly people we have here in the Fox Cities, we have so much to be thankful for.

For the past 15 years, I have had the good fortune to travel around the nation multiple times per year to experience, learn about, discuss, and promote the business of sports. Nearly all of these trips lead me to reflect on how good we have it here in the Fox Cities and how we should be grateful for the sports scene we have. When I am on the road, I often experience and hear from individuals from other communities with a greater population, bigger budgets, or a more tropical destination, who wish they had what we have.

From small to large, the facilities and venues in the 19 communities that we classify as the Fox Cities are some of the best of the country in a community with a population of around 250,000. That isn't hyperbole. There is actually a national index

that ranks sporting venues in communities, and we are #3 in the country for comparable cities. Just trying to write about all the great facilities and parks we have is too long for this article. But we should be thankful for not only the great venues we can utilize, but the people who pour their hearts and souls into making sure they are clean, modern, and operated at a high level.

Great venues are of little use without great programming. There are so many individuals, businesses, and non-profits that run great programs in the Fox Cities for athletes who are young and old, experienced and not, talented or just beginning. It starts with our extensive collection of park and recreation programs and the YMCA of the Fox Cities and then goes to school-associated programs, club travel teams, and everything in between. The tradition of excellent program offerings has a long history here, and it is carried on today by hundreds of dedicated individuals, many doing it as volunteers.

And finally, these venues and programs don't have any games to host if it weren't for hundreds of officials, coaches, trainers, and support staff. Even though we have many dedicated individuals in the Fox Cities who help make for great sporting events, there is always room for more! Remember to thank all the people who dedicate their time to making sports in the Fox Cities as great as it is, but please also consider how you can lend your time and talent to make it even better! ■



Photo Credit: Chad Mazur

Looking to plan a tournament? *Let us help!*

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An Old Car with Low Miles

BY NICOLE CAMPUZANO | PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Starting a new hobby later in life is a common goal for many people, but becoming a runner at the age of 59 seems like a mighty fierce dream to strive for.

In 2010, that's exactly what Carlos Munoz decided to do. Since then, the now-74-year-old has achieved his goal of becoming a runner by accomplishing a number of impressive feats, and he says he's not done yet!



Brooklyn, New York
May 25, 2025

Munoz, who was born in Camargo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, ran his first race in 2010. It was a two-mile race, but he explains that it was a priceless experience because he was able to run it with his family. Since then, Munoz's four children and his fiancé, Gracie Mielke, often travel along with him to various races that he competes in to show their support by cheering him on.

Though Munoz was new to the running scene, he was already a veteran athlete.

Over the years, he has participated in baseball, softball, and martial arts. One of the accomplishments that he is most proud of was winning the 1989 Grand Championship in the sparring division in Taekwondo at the finals tournament. At that time, Munoz was about 36 years old and felt a bit nervous about going up against a younger competitor. "I had to go against a young man who was very good, and even I always picked him to win the tournament. So when I found out I was going to go against him, I didn't think I had a chance, but my hard training paid off, and I ended up winning the tournament," Munoz recalls. Clearly, age is just a number for this athlete.

Back in 2010, he started out by simply walking. That evolved into running a couple of blocks at a time. Soon, he was running farther and farther distances. When Munoz retired in 2017 from his 35-year career at the Oshkosh Corporation, he was looking to find a sport through which he could keep himself physically fit while having the freedom to participate on his own time.

Running proved to be the perfect blend of fitness and freedom for him. Although beginning running might be challenging for some people, Munoz explains that he was in pretty good shape by the time he retired. "It was like when your grandma dies and she has an old car with low miles sitting in the garage. I had low miles on my legs. My legs are fresher than many people's. I am an old car with low miles," Munoz jokes.



Wisconsin Master Games
2025



With grandson David Munoz.
Their first run together at Reach
the Peak in Mt. Morris, WI

Since then, he has put a lot more miles on those legs. When asked how many 5k's he has run, Munoz answers, "Many, many; too many to count." In fact, he has run races all over the country. He set himself the goal of running a 5k in all 50 states. So far, he's completed races in 29 of them. He was making great progress until the pandemic hit in 2020, when racing events came to a crashing halt.

"When I couldn't run in 2020, 2021, [and] 2022 because of the pandemic, it kind of frustrated me because I had set a goal to run a 5K in all 50 states of the USA, and that put me behind by three years. But I didn't let that bother me; I just kept on training to be ready for when the road runs started again. I kept on working towards my goal of completing the 50 states," Munoz says.

To make up for lost time when he was finally able to get back to working towards his goal, he created a new system for choosing which races he would run in. Using the website, Running in the USA, he researches different race locations that are relatively close to one another as a way to optimize his time. "When I was able to continue with my runs, I implemented a system of running multiple states in a weekend to catch up. I scheduled these runs mostly on holiday weekends, when I can connect two or three states that are not more than 3 or 4 hours away from each other. I finish my run in one state, [then] drive to my next state and run the following day," he explains.

In addition to running 5k's, Munoz has also competed in the Wisconsin Master Games of the Senior Olympics. The National Senior Olympic Games began in 1969 with events in all 50 states. Munoz says, "It's an awesome event because you can go and run and meet people at all ages. Older people who don't take age as an excuse not to get involved. You'd better be in good shape, because many people are in very good shape."

He went on to describe a running snafu he dealt with a few years ago. "I trained for four months to run an event in Florida, and the Monday before the event, I got hurt. I couldn't run. I talked to people in a running club, and this girl who was an amazing runner. She asked if I was hydrating enough. I realized that was probably the problem." Munoz went on to add, "You get hooked on running, and you meet all these amazing people."

In the most recent Senior Olympics, he ran the 400 meter race with a time of 1:18:15 (5:68 seconds faster than his time when he ran the same event two years ago). He also ran the 200 meter race for the first time with a time of 35:48 seconds. Additionally, he has competed in the 800 and 1500 meter runs over the years, dating back to about 2017. Munoz is proud to say that he has won every single event that he has participated in so far.

Most recently, Munoz and his team won the Relay Award from the Fox Cities Marathon. His team took second place in the male overall division, and fourth place overall. "There were 52 teams, and we have three people over 70 on our team," Munoz explains proudly.

Munoz says that, to maintain his fitness and train for upcoming events, he runs every other day. Some of his favorite routes are the River Walk in Oshkosh and the hills in Fond du Lac. Sometimes he runs with others, but most often, he runs individually. He also does cross training to maintain his upper body, core, and legs. He tries to take a day of total rest, as well.

When asked what advice he would give to anyone who is a bit older and thinking about starting a new sport or fitness routine, Munoz says, "My advice is you are never too old to start any kind of physical activity to maintain your body and mind. I chose running without knowing that running is one of the most complete sports to keep you fit. When you take on running, you don't just step out the door and start running; you need to warm up and stretch before you go out. When you are a runner, you condition your entire body to avoid getting hurt."

When asked what his future goals are once he has finished running in all 50 states, he answered jovially, "Good question! I hope I will still be alive!" His next 5k's are scheduled for February of 2026, when he will be competing in North and South Carolina. Munoz is proof that you really are never too old to take on a new challenge and run toward your goals. ■



Nicole Campuzano is an Antigo, Wisconsin native. She earned her bachelor's degree in English Education from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She taught high school English Language Arts for several years. She and her family recently relocated to the Fox Valley, where they are enjoying the many exciting opportunities the area has to offer.

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20 QUESTIONS

AUTUMN CROWE

JUNIOR, ST. MARY CATHOLIC
VOLLEYBALL AND BASKETBALL

MY TOUGHEST RIVAL IS: Manitowoc Lutheran, for both basketball and volleyball

SOMETHING THAT WOULD SURPRISE PEOPLE ABOUT ME IS: My volleyball and basketball coaches at St. Mary Catholic also coached my mom when she was in high school—it's something that makes SMC feel like family

MY FAVORITE HOME-COOKED MEAL IS: Tacos

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT MY SCHOOL IS: I truly love the school community I'm part of. Families, students, coaches, and staff all work together, building a support system that helps us grow not only in academics and athletics, but also socially

MY FAVORITE TEAM IS: Milwaukee Bucks

THE BEST THING ABOUT MY SPORT(S) IS: Basketball is fast-paced and a lot about spacing, and finding advantages. You also must be skilled and know angles, be a good teammate, and trust your teammates. Volleyball, on the other hand, emphasizes positioning, athleticism, preparation, and communication

MY MOST MEMORABLE SPORTS MOMENT: Making it to the Wisconsin state championship game as a sophomore for basketball

MY FAVORITE JUNK FOOD: Brownies

I PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE TO: I'm interested in exploring a future in either the medical field or the business field, as both areas offer opportunities to help others and take on meaningful challenges

WHAT ARE TWO REASONS YOU LIKE BEING PART OF A TEAM SPORT: Team sports challenge me to push myself, not only so I can be the best version of myself, but also so I don't let my teammates down. I truly enjoy the connection and support that comes with being part of a team

HOW DO YOUR TEAMMATES MAKE PRACTICE FUN: By encouraging each other while still challenging each other, also making sure there are team bonding moments and celebrating successes

WHO DO YOU WISH WAS WATCHING YOU PERFORM AT EVERY GAME OR MATCH: My family members, like my grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and siblings

WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A TEAMMATE A GOOD TEAM CAPTAIN: Being accountable, a good leader, holding teammates accountable

IF YOU COULD PLAY ANOTHER SPORT, WHAT WOULD IT BE: Soccer

WHAT AGE WERE YOU WHEN YOU STARTED YOUR SPORT? I started playing basketball in third grade and volleyball in fourth grade

WHAT ONE WORD DESCRIBES YOU? Competitive

WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE COACH AND WHY? I've been lucky to work with some incredible coaches and trainers over the years. Some of the coaches who really challenged me and helped me grow are Coach Chew, Coach Mauritz, Coach Paveletzke, and Harry Boyce, and I'm grateful for the lessons they've taught me. I have also been blessed to have many great assistant coaches

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST EVER AUTOGRAPH? Sam Decker

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE HALLOWEEN COSTUME YOU WORE AS A CHILD? A zebra costume

WHAT SPORT DID YOU FAIL AT AS A CHILD? Soccer



A Parent's Perspective

BRIAN AND SARAH CROWE | PHOTOS BY PAUL STUMPF



We have four daughters: Alayna, Autumn, Ava, and Adalyn.

