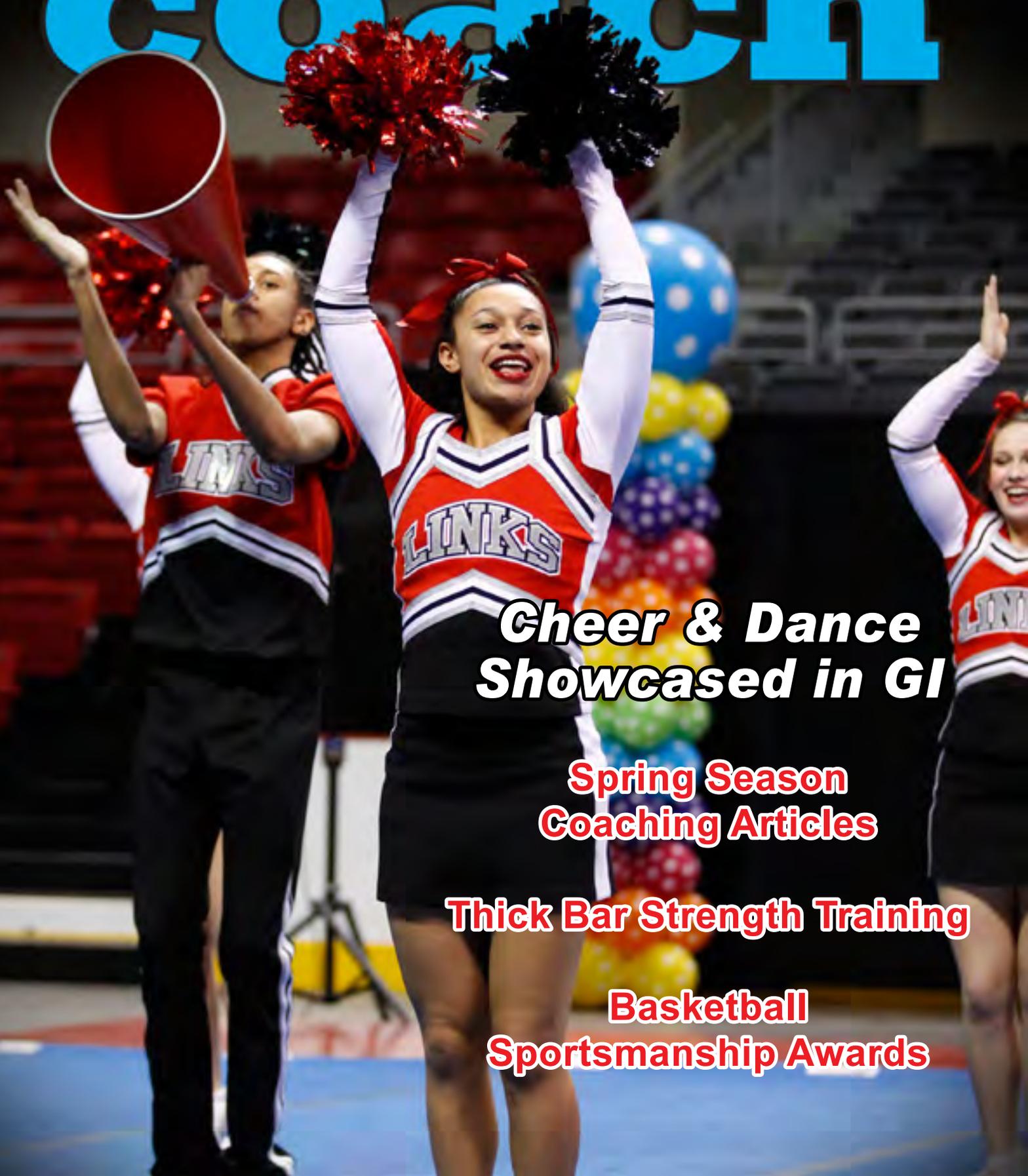


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Coach Dan Lefever, University of Missouri, presents a session at the annual NCA Winter Track & Field Clinic in Lincoln on February 6. – NCA Photo



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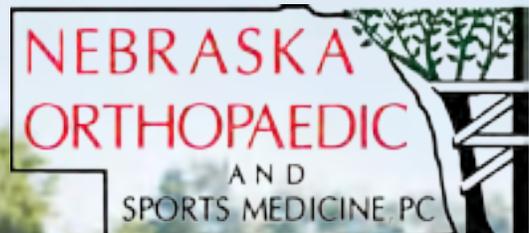
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### NEBRASKA COACHES ASSOCIATION UPCOMING EVENTS 2016