Our oldest, Alayna, enjoyed playing a variety of sports through middle school and went on to run track in high school. Ava is active in both volleyball and basketball, while our youngest, Adalyn, is seven years old and busy exploring basketball, soccer, and volleyball. Each of them has

found their own interests and passions, and it's been fun to watch their journeys unfold in different ways.

Autumn participates in basketball, volleyball, and track. From a young age, we've encouraged all our children to play multiple sports, believing it provides not only social opportunities but also mental benefits, injury prevention, and well-rounded athletic development.

Playing multiple sports has certainly been rewarding, but we've also seen the challenges that come with trying to compete at a high level in more than one skill-based sport. For Autumn, this meant making the difficult decision to step away from club volleyball due to overlapping commitments with school and AAU basketball.



One of the biggest challenges when you have kids involved in travel sports or other activities is managing the family calendar. Practices, games, and tournaments can quickly fill every weekend, making it easy to lose sight of quality family time. We rely on a shared calendar to stay organized and coordinate schedules, while also making a conscious effort to carve out time for the family as a whole.

We will always be there for our kids no matter what, but it's especially fun having Autumn play a sport that we also played. Supporting our kids through

thick and thin is something we take pride in, regardless of the sport they choose. With Autumn, it's been extra special to share that basketball connection. We love going to the gym with her to train and finishing each session with a friendly series of 1-on-1 games. When she was younger, I [Brian] would occasionally let her win a series. Now, every once in a while, she'll let me win one.

We do our best to help the kids maintain a healthy balance between school, sports, faith, and family. At times, that means turning down certain opportunities in order to protect that balance and keep their priorities in the right place.

Autumn plays basketball year-round, but we make sure she takes some time off at the start of volleyball season to fully focus on that sport. She still works in basketball workouts during volleyball, but we try to limit the contact and physical demands while she's in season.

To date, none of our kids have experienced a serious injury, and we are truly grateful for that. As parents, it's something we think about constantly, knowing the physical demands and risks that come with competitive sports. We are careful to encourage proper training, rest, and recovery, while also trusting in their skills and the guidance of their coaches.

Every practice, game, and tournament is approached with both excitement and mindfulness, and we continue to pray for their safety and well-being every day. The hope is that they can grow, compete, and enjoy the game they love while staying healthy and protected.

We try to stay grounded after both wins and losses. More than anything, we truly enjoy the opportunity to watch our kids play, and we understand that losses are just part of the journey. We also try to remind them to be grateful for the gifts and opportunities they've been given.

Autumn would like to play basketball in college. She has received interest from several schools and hopes to make her college decision by the end of next summer. When considering her options, she is looking closely at the overall fit including the school itself, its location, the teammates and coaches she would play alongside, and the culture of the program. All of these factors are important to her as she decides where she will continue both her education and athletic career.

Kids in competitive sports learn so much more than just the game. They develop the ability to manage their time, work together as a team, and perform under pressure in front of peers and others. Along the way, they pick up healthy habits—understanding the importance of good nutrition, valuing rest, and showing up ready to give their best every day.

Athletes grow into teammates who are dedicated, hardworking, and focused on both individual improvement and team success. These lessons extend far beyond the court, shaping who they are and how they approach challenges in life.

Autumn has been fortunate to learn from a number of outstanding coaches and trainers over the years. Some have focused intently on teaching the skills and strategies of the game, while others have taken a broader approach—using sports as a way to teach life lessons about perseverance, discipline, and character. Each in their own way has pushed her to grow, challenged her in the tough moments, and celebrated with her when she's reached new milestones.

She has also been surrounded by remarkable teammates who bring out the best in one another. It's inspiring to watch how each player embraces their role, contributes their unique strengths, and works together toward a common goal. When that kind of teamwork comes together, the results on and off the court are truly special. ■

In Every Game, I'll Either Win... or Learn

Xavier John

Menasha High School
and Power 5 AAU
Basketball

BY DIANE BAST | PHOTOS BY PAUL STUMPF

Menasha High School freshman Xavier John has been a multi-sport athlete since he was 5 years old, playing both basketball and football for nine years. Two years ago, he added in track & field—because he needed something to do in the Spring?

I didn't ask, because this is November, and Xavier's focus these days is basketball. He plays for the Bluejays as well as Power 5 AAU (Amateur Athletic Union).

Why basketball? "I love the feeling that I get when I am able to tap into the flow of the game and shape it the way that I want it to be," Xavier explains. "I am able to push the pace, slow it down

or create for others, depending on what makes the most sense at the time.

"I also love the moments where we are in need of a big play or someone to step up and take control of the game," he says. "It doesn't always end up working out the way that we'd like—but just knowing that I am able to trust myself, and my team is able to trust me, in those moments means a lot."

CONSTANT COLLABORATION

Being a member of a team, Xavier says, "has taught me how to lead and how to follow." It's important to be willing to learn from everyone, he adds.

"Everyone has a different background and a different skill and experience level," he points out, "but they all have something that you can learn from them. I have played in a lot of places and I have been fortunate to have learned from a lot of skilled teachers, so I also have a lot to offer to my teammates as well. It's a constant collaboration."

Part of that collaboration is learning to relax and trust his teammates.

"I used to think that in order for us to win, I had to do everything—but that wasn't true. I hated the feeling of losing. I was so obsessed with winning that I tried to shoulder a lot of unnecessary responsibility," he admits.

"I love the feeling that I get when I am able to tap into the flow of the game and shape it the way that I want it to be."

"My dad told me a few years ago that in the larger scheme of things, middle school games are just middle school games, and I'll either win or I'll learn. That made a lot of sense to me, so I was able to relax and let up a little ... and I realized that I was surrounded by some very talented peers."

STAYING TRUE

"The biggest challenge," Xavier says, "is the mental aspect."

"There are a lot of people who try to build themselves up by cutting others down. It's unfortunate, but some people would rather do that than put in the work that it takes to make themselves into the players that they would like to become."

He's quick to add, "Please don't get me wrong—some people are very supportive and encouraging and they truly believe in me and my abilities—but others are very critical and judgmental of where I am in my learning process. There are also constant comparisons made between myself and other players, and it can be a lot to deal with at times."

Xavier doesn't let the criticism get to him. "I manage all of this by giving myself grace," he says, "allowing myself to learn and grow through good and bad experiences and just staying true to my own personal journey."

And, he adds, "I also have an excellent support system in my family and friend group, and they do a really good job of building me up and shielding me from negativity."

GETTING READY

Xavier's pre-game rituals are mostly about silence and time alone, preparing himself physically and mentally for the game ahead. "I usually don't talk at all on the way to the venue," he says. "I listen to my music and try to calm my body and my mind."

"Once I arrive, I greet my teammates and coaches and then I like to spend some time alone stretching and praying. While I stretch, I visualize the game and try to prepare myself for a lot of different scenarios that may present themselves while I'm playing."

"I warm up and then before I head to the bench, I usually ask my coach for any last-minute things that he may have observed while watching the other team warm up."

And the final pre-game preparation? "I run over to give my dad a hug, and then I'm ready to play," he finishes.

MATURING MINDSET

Xavier recalls two mistakes he has made during his development as a basketball player ... and recognizing them shows how much he has matured over the years.

"When I was younger," he says, "I used to watch highlight films and then go out and try to do all the things that I saw my favorite players doing."

"And then at some point, I realized that all of those players put serious time and effort into building their skills ... and I was ignoring the whole process of working hard, and just looking for results."





"I shifted my mindset and started to put in the hard work and effort," he says. "As a result, I gained confidence and skill along the way."

The second mistake? "I used to complain to referees over missed calls or things that were happening to me and around me," he admits. "But I learned that sometimes calls are going to be missed and that referees are human and make mistakes just like anyone else."

And then he offers a good life lesson for us all: "I came to that realization as a part of my maturing process and realized that

there are things that I can control and things that I can't—and I should have my focus on the things that are within my control because that's what helps my team."

THOUGHTFUL ADVICE

When Xavier recalls the advice he's received from coaches and mentors, it's easy to see how much he cares for the game ... and how eager he is to learn and grow.

"Prior to playing in the state championship game this past season," Xavier says, "I was really nervous. We were playing a

team that had beaten us about a month before, and I really wanted to go out and have a good showing.

"My coach could tell that I was anxious, and he sat down next to me while I was stretching. He told me that nerves and fear are all normal when you're going to be playing in a championship game and have all eyes on you. He said that being brave doesn't mean that I'm not afraid of the moment—it means that I'm able to take that fear and transform it into the energy that I need to go out and get the job done.