**April 1-2, 2016**

Big Red Football Coaches Clinic - Lincoln

**April 24, 2016**

NCA Board of Directors Meeting - Lincoln

**May 1, 2016**

2016-2017 Membership & Clinic Online  
Registration Opens

**May 10, 2016**

Soccer Clinic - Creighton University -  
Omaha

**May 11-17, 2016**

State Soccer Sportsmanship Awards -  
Omaha

**May 20-21, 2016**

State Track & Field Coaches Hospitality  
- Omaha

**June 1, 2016**

Milestone & Service Awards Applications  
Due

**June 26-30, 2016**

NHSACA National Convention - Louisville,  
KY

**July 24, 2016**

NCA Awards Banquet - Lincoln

**July 25, 2016**

NCA Girls & Boys All-Star Basketball  
Games - Lincoln

**July 26-28, 2016**

NCA Multi-Sports Clinic - Lincoln

**July 26, 2016**

NCA Volleyball All-Star Match - Lincoln

**July 27, 2016**

NCA Softball All-Star Game - Lincoln



## *The Game Plan* *Darin Boysen, Executive Director*

The Spring season is upon us. Other than the Ground Hog Day storm that hit Central Nebraska in early February, much of Nebraska was spared Old Man Winters' wrath. Unfortunately, this will be the winter that will stick with our family forever. In late January we lost my father to cancer. As courageously as he fought, his final months of life were difficult as his body was ravaged with cancer.

My father taught me to never settle for less than your best effort – and then go for more. As a young student-athlete he would frustrate me. Almost like clock-work, when I would arrive home after practice, he would greet me with three questions:

1. "How was school?"
2. "How was practice?"
3. "What did you do extra today?"

It was the third question that would really get under my skin. "What did you do extra?" For many years I thought the question was meant as a lack of confidence in my teachers and coaches. In time I realized that most people do give their best efforts in the classroom and in athletics, but unless you're one that has been blessed with unbelievable talent and intelligence, that may not be enough to set yourself apart. That third question - "What did you do extra?" pushed me for decades, and I hope for the rest of my life.

My father was a man of great internal intensity. He also had a comical side. I find myself emulating both. I wish I could pick up the phone to just visit or to listen to his voice. His voice of reason will forever be engrained in my heart and soul. For years, my wife has been telling me that I was becoming more and more like my father. With pride, I can say, "I sure hope so."

*"People look more closely at our actions in the rough times, when the emotions are raw and our guard is down. That's when our true character shows and we find out if our faith is real." Tony Dungy - Quiet Strength*

### **A Few Nebraska Coaches Association Important Informational Points:**

- The NCA Board of Directors have unanimously voted to increase membership from \$40 to \$45 starting with the 2016-2017 school year. With this increase, you will receive a digital version of the Coach Athletic Director Magazine starting in the fall. Due to decreasing demand, the NCA will no longer offer Texas Coach Magazine as an optional member benefit.
- If you are hosting or coaching in an All-Star event not sponsored by the NCA, your NCA liability insurance is not valid. See the NCA Membership tab at [www.ncacoach.org](http://www.ncacoach.org) to secure additional insurance options for camps, regional all-star games and clinics.
- Over the last year I have had the privilege to chair a national committee in developing a speaker resource for schools, teachers and coaches. It is my hope that you will take time to investigate the National Organization of Coaches Association Directors Beyond the Game Speaker Program at: <http://www.nocadcoaches.org/speaker-program> You will find a great deal of Nebraska and Midwest flavor of speakers that can be a great resource for schools.
- The securing of clinicians for the 2016 NCA Multi-Sports Clinic has been completed. We are currently working on finalizing schedules, session tiles, organizing transportation and booking accommodations for over 55 clinicians. Look for your pre-clinic magazine in the mail during the first week of May.
- The NCA is excited to announce that the 2016 Sportsmanship and Leadership Summits will be expanding from two to three sites in November. Rob Miller and Lori Thomas of Proactive Coaching will be leading the hands on workshops that will challenge students and staffs.
- Tuesday, November 15 – Alliance High School
- Wednesday, November 16 – Kearney High School
- Thursday, November 17 – Midland University, Fremont



Bud Boysen overlooks the Santa Rita Mountains in Arizona – Courtesy Photo

*"There are no traffic jams along the extra mile," Roger Staubach*

# MODELING LIFE LESSONS

Dr. Jim Tenopir, NSAA Executive Director



Allow me to use a Brigham Young quote, stating, *“We should never permit ourselves to do anything that we are not willing to see our children do. We should set them an example that we wish them to imitate.”*

This article is not specifically about the rearing of our own children; rather, it has everything to do with the life

lessons we as coaches teach, unwittingly or by design.