"He also said that every game is going to have a winner, and it's going to have someone who came up short. The value of both teams and their players is not defined by the outcome of the game, but by the effort that they put forth and the way that they handle the results."

BREAKING RECORDS?

Xavier says he'd "love to play at the professional level ... but in the meantime, I'd like to continue playing and learning and see if I can allow my talents to pay for my college education."

As for goals in his more immediate future, he says, "I would love to break the scoring and assist records at my high school. I know that it can be done, but I'm worried that breaking one will make me come up short for the other."

To reach those goals, in his downtime Xavier "likes to practice a lot of the little things that contribute to my overall speed, strength, and skill."

And occasionally he'll try to get his mind off basketball entirely.

"I love to spend time with my family and friends; we regularly go thrifting and find hidden gems or apparel from all the other schools in the area that we wear out in public just for fun."

Xavier likes "to attend local festivals, because I always run into a lot of people that I know and may not have seen in a while. I also



like to spend time sitting in my living room with my family and friends making jokes and talking about all types of stuff."

When asked if he'd like to add anything else to this story, Xavier focused on giving thanks:

"I'd like to thank all of the people who follow and contact me on social media and who have encouraged and supported me to this point in my journey," he says. "Follow me on Instagram at xavs_a_hooper2!"



"I'd also like to thank my parents, Al and Aimee John, for everything that they do for me and all the sacrifices that they make so that I am able to thrive both athletically and academically.

"Last but not least," he says, "I'd like to thank Coach Shawn Folts, Coach Antoine Tines, Coach Quinton Calloway, and my trainers Tony Devine, Carl Gardner, and Kunle Famakinwa for all that they have done and continue to do for me." ■



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.





THIS MONTH IN SPORTS HISTORY

NOVEMBER 1, 1959 Future Pro Football Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown runs for 5 touchdowns in Cleveland Browns, 38-31 win over Baltimore Colts at Memorial Stadium

NOVEMBER 2, 1898 Cheerleading begins in the United States as Johnny Campbell leads the crowd cheering on the football team at the University of Minnesota

NOVEMBER 5, 1978 Oakland Raiders John Madden becomes 13th coach to win 100 NFL games

NOVEMBER 6, 1981 Larry Holmes TKOs Renaldo Snipes in 11 for heavyweight boxing title

NOVEMBER 8, 1966 Frank Robinson, Baltimore Orioles outfielder, selected as AL MVP. The first player to win MVP in both leagues

NOVEMBER 10, 1977 Major Indoor Soccer League officially organized (NYC)

NOVEMBER 11, 2000 155 skiers and snowboarders die when a funicular railway catches fire in an alpine tunnel near Kaprun, Austria

NOVEMBER 13, 1875 Harvard-Yale game is 1st college football contest with uniforms

NOVEMBER 15, 2004 Maria Sharapova becomes the first Russian to win the tennis season-ending WTA Tour Championship; beats American Serena Williams 4-6, 6-2, 6-4

NOVEMBER 17, 1940 Green Bay Packers become 1st NFL team to travel by plane

NOVEMBER 18, 1949 NL batting leader (.342) Jackie Robinson wins NL MVP

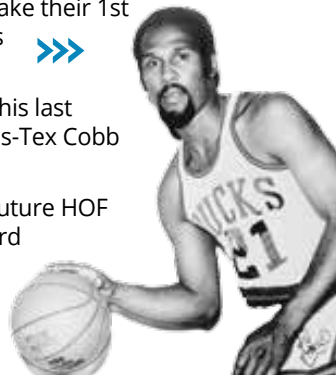
NOVEMBER 20, 1902 Geo Lefevre and Henri Desgrange create the Tour de France bicycle race

NOVEMBER 23, 1968 Milwaukee Bucks make their 1st NBA trade, giving Bob Love and Bob Weiss to Chicago Bulls for Flynn Robinson >>>

NOVEMBER 26, 1982 Howard Cosell calls his last fight after being disgusted by Larry Holmes-Tex Cobb mismatch

NOVEMBER 28, 1957 Milwaukee Braves' future HOF pitcher Warren Spahn wins Cy Young Award

NOVEMBER 30, 1952 Jackie Robinson accuses the NY Yankees of racial bias on national television



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BUSINESS PROFILE

Achieve Your Fitness Goals at TNT Basic Training: A Personal Training Gym

BY TAMMY THYSSEN – OWNER, TNT BASIC TRAINING

In an age where physical fitness is more important than ever, finding the right training facility can make all the difference in our journey toward a healthier lifestyle. This hidden gem in Hortonville has been in business for 22 years, 20 at its current location. At TNT Basic Training, we specialize in providing a comprehensive fitness experience designed to cater to individuals of all fitness levels—whether you're a beginner trying to find your footing or an experienced athlete looking to push your limits.

A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE

Walking through our doors you'll immediately feel the camaraderie among other members and a welcoming atmosphere. My belief is that everyone should feel comfortable in their pursuit of fitness. I take pride in creating an encouraging and supportive environment and helping you stay motivated every step of the way. I assess your starting point and guide you through a progressive and sustainable training program, helping you overcome obstacles,

of food and fitness to reach your goals. I am not a diet or fad-follower; I am someone who helps you live a full healthy lifestyle. Life should be enjoyed—not limited or counted. We work together to find a ground that works for you and your body. We are all different, and therefore one size doesn't fit all.

TRAINING SESSIONS

At TNT Basic Training I offer personal, small group classes, and athletic strength and speed conditioning. I offer flexible scheduling to meet your crazy schedules. Each class is designed to be fun, engaging, and effective, ensuring that you look forward to the next session while you continuously challenge yourself in new ways.



SWAMP RUN

Here at TNT Basic Training is a unique opportunity to have fun and challenge yourself at the same time in our very own Swamp Run Obstacle Course: a course for your family, friends, parties, and cooperation gatherings. Friendly competitions push you to your limits and test your ability, as well as have lots of fun. It's something different than your average bowling and bar hopping experience! (You can always do that after this event!) Be sure to check it out on our Facebook page.



holding you accountable, and ensuring that you remain engaged and challenged as you advance.

Understanding each person has a unique fitness goal and ability, I develop a plan that suits your lifestyle and goals. Whatever accommodation you may need—hip replacement, shoulder surgery, foot/ankle issues, back issues, other medical issues—no matter what it is, you are guided to help you live a full functional lifestyle of your choosing.

NUTRITION GUIDANCE

Fitness goes beyond what we do in the gym, and that is why I put an emphasis on nutrition as well. I help you understand the role

I'd love for you to JOIN US at TNT Basic Training if you are ready to take the first step towards achieving your fitness goals. You don't have to be in shape to start, just willing to start.

If you are looking to build muscle, stand out in your sport, run marathons, advance in your sport, rebuild after a surgery, look after your grandkids, or just stay in your home as you are aging: Whatever your goals may be, I am dedicated to help you succeed. My mottos are "Basic Training for Life" and "Live in YOUR Home or A Home." ■



Tammy Thyssen has a passion for fitness and Bachelor of Science degree in education and nutrition and coaching. She is an athletic trainer and personal trainer with more than 20 years' experience helping people and athletes thrive and build confidence.

Learn more at www.tntbasictraining.com.

Creating Memorable Experiences for Foreign Exchange Students Through the STS Foundation

BY NICOLE CAMPUZANO

Established in 1986, the STS Foundation is a “non-profit organization dedicated to providing memorable cultural exchanges between American families and young people from other parts of the world.” The foundation is a designated U.S. Department of State exchange program.



Since the foundation was established nearly 40 years ago, “it has placed thousands of foreign high school exchange students, from over 40 countries, in homes across America.” Though the desire to become a foreign exchange student is multifaceted, playing American sports is one of the many aspects that draws foreign students to travel to America to study abroad.

Students who wish to become a foreign exchange student and travel to the United States are likely to be exceptional young adults. They possess a strong curiosity about the world and other cultures. In keeping with these strong values, the STS Foundation also fosters a spirit of volunteerism and encourages students who enter the program to give back to the communities that welcome them. Foreign exchange students who attend local high schools not only gain cultural knowledge and experiences from being here in America, they also provide a window into their own cultures for all those they meet during their time in the program. This can provide priceless perspective to American students and teachers, as well as to the families who volunteer to host them.

Becoming a host family for the STS Foundation comes with several requirements. Hosts need to be at least 25 years of age and must pass a criminal background check. Hosts can be a single individual or a married couple; they can be childless or have children in their home. No matter the family make-up, opening their home to a foreign exchange student is bound to create a lifelong connection with the student being hosted.

The cost of studying abroad through the STS Foundation can vary significantly. Pricing depends on the destination and the duration of the trip (one semester or an entire academic year). The prices range from \$9,850 to \$16,520. This covers a variety of things such as the roundtrip international flight to an exchange

student’s destination, travel insurance, 24/7 support from the foundation, language support, and a certification of completion at the end of the exchange year, among other things. There are also additional expenses such as the cost of a domestic flight to get to the international departure, passport and visa fees, school lunch money, public transportation cost, educational and recreational trips, and spending money. Though the cost can be somewhat prohibitive, there are several scholarships that students can apply for to offset the cost.

The foundation is headquartered in Laguna Beach, Florida; there are local coordinators around the country. Their job is to recruit and support volunteer host families in their locale. Though being a local coordinator is a voluntary role, it comes with rewards and incentives. According to the STS Foundation, a local coordinator could earn as much as \$1,100 for each foreign exchange student they place and support each year. They can also earn a spot for the annual incentive trips for every four or more students they place.

One local coordinator in the Fox Valley, Shelley Behling, says that she got involved with the STS Foundation back in 2015 when she hosted a foreign exchange student for the first time. She explains that the experience was so wonderful and meaningful that she felt compelled to become more involved and join the foundation as a local coordinator to recruit more host families and support them and their exchange students. Over the past ten years, Behling has helped place dozens of students in the Fox Valley area. Currently, there are fewer than ten foreign exchange students placed in the Fox Valley, but there is a potential for dozens more families to host students who wish to study abroad.

Behling herself is currently hosting a foreign exchange student from Poland. She explains that her “experience has been excellent so far. He [her foreign exchange student] plays volleyball. This has pushed me to learn to understand the game. He will play basketball over the winter. Again, learning a sport that my children never played. While I am learning a sport, it’s fun to watch him learn so many American things that we take for granted. Like how most of our streets have 90 degree turns instead of curves or narrow angles.”

Exchange students who come to America gain many cultural experiences regarding our traditions, foods, the arts, language, and of course, sports. Participating in an American sport can be a dream come true for a foreign exchange student with a passion for athletics. Adding a foreign exchange student to a high school team can be positive for that student, as well as their teammates.

Behling says that many foreign exchange students wish to try a new sport such as American football or cheerleading, but they are often interested in playing any sport that is available at their American high school, or even multiple sports. “Nearly every [foreign exchange] student wants to join a sport of some sort if they can. It is a great opportunity for them to build stronger relationships with other high school students,” Behling explains.

“If an exchange student is allowed to participate, they experience the sports teams just like their American peers, sometimes participating on a team that goes to the State competitions. I think my students that get involved in sports adjust faster and make friendships with teammates faster. They get a sense of belonging right away,” she adds.

Although many foreign exchange students also participate in sports in their home countries, it is quite a bit different here in America. Students in many foreign countries join clubs outside the school setting to play a sport because sports are not offered through their schools.



This means that they are used to practicing a few times a week or on the weekends. “We find our students appreciate getting together daily with their teammates and competing in more sports competitions while they are here, but the initial exercise level can be a challenge the first week or so,” Behling observes.

Though the initial change may be a struggle at first, this has not stopped many foreign exchange students from excelling at their chosen American sport. “We have had students excel in many new sports here, such as wrestling, and helped their team compete at the State level. We have also had students excel in a sport and get a scholarship to come back for college participation.

“But these are not expected, nor the reason exchange students come to the U.S. It is the team atmosphere and making close, personal friendships with their teammates that is truly the joy our exchange students experience,” Behling clarifies. The camaraderie and new experiences are the main drivers for most of the students in the program to join a sport while they are here.

Through the STS Foundation many foreign exchange students are given the experience of a lifetime, while the American students and host families gain new perspectives and make meaningful connections with young people from all around the world. There are clear incentives to become a host family that are far-reaching and long-lasting. “Each year, STS Foundation places about 500 exchange students with American families nationwide. Wisconsin is one of the top placing states in the country, so our potential to place in Wisconsin is great. We would love to have 40 to 50 American families hosting an STS Foundation student in the 2026–2027 school year,” Behling states.

Anyone interested in hosting a foreign exchange student by working with this amazing organization should start by visiting the STS Foundation website at <https://stsfoundation.org/>.



Nicole Campuzano is an Antigo, Wisconsin native. She earned her bachelor's degree in English Education from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She taught high school English Language Arts for several years. She and her family recently relocated to the Fox Valley, where they are enjoying the many exciting opportunities the area has to offer.

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Training Thru change

PERFORMANCE IN PERIMENOPAUSE AND
BEYOND

BY LORA GLASEL – OWNER, THE RECYCLIST BICYCLE COMPANY



Ladies, this one's for you. It's not just for cyclists, but for runners, walkers, or women interested in navigating this phase of life and staying active.

Perimenopause isn't the end of peak performance; it's just a new stage of the ride. The Recyclist is shining a light on the powerhouse women balancing training, racing, recovery, and real life while their hormones decide to mix things up a bit.

At our Training Thru Change Clinic, (see information in next column) experts in women's health and sport science will break down what's happening in your body and how to train, fuel, and recover smarter. Think of it as your new playbook for feeling strong, steady, and unstoppable. Whether you're an endurance athlete or simply want to understand how your body is evolving,

this event offers practical, science-backed insights and a supportive space to share experiences.

Because let's be real: We're not slowing down. We're just getting smarter about how we move.

We expect this clinic to be well-attended, so please RSVP "going" if you truly are going, so we have enough wine and chairs. RSVP here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/69130913346652>. ■



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Leaders Don't Live at the Finish Line

BY GINA GLOVER

It was my first year in Cross Country and I had just finished the workout, a five-mile run that incorporated a portion of the course we'd be running at the invitational the coming Saturday morning. As I stretched my legs, my dad (who was also my coach) saw me and jogged over. "Where's the rest of your team?" I was feeling a little smug having finished before everyone else: "They're still out there—I got back first."

His response took my 14-year-old self by surprise, and it quickly squashed whatever pride I was feeling. "Well, what are you doing here? Get back out there and don't leave anyone behind—you always finish practice as a team!"

Before I could even muster a response, he added, "Leaders don't live at the finish line."

And his expression made it clear: I needed to start running back the way I'd come. I turned around, probably muttering under my breath but I can't be sure because 37 years have passed since that day.

As I approached the teammate who had been closest behind me, I noticed a strange look on her face. "What are you doing?" Rather than replying, I reached out, ready with a high five, then closed my hand around hers, saying "C'mon, we've got to run back for the others." She turned and followed me and together we ran until we joined up with the next girl who was behind us, and we continued this sort of "backwards leapfrog" until we had connected with every girl. Then we finished the workout as an entire team—together.

Years later, I asked the girl who was almost always the last runner on our team whether she remembered those practices. Not only did she remember, but she told me how motivating those practices were. I was a little taken aback by that: "Didn't it just remind you that you were the slowest?"

She laughed, "I knew I was the slowest, no reminder needed! But it motivated me to keep going because I knew if I stopped and walked then the whole team would have to run even further and I didn't want to do that to anyone, especially my best friend."

Back when I was 14, I didn't realize how important this lesson would be in my life. And I didn't realize how profound an application it would



The author and her best friend - still running together.

have on the teams I was part of later in my life. Not Cross Country teams, but work and volunteer teams.

We don't all work the same way, or at the same pace, but in life, forward is a pace. Like Cross Country, what matters most is that we keep moving, and that we finish together, as a team.

In whatever team you are part of right now, consider who is a few paces behind you. They might really appreciate you taking the time to turn around to run alongside them for a while. It just might be the motivation they need to keep going. ■



Gina Glover is a professional speaker, career coach, and founder of Gina Connects LLC. She specializes in helping individuals and organizations build meaningful connections through her signature keynote, *The 5th Question™*. Since 1996, Gina currently serves as president of the Wisconsin chapter of the National Speakers Association. A coach's daughter and parent of student-athletes, she inspires audiences with stories that bridge the sport of cross country and leadership.

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Biscuit Pot Pie

BY KIRSTEN RICE

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1 sweet onion, diced
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 2-1/2 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup half and half
- 3 cups shredded rotisserie chicken (or turkey)
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley leaves
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Biscuits (see homemade version below)

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
- Melt butter in a large stockpot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 3–4 minutes. Stir in garlic and thyme until fragrant, about 1 minute.
- Whisk in flour until lightly browned, about 1 minute.
- Stir in wine, scraping any browned bits from the bottom of the stockpot.
- Stir in chicken stock and half and half. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 6–8 minutes.
- Stir in chicken, peas, and parsley; season with salt and pepper, to taste. Top with biscuits.
- Place into oven and bake until bubbly and biscuits are heated through, about 8–10 minutes.
- Serve immediately.

BISCUIT INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 1-1/2 cups buttermilk
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
- In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda.
- Add cold butter, using your fingers to work the butter into the dry ingredients until it resembles coarse crumbs.
- Add buttermilk and stir using a rubber spatula until a soft dough forms.
- Working on a lightly floured surface, knead the dough 3–4 times until it comes together. Using a rolling pin, roll the dough into a 1 1/4-inch thick rectangle. Cut out 10–12 rounds using a 2 1/2-inch biscuit or cookie cutter.
- Place biscuits onto the prepared baking sheet; place in the freezer for 15 minutes.
- Remove biscuits from freezer and brush tops with butter. Place into oven and bake for 15–18 minutes, or until golden brown.
- Serve warm. ■

Kirsten Rice is the Operations Director at the Ogden YMCA and Valley Tennis Center. She has her bachelor's degree from Michigan State University in Kinesiology with an emphasis in Health Promotion Specialization. She is a certified personal trainer through the American College of Sports Medicine and a Certified Group Exercise Instructor. She has been working in the field for 17 years and loves working with clients one on one to achieve their health and wellness goals and teaching to groups as a fitness instructor. If you would like to talk with Kirsten, you can contact her at krice@ymcafoxcities.org.



Keeping Your Cool: Emotional Regulation in Competitive Sports

BY ANNA BOMBER, MS, CMPC

In the final moments of a close game, emotions can rise quickly ... and can also have serious consequences on the game-winning shot. Anxiety, frustration, anger, or “freezing up” can change the trajectory of the game, so it’s crucial to know how to harness those emotions effectively. There are several ways to conquer this mindset, and these valuable tactics fall under the concept of emotional regulation.

Emotional regulation refers to the method an athlete uses to influence which emotions come through during difficult moments, when they come through, and how the athlete might experience them. It’s not necessarily about suppressing feelings. It’s about managing them in a way that supports the performance, rather than sabotaging the game.

How does an athlete learn to do this? It takes practice and consistent trial and error, but the art of emotional regulation can be mastered in a variety of ways.

- **Cognitive Reappraisal:** Cognitive reappraisal refers to how an athlete thinks about, or “appraises,” a situation mentally. An athlete can think to themselves, “what else could this situation imply?” or “how might I think of this in a way that benefits me?” For example, an athlete might reframe a bad referee call in a positive light, as a chance to build upon skill, instead of negatively, such as framing it as an unfair judgment call.
- **Nervous System Regulation:** This refers to how an athlete regulates their central nervous system physically, to balance their emotions through breathing techniques, imagery, or other calming practices. For example, when an athlete notices their heart rate shoot up at the sight of a close score, they can take three deep mindful breaths to regulate the anxiety that creeps up.
- **Managing Stressors:** This method suggests that an athlete may need to identify and manage other daily life stressors that occur

outside of sport to help stay in the “zone” and manage emotions that trickle into game time. Distraction caused by stress may not only cost the winning point but may lead to a higher likelihood of sport injury. For example, an athlete might benefit from finding social support in their lives—someone they can open up with, or a school counselor to depend on when making difficult choices about future career decisions and scholarships.

Every athlete has a different approach and benefits from distinct techniques in a variety of ways. It’s important to remember that aside from these differences, every athlete also has their own unique emotional “sweet spot” where they perform their best. **Individualization** is key here. Some athletes benefit from being amped up and energized before a game, while some benefit from being in a more relaxed and focused state. Some athletes even bounce back between these two extremes depending on the day, sport, or other factors. It’s always best to tackle this at an individual level and remember that no two athletes require the same pre-performance mindset. ■

For more information, please schedule an informational session with Anna Bomber at Bomber Performance Consulting, LLC, phone 920-470-8118, website Bomberperformance.com, email bomberperformance@outlook.com.



Anna Bomber is owner of Bomber Performance Consulting, LLC, where she specializes in one-on-one and team sessions to help athletes thrive in their performance arena. Anna is a Certified Mental Performance Consultant (CMPC) through the Association for Applied Sport Psychology and works with athletes through a holistic approach on areas such as motivation, confidence, teamwork, communication, concentration, and so much more.

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ONE ON ONE

BY DIANE BAST | PHOTOS BY PAUL STUMPF

COACH MODESTE ROUAMBA

SOCCER, RIVER SURGE FC
AND XAVIER HIGH SCHOOL

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN COACHING? I have been coaching for over 20 years at the club level. I spent 15 years with the Wisconsin Olympic Development Program, 10 years as Director of Coaching for Electric City, and I am currently the DOC of the combined club River Surge FC. I have also been the Varsity Head Coach at Xavier High School for the past 5 years.

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND IN THIS SPORT? I began playing soccer at age 3 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and continued through college. When I moved to the United States, I was no longer eligible to play in college, so I turned to coaching to share my knowledge of the game. I am the owner of GCS Academy of Soccer, a consulting and training business designed to help organizations and players learn and teach the game the right way from the beginning. I hold a U.S. Soccer National B License and am an accredited ISPAS Level 2 Performance Analyst.

WHAT IS YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY? My philosophy is to adjust the game plan to fit the players' skills and strengths. At the JV level, our focus is purely on development, teaching players to grow in the game. At the varsity level, we compete while still emphasizing development and preparing athletes for life beyond the field. Coaching, to me, is about helping players become not only better soccer players, but also better people who stay connected to the game for a lifetime. Lately, after one of our games, a varsity coach asked me this question: Why do we always beat your JV and your varsity always beats us? My answer was: At the JV level, we play to develop.

WHAT ARE ONE OR TWO THINGS THAT THE TEAM DOES IN TRAINING THAT ARE KEYS TO THEIR SUCCESS? Two keys to our success are how we train and how we connect as a team. At Xavier, we constantly adapt formations and style of play depending on the players on the field and the opponents we face. We don't copy others, we create our own style, built around the strengths of our players. For example, we will not copy Real Madrid style of play, because we do not have Mbappé at Xavier. Another key is our Catholic faith, which brings us unity and purpose. We also focus heavily on positional training, ensuring every player understands their role and responsibilities.

PLEASE DESCRIBE THE MOST MEMORABLE GAMES YOUR TEAM HAS WON. The most memorable games are always against Fox Valley Lutheran (FVL). The rivalry between the Hawks and the Foxes is truly the derby of the Fox Cities. The players are always energized for these matches, and the connection runs deep since many of them play club soccer together and are friends off the field.

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE THE TEAM AFTER A DISAPPOINTING LOSS? After a disappointing loss, we focus on the mental side. We talk to players

individually, especially those who may blame themselves. We remind them that we win as a team and lose as a team, no excuses. Our motto is "Together We Rise." As a Christian school, we also turn to prayer. Before and after games, we give everything to God. When we lose, we ask for the strength to accept it, learn from it, and grow stronger for tomorrow.

DESCRIBE YOUR PROUDEST COACHING MOMENT.

Coaching at Xavier High School has given me many proud moments, but one of the most special was winning a regional title two years ago in extremely difficult conditions, playing in the mud. The boys showed incredible resilience, teamwork, and determination. It reminded me why I coach: to see young players rise above challenges and succeed together.

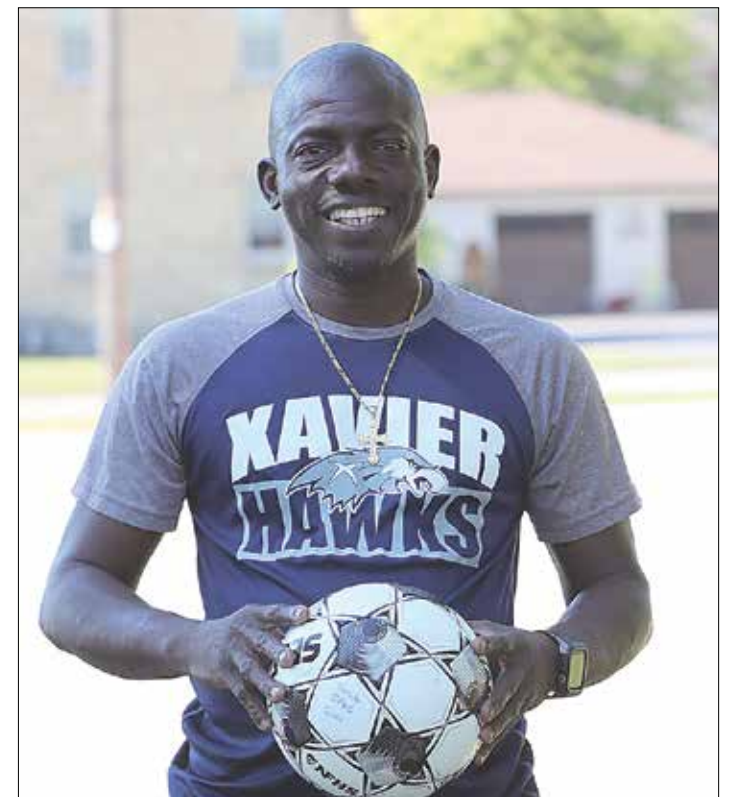
WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LIFE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED FROM BEING A COACH?

The biggest life lesson I've learned is to always trust your players and never give up on them. Every player has value; some stand out for their skill, while others provide motivation, energy, and unity for the team. High school games are ultimately for the players. As coaches, we guide them, but the joy belongs to them for the work they put in both on the field and in the classroom.

WHAT LEGACY DO YOU HOPE TO LEAVE AS A COACH?

I hope to change the way coaches view the game and approach player development. My goal is to revolutionize how we teach soccer, focusing on developing players the right way from the start, so they not only succeed in soccer but also carry important life lessons into their future. Above all, I want players to remember that I cared about them as individuals.

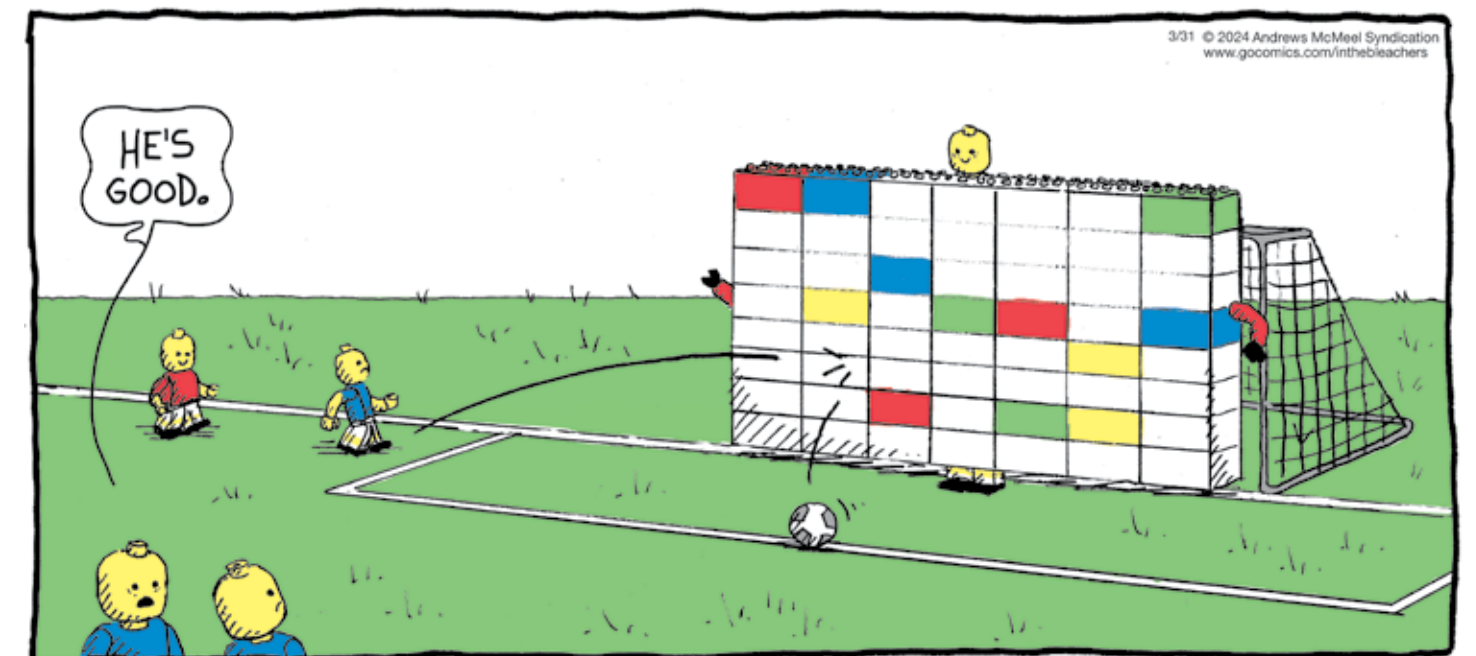
ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD? I want to thank you for giving coaches the opportunity to share their perspectives and stories. The work you are doing helps advance soccer in our community. With the World Cup coming to the United States in 2026, the future of the game here is bright and I am excited to see the U.S. compete on home soil. ■



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.

IN THE BLEACHERS

BY BEN ZAEHRINGER



Fueling for Four Quarters of Optimal Performance

BY KATE HARRELL JENKINS, MS, RD, CSSD, LD | YMCA DIETITIAN AND PERSONAL TRAINER, NEENAH-MENASHA



Basketball and other team sports present unique nutrition challenges, as they demand high-intensity efforts over longer periods of time. It is estimated a basketball player may run 2.5 to 3 miles in one game, depending on position and playing time. Similarly, practices can run for multiple hours per day.

From a sports nutrition standpoint, bursts of high-intensity effort paired with longer duration deplete the body's stores of carbohydrates, called glycogen, that provides the quick energy for play. A very physical game or practice will further up the nutritional ante. Tournaments provide the unique challenge of multiple games with short recovery windows between games and limited time to refuel.

Nutrition can be a game-changer when it comes to playing optimally and staying strong and healthy throughout the season. Below are key sports nutrition strategies to consider before, during, or after play.

DAILY

The daily diet of a basketball athlete should be high in carbohydrates to support the high-intensity demands of the sport, both practice and games. Opting for a variety of carbohydrate foods (grains like pasta, bread, rice, but also fruit, starchy vegetables like sweet potatoes, and some in dairy such as milk or yogurt) will provide a variety of nutrients to support the demands on the body and recovery. Timing quick carbohydrates after practice and games will jumpstart recovery. Protein should be distributed across the day to support muscle repair after hard efforts.

DON'T SKIP BREAKFAST! This key meal jump starts recovery and fueling for the body, which will be necessary for optimal performance.

Specifics:

- Carbohydrates: For those who have significant playing and practice time, carbohydrate needs could be in the range of 6–10g/kg per day. For those with less playing time, needs may fall in the range of 5–7g/kg.
- Protein needs will vary athlete-to-athlete based on training, age, goals, and more. In general, aiming for 20–30g per meal (this can be calculated specific to the athlete) and 20–25g post workout is a good starting point.

PRE-GAME MEAL

Aim for a high-carbohydrate meal 1 to 4 hours out from exercise.

The closer you are to exercise, aim for lower fiber options to avoid GI upset.

If you're traveling, try to find familiar foods you know your body tolerates well. Consider bringing along snacks or food options to add to meals (example: bring along fresh fruit or granola bars to pair with a sub sandwich).

PRE-GAME SNACK?

Depending on when you consume your pre-game meal, there may be a need to top off with a snack prior to the game. This should also be high carbohydrate, but focus on quick-to-digest carbohydrates close to game time.

Quick portable options for games played away from home might include fruit, dried fruit, trail mix packs, applesauce or other fruit squeezable fruit packets, granola bars, sports drinks, and more!

Specifics:

Consume 0.5–1g/kg carbohydrates about an hour out from exercise.

HALF-TIME

Given the intense nature of play, athletes may benefit from consuming carbohydrates at half-time. This can provide a needed boost of energy during the second half. Easy options might include a sports drink or other sport foods, or even a small piece of fruit.

3RD QUARTER INTO THE 4TH QUARTER

Fatigue can start to set in for players with significant playing time. The break between the 3rd and 4th quarter could be a great opportunity to both hydrate and fuel the final quarter, both mentally and physically. Sports drinks are an easy and effective option to provide both carbohydrates and fluids/electrolytes.

POST-GAME

Time can fly after the game, due to team meetings, showering and changing time, etc. It may be helpful to have options packed in a gym bag or available for the team to assure a speedy recovery snack is consumed. Pair carbohydrates with protein to promote recovery. Once post-game activities are complete, be sure to consume a balanced meal, rich in carbohydrates but also protein and healthy fat as well.

Specifics:

- Aim for 1–1.5g/kg carbohydrates and 20–25g of protein ASAP.
- Be sure to include fluids as well.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

It's important to pre-fuel for tournament play. The meals the night before a tournament, as well as the morning of, are equally important. Aim for high carbohydrate options with some protein and fat.

If windows between games are short, pack sufficient easy-to-digest snacks to include between games. For longer windows, aim to include a more meal-like option such as a sandwich with fruit and a granola bar. Liquid options may also be effective for bringing in quick fuel. Easy options like low-fat chocolate milk or a fruit smoothie drink could be brought along in a cooler bag.

Dialing in your sports nutrition game plan can have a significant impact on performance. The above strategies should help you perform at your absolute best this coming season. ■



Kate Harrell Jenkins is a registered dietitian, certified sports dietitian, personal trainer and group fitness instructor. She loves all things wellness, and is an avid runner with over 20 marathons and ultramarathons under her belt. She also has a passion for working with Parkinson's and is certified in Rock Steady Boxing, PWR! Moves and Pedaling for Parkinson's. Kate believes in bringing together nutrition and fitness and would love to talk with you! Feel free to email Kate at kharrell@ymcafoxcities.org or kateharrellrd@gmail.com. Photo by David Schuhart, DRS Photos

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SUMMARY OF APPLICATION GUIDELINES

DESCRIPTION

Fox Cities Sports magazine will award four \$1,000 scholarships to high school student-athletes graduating in 2026 who plan to pursue a career in the sports industry — on or off the field. Scholarship winners will be announced in the April 2026 issue.

ELIGIBILITY

 Applicants must:

- Be a high school student-athlete graduating in 2026
- Attend one of the schools we cover or be homeschooled in the school districts we cover
- Have participated in at least one varsity-level sport
- Plan to pursue a career in a sports-related field (not necessarily as an athlete)
- Have a minimum GPA of 3.0

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Application Form

Available online at FoxCitiesSports.com.

2. Short Essay (200–300 words)

Describe your future career goals in sports and how your experience as a student-athlete has shaped that path. What impact do you hope to make in the sports world?

3. Letter of Recommendation

From a coach, teacher, or mentor who can speak to your leadership, work ethic, or character.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Clarity of career goals in a sports-related field (30%)
- Connection between sports experience and future path (25%)
- Demonstrated passion or initiative (e.g., volunteering, internships, content creation) (20%)
- Character and leadership (15%)
- Academic performance (10%)

DEADLINES

Application window opens November 1, 2025

Applications due by midnight January 31, 2026

Winners will be notified by March 1, 2026

Winners will be announced in the April 2026 issue of *Fox Cities Sports*

Applications Now Being Accepted for *Fox Cities Sports* 2025–26 “Future in Sports” Scholarship

BY DIANE BAST

The window for applications to be submitted for the *Fox Cities Sports* “Future in Sports Scholarship” is now open! Applications must be received by midnight on January 31, 2026. You can download the application form at www.foxcitysports.com.

Fox Cities Sports will award four \$1,000 scholarships to high school student-athletes graduating in 2026 who plan to pursue a career in the sports industry—on or off the field. Scholarship winners will be announced in the April 2026 issue.

Applicants are asked to write a 200–300 word essay and submit a letter of recommendation from a coach, teacher, or mentor who can speak to their leadership, work ethic, or character.

A summary of the Scholarship Guidelines appears in the sidebar on this page, and complete guidelines are available on the website at www.foxcitysports.com.

If you'll be graduating in 2026 and attend a school (including homeschool) in our Fox Valley coverage area, we look forward to hearing about your future in sports! ■



SPORTS REPLAY

Brought to you by the



With Gratitude to the Appleton Historical Society... and the City My Dad Called Home

BY LAURA KOSTELNIK BISKUPIC

My dad, Ron Kostelnik, had a couple of big decisions to make following the 1969 NFL season.

At the ripe old age of 29, he needed to decide if he wanted to retire from the NFL, and then he had to figure out where he and his family would live.

During an eight-year run with the Packers, my dad and mom had built a life in Green Bay. They had a home, an active social life, and plenty of friends there. The Packers won five world championships during that stretch, including the first two Super Bowls. Following the 1968 season, the Packers traded my dad to the Colts and we moved to Baltimore for the football season, though we never sold our Green Bay home.

He had a good season in Baltimore. Along with linemen Bubba Smith and Fred Miller, my dad played for a Colts defense that had allowed the fewest points in the NFL that year.

But, after nine years in the sport, he felt ready to move on.

Like most of his teammates, my dad worked a second job during the off-season. In his case, he worked as a salesman for Mainline Industrial Distributors. At the end of the 1969 football season, he negotiated a contract with that company that allowed him to operate as president and owner.

He commuted from Green Bay to Appleton during that first year of ownership, and our family moved to Appleton in 1971.

Though his job required travel—the company eventually grew to include nine branches in three states—he still came home for dinner most nights.

In winter, he loved to fire up his snow blower and take it around the block. Our neighbors loved that too.

We all spent a lot of time in Erb Park, right across the street from our house. On Sundays, after church, we'd pull in our driveway and someone would yell, “The courts are open!”

One of us would dash over to save the court while everyone else changed into tennis clothes. My mom taught my dad to play tennis on the public courts in Cincinnati when they were in college, and they both enjoyed the life sport (though my mom played a little more seriously than my dad).

My siblings and I first learned to play tennis through the Appleton Recreation Department's summer tennis lessons, and we all went on to play high school tennis. My mom coached the Xavier High School boys' tennis team. In that case and throughout all of our



Ron Kostelnik's locker inside the football exhibit at the Appleton Historical Society.

athletic endeavors, my dad remained the kind of sports parent who showed up for every game ... and let the coach do the coaching.

One year, he helped coach the Xavier High School football team, which he enjoyed immensely. He just felt it wasn't fair to the program to continue in that role while he was still so busy with work and family commitments.

He might have coached more in retirement, but my dad passed away in 1993, having suffered a heart attack while he and my mom drove back to Appleton from a vacation in Florida.

His adopted hometown showed up for him and for all of us in the weeks that followed. Neighbors dropped off food, friends

stopped by to offer condolences, and more than 800 people filled the pews at St. Therese Parish to say good-bye.

The Colts won the Super Bowl the year after my dad retired, but he never regretted his decision. He and my mom carved out a beautiful post-football life in a city our family felt privileged to call home.

That's why we're so grateful to the Appleton Historical Society for including our dad in their comprehensive football exhibit. I know he'd be honored to share a replica locker room with all-around superhero Rocky Bleier, three-time Division III All American Scott Reppert, and Dr. Chuck McKee, a first team All American quarterback.

We look forward to bringing our out-of-town family and friends to see the exhibit and tour the rest of the museum many times in the coming months. ■

Recruiting Rescue ... Tips, Blips, and Quips in Recruiting

BY TAMMY EBBEN

The college recruiting process has been just that, a process—one that began for my daughter at the tender age of four, when she started to develop her love of the game of soccer.

Fast forward 12 years and Kennedy is committed to her dream school, the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Thinking back on how those 12 years went, I realize I learned a lot of things along the way. The most important was that I wanted to take what I've learned and share it with others so they might be better prepared and equipped for what is to come.

My daughter's journey dealt specifically with soccer, but we dabbled in basketball as well, and this can all be related to whatever sport your son or daughter wants to play at the next level.

The first and perhaps most important piece is to develop a love of the sport they are playing. Kennedy started with youth sports at the Heart of the Valley YMCA, where she met Coach Hayden Knight and Funtactics soccer. He set drills to music and offered prizes for silly competitions. He included parents in the learning process and made the environment fun and full of energy. She was learning but having a blast at the same time.

From here she went on to local rec soccer and eventually club and travel soccer until about age 13. During that five-year period she was able to grow her game in a competitive environment, try different positions, play with different age groups, and keep working on her own individual skills. We made the move to FC Wisconsin and the ECNL [Elite Clubs National League] just before 8th grade. We made this choice because we felt that to play at the next level, she needed to be seen by those who could get her there.

I've identified six steps we intentionally took to put her in the best position to be recruited.

1. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL UNIVERSITIES EARLY. On travel weekends for basketball and soccer, we always visited one or two universities of all divisions and sizes. This way she could begin to identify what she liked or did not like in a potential school. Was it urban or rural, big or small, spread out or enclosed, gated or not gated? How far away were the athletic facilities from the rest of campus? Did she want to stay close to

home or travel further away? The number of potential schools is vast and overwhelming, so this helped her to start to narrow down what she wanted out of a university. As we got closer to the recruiting timeline, Kennedy identified 130 schools to contact with locations across the United States. She spent a lot of time researching their style of play, potential majors she was interested in, coaching styles, current player bios, and whether or not she felt she could see herself living there long term, if soccer ever went away.

- 2. FIGURE OUT HOW TO PUT TOGETHER HIGHLIGHT VIDEOS AND MARKET YOUR PLAYER'S VALUE.** We used our clubs' Hudl to pull together clips after games, and Canva to design posts to showcase locations and dates where coaches could come to watch her play. Your videos should be no longer than 1-1.5 minutes long. The first two clips should be your best clips to entice them into watching more and conclude with a big finish! We sent 12 cycles of video through email but also set up a Hudl page and a YouTube page, both of which were accessible through links on her X and Instagram accounts. Social media can be a great way for players to market themselves to coaches and schools, as well as a great way to track potential interest from coaches who start to follow them. Players should start following coaches and college programs and track when coaches like their posts. Coaches don't follow players they aren't interested in, so this is a great way to see what programs are expressing interest early on.

- 3. USE ALL YOUR RESOURCES AND ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS.** You aren't the first family to go through this process. Find websites to follow and books to read. Talk to coaches and other parents. Read articles and follow websites. Take in any and all advice. Be open to all opinions so you can best put together how you will attack this, because it is a lengthy and time-consuming process that will encompass at least two years of your life. We found the book "Looking for a Full Ride" by Renee Lopez extremely helpful as well as her website: "Educating Parents of HS Athletes on the College Recruiting Process" on Facebook and the website "D1 Scholarship" on Instagram. They all are applicable to all sports and divisions. There are many other resources, but these three were most helpful to us. There are companies that will do all this work for you for a fee, but we felt we had enough information and resources to attack this on our own. It's time-consuming but it can be done.

- 4. PUT YOUR PLAYER IN THE BEST POSITION TO BE SEEN BY COACHES.** Do your league research and figure out where the coaches will be. Understand when they are in season and what positions they are looking for. Unfortunately, the previous mentality of "if my player is good enough, he/she will be found" is not relevant any longer. Players need to take a much more aggressive approach to recruiting and go to coaches by inviting them to come watch their play as well as marketing themselves on social media to highlight their value. Start national showcases and ID camps around high school age to be taken seriously. Anything earlier than that is strictly for



boosting confidence and to get used to the system. Student-athletes will not be taken seriously until that program is ready to focus on their age group. The right league will have hundreds of coaches in attendance. Players will need to start developing relationships with these coaches through social media and email before attending national events and ID Camps. Coaches should know who they are and what they bring to the table before they come to watch them play. Specific sports will have specific dates when coaches are allowed to physically begin "talking" to players. For soccer that date was June 15 heading into the player's junior year of high school. For basketball that date was June 1, however high-revenue sports such as basketball and football are much more relaxed with talk-to dates. All specifics can be found on the NCAA Eligibility Center website. *I cannot stress enough the importance of attending college ID camps in the soccer world.* Look for cues that a program is interested in your athlete and get to the school so he/she can be evaluated. This is the best way to show coaches your athlete is invested in their program as well. Build the relationship ahead of time so that when the athlete steps out on the field, he/she is already known.

- 5. FIND WAYS TO ELEVATE YOUR ATHLETE'S GAME OUTSIDE OF ORGANIZED TRAININGS.** Find people who can positively impact your athlete's confidence, game, and the mental piece as well and are not just in it for a paycheck. Surround your athlete with positive influences. There are plenty of these places in the Fox Valley. Kennedy started with Synergy Sports Performance in Hobart early on in middle school. I can't stress enough the importance of strength training early in your athlete's development, both in-season and off-season. Coaches are looking for a strong physical build. Don't skip this piece because it's really important. The amount of load on your athlete's body will be intense with practices, league, and tournament and showcase schedules. Strength, speed, agility, and injury prevention work will help to prepare their bodies for what is

going to be expected of them both now and in the future. This was supplemental to her strength training at Kimberly High School. There are loads of places for students to strength-train in the Valley. ETS Performance is a popular one, along with Iron Forge and Push Personal Fitness, where I work. These are just a few examples of locations that specialize in strength training for young athletes. The next piece is to find ways to continue to elevate their individual technical development. We used Purdy Performance for this. Kennedy also started this piece of the puzzle in middle school. It's important for your player's development to hear a voice other than the coaches'. Different approaches and ideas will help to shape their decision-making and help their games long-term. This was instrumental to gaining confidence both technically and tactically.

- 6. DON'T FREAK OUT.** Keep at it until your athlete finds his/her place and next home. There will be disappointments, and very dramatic highs and lows. Don't give up ... because there will be times when you will want to. I freaked out plenty. But looking back I now realize it was more than just the recruiting. It was the time spent together working towards a common goal. It was the plane rides together filled with nervous anticipation as to whether or not she would like this school and whether or not they would like her. It was her standing in a line of 50 girls after an ID camp waiting for a chance to talk to a coach and wondering how she would handle the conversation. It was the worry that we were doing everything wrong and all positions would be filled before she was given the chance to showcase her skills. It was the disappointment at not being able to attend homecoming or other school functions because she needed to see this process through to fulfill a dream. As a parent it was about coming to terms with all that she had to give up in order to watch her growth throughout this process.

What a journey. I wouldn't trade a second. Good luck on your own athlete's journey and enjoy the ride! ■



How to Deal with a Coach Who Yells

BY PEAK PERFORMANCE SPORTS, LLC

Nobody likes it when coaches yell at them. Coaches should treat their athletes with respect. Unfortunately, events don't always unfold as we would like.

Coaches who yell feel as if it is a wake-up call and the best way to deliver feedback or instructions. Most of these coaches have no idea how to communicate effectively, but they may not realize the impact of their actions.

When coaches yell, athletes lose confidence, worry about making mistakes, and lose interest in their sport. For some athletes, their self-esteem takes a hit and they end up believing, "I'm not good enough," "I'm a disappointment," or "I'm a failure." Many times, these athletes quit because they no longer enjoy competing.

While you can't control how your coach gives instruction, there are ways to minimize the negative impact and even help you improve your performance.

Let's examine three ways athletes commonly respond to yelling from a coach.

1. Shut Down – Many athletes shut down when coaches yell. It doesn't matter if the coach has insightful information to build their game. For these athletes, shutting down is an automatic response to the chaos. Shutting down is when you build an invisible wall around yourself. While it may block out some noise, it prevents you from dealing with your feelings or improving your game.

2. Take it Personally – Some athletes hear only the tone. No matter what the coach says, it is drowned out by the yelling. The loud and negative tone is interpreted as if there is something wrong with them.

3. Find the Message – Some athletes separate the message from the tone. They still aren't okay with the tone, but they extract what can help their game and discard the rest. This enables the athlete to protect their confidence, sift through the BS, and find information they can apply to elevate their game.

If their coach is just ranting, they chalk it up to the coach having a personal issue. It isn't right to be subjected to such nonsense, but try not to allow it to affect you negatively or lessen how you think about yourself.

If your sport is important, don't allow anyone to steal your joy. Instead, look for the message and stay committed to your game.

In Game 2 of the NBA playoff series between the Los Angeles Lakers and the Minnesota Timberwolves, Lakers coach JJ Redick became livid early in the second quarter.

Redick called a timeout and was angry with his team for allowing an 8-4 run to open the second and cut the Lakers' lead to eleven. Redick didn't hold back during the timeout. After the game, Los Angeles Laker LeBron James commented on Redick's outburst and the importance of separating the message from the tone.

JAMES: "We know JJ is going to (flip) out from time to time. That's JJ. ... At this point, for us, we obviously need to listen to the message and know how it's delivered. For me, my high school coach my freshman year was kind of the same way. He would (spaz) out on us and you have to be able to understand it's not how it's saying it. But we responded out there."

Dealing with an angry coach isn't easy, but you have the power to control your response. Your coach's tone should never define your ability or your worth. It is crucial to stay focused on what matters: your love for the game and your athletic journey.

When your coach yells, take a deep breath, extract any useful information, discard the noise, and remind yourself why you started competing in the first place. ■

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

NAME: Abbey Hintz

AGE: 18

GRADE: 12th

SCHOOL: Appleton East High School

SPORTS: Girls' Track and Field, throwing shot, and disc

1. HOW DO YOU BALANCE ACADEMICS, TRAINING, AND COMPETITION?

I always ensure that I complete my work in class or during my free time, and I always focus on what I am doing in practice and not on an upcoming assignment or a test I might have in class. I just focus on my practice or my meet. I always think of what can make me a better athlete when I am at practice or a meet, and I will focus on school when I am at school or when I am working on my schoolwork.

2. WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO PUSH THROUGH TOUGH PRACTICES AND GAMES?

I try to picture myself getting a PR or doing well in a meet. I also try to remember that if I have a bad throw for my first throw in a meet, I know that I have at least two more throws that I can do better with. When I am practicing, I focus on nailing whatever I am trying to get down.

3. WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED THAT APPLIES BEYOND SPORTS?

The most important lesson I've learned is that when I am having a bad day, I have the power to change my mood around and work to make it a better day, and if I am struggling with something, no matter what it is, there is always someone who will help me get through it.

4. HOW DO YOU HELP BUILD A POSITIVE TEAM CULTURE?

In track, it is a team sport, but it is also mainly an individual sport. However, I always try to make sure I am cheering on all my teammates, whether it's with their throws or with what they are doing. I also help them with what I can if they need help.



5. HOW WILL YOUR EXPERIENCES AS A STUDENT-ATHLETE SHAPE YOUR FUTURE?

My experience has taught me that when things are hard, I can always persevere through them and make a better outcome of a bad situation. It has also taught me that I need to have a balance between all of the things that are going on in my life at any particular time. ■

Outdoors

WITH GREG SEUBERT

Team Swanson Finds Success During Youth Hunt

Zach Swanson is only 11 years old, so he still has plenty of hunting opportunities in his future.

His first experience will be one that he will never forget.

Swanson participated in April in the Waupaca Learn to Hunt program, which offers new and inexperienced hunters an opportunity to participate in a guided turkey hunt with a mentor. The free program has been held the weekend before Wisconsin's state youth turkey hunt for more than 20 years.



Zach Swanson and his hunting mentor, Calvin Swanson, show off the 24-pound tom that Zach harvested in April on his first hunting trip in Waupaca County. The Swansons participated in the Waupaca Learn to Hunt program, which gives first-time hunters an opportunity to harvest a turkey. Photo by Greg Seubert

An hour after shooting his first turkey on his first-ever hunting trip, Zach joined his dad Jason Swanson and mentor Calvin Swanson at Brooks Farms south of Waupaca.

Jason joined his son in the blind for the hunt. Calvin is Jason's cousin's son.

"It's his first time hunting ever," Jason said. "We got up real early. Calvin picked us up and we got in the blind at 5:30. We were southwest of Waupaca. We heard a lot of birds early in the

morning. A couple of hens came out in front of the blind. At about 10 o'clock, this guy popped up out of nowhere from behind us."

"I was nervous," said Zach, a fourth-grader at Amherst Elementary School. "He was flopping around a lot."

"I don't hunt," Jason said. "I've been around hunting my whole life, but don't know a lot about it. We heard about this program and signed him up to get a good hunting experience. I think it's a great way to learn. I learned enough to feel confident in doing it."

Calvin participated in the program as a youth hunter.

"My grandpa used to mentor and I got into turkey hunting," he said. "I've shot so many (turkeys). I might as well take some kids out and get them into it."

He said he noticed a lot of birds this spring while scouting potential hunting sites.

"There's a lot of driving around looking for birds," he said. "I have it pretty easy. I have some good landowners that allow me to hunt. I pretty much know where they're at all the time, but it took me a little time this year to find them. I was panicking all week."

As part of the program, hunters and their mentors met April 3 at Brooks Farms to meet each other and go over plans for the hunt.

Hunters were able to practice shooting at a range and Calvin said he's not surprised that Zach needed to take only one shot to bag his bird, which weighed 24 pounds.

"After I saw him shoot the other day, I thought, 'Yeah, he'll be alright,'" he said. "I had a feeling he was going to get one."

The Waupaca Learn to Hunt program is free. Participants range in age from 10 to adults and do not have to have completed a hunter safety course.

The goal of the program is to offer first-time hunters a positive and educational turkey hunting experience.

"They're getting a guided hunt with guys who know what they're doing," Calvin said. "Not many kids are hunting. They want to play video games. We're getting them out and doing this instead. It's kind of cool." ■



Greg Seubert is a freelance reporter, photographer and editor based out of his rural Weyauwega home. He spent 28 years covering high school sports for the Waupaca County Post, a Waupaca-based weekly newspaper, before stepping down in April 2024. Before that, he spent 10 years as a reporter and editor at four other newspaper in Wisconsin. He joined the Waupaca County Post prior to the start of the 1996-97 school year and eventually covered sports teams from Waupaca, Iola-Scandinavia, Weyauwega-Fremont, Little Wolf (Manawa), Amherst, Wild Rose, Almond-Bancroft, Stevens Point, New London, Clintonville and Hortonville high schools.

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PICKLEBALL KINGDOM

"Pickleball isn't just about fast reflexes; it's about faster decision-making." ■

~ Unknown

13-year old twins Angelina (left) and Julia Sibla (right) are ready for action at Pickleball Kingdom in Appleton

INSET PHOTO: Dad, Marius, is often on the court with his daughters working on their game.

PARTING SHOTS

Photos by Paul Stumpf, P.S. Portraits