As we wrap up the winter sports season, it gives us an opportunity to reflect on the season just completed. There were winners and losers. There were those who advanced to the state tournament, and those that saw the post-season elude them. There were teams that matched their potential and those that came up short. There were lessons learned, albeit some of those lessons were not the lessons intended.

As is the case nearly every season, I hear from persons who are in disagreement with the leadership being provided their community’s sports programs. Some of those comments come from parents whose child did not get the playing time the parent felt was warranted; some comments come from persons who have conflicts with the coach or administrator; still other comments come from people who recognize that the coach’s leadership example is contrary to general expectations for education-based athletics.

This past season, I observed coaches who were teaching the sport skills and teaching lessons to develop boys and girls into men and women. In Nebraska, we have a large majority of our high school coaches who do a great job of winning with grace and losing with dignity. We have coaches who understand they are coaching “just a game,” but they also understand that there are bigger lessons to teach, life lessons.

Regrettably, we also have coaches whose teaching does not align with the greater expectations most within a school community desire for their children. Some coaches rant and

rave, teaching lessons that one has to be caustic and overbearing to be successful. Some coaches use profanity and cut corners, all while telling their student-athletes to do the opposite. Some exhibit poor sportsmanship in their approach to game officials, opponents and the game rules themselves.

We like to say that NSAA activities are education-based activities, activities that parallel and support the educational mission of our schools. Yet, in many schools, coaches’ behaviors belie the expectations we hold for our teachers and administrators in our curricular programs. The examples demonstrated by some of our coaches call into question whether our programs truly are education-based. Those coaches are in a minority, but regrettably, some of those coaches are the ones who get the headlines and give education-based activities the proverbial black eye.

Now is a good time for each coach to take inventory. How well did I teach the X’s and O’s? Did my coaching provide opportunities for all student-athletes to participate and compete? Were my sideline or mat-side behaviors mature and worthy of emulation by my student-athletes? Was I guilty of “do as I say, not as I do” modeling? Does my coaching focus on teaching the positive life lessons that student-athletes can carry with them for a lifetime?

High school activities and athletics provide opportunities for student athletes to participate, compete and learn. They also provide a platform for coaches to mold a group of young men or women into a cohesive group that works well together to achieve team goals. It also provides high school coaches a “canvas” onto which life lessons for young people can be “painted.” That should be the driving mission.

*“We should never permit ourselves to do anything that we are not willing to see our children do. We should set them an example that we wish them to imitate.”*

Thank you and congratulations to the great number of high school coaches who take their charge seriously and provide the leadership and modeling that we should all want for our children!

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# GOALS & A PURPOSE: GIVING YOUR PROGRAM DIRECTION & CAUSE

Troy Charf - Lincoln Pius X - Baseball



Yogi Berra once said, “If you don’t know where you are going, you might end up someplace else.” I feel like this is an appropriate observation or mindset when discussing players having goals or not, and if your program truly has a purpose. I’ve also heard it said, “If you don’t have a destination, that any place will do.”

And certainly not any place will do for you, your players, season, or program. If you are not requiring your players to develop goals, in my opinion, you are selling them short of what their experience should be. And if you haven’t clearly defined what the purpose of your program is, you’re probably missing the big picture.

Our players practice the framework of SMART goals. Their goals should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely). You as a coach should instruct what you mean by a SMART goal and what your expectations are. There are plenty of educational websites out there that you can consult for help. A couple of the questions that I pose to my players when having them develop their goals are: 1. what does it look like when it happens? Say a player has a goal of 3 errors or less in 20 chances. He needs to picture what that looks like. Obviously envisioning fielding balls cleanly more than not. 2. What does it look like before it happens? Using previous example, what does being able to field 17/20 clean look like in a practice setting. You’re leading the player to see necessary, hard, and tedious work that will need to be put in. 3. Are you willing to pay that cost? Again, trying to make player understand the amount of work will be labor intensive and sacrifices will be made. Are they willing?

What I do after setting the expectations of them developing their goals, is require them emailed to me by the end of the first week of practice. From there, I copy and paste them onto one document. Then, I print the document and post them on our bulletin board. All are required to look over their teammates’ goals. I also have individual meetings with all my players within the first 2 weeks of the season to discuss a variety of things, including their goals.

This next part might be a side note to the goals discussion itself, but bear with me. The posting of the goals and making them public knowledge allows you as a coach to make everyone accountable and allows for them to police themselves on their individual pursuits. Furthermore, it allows for individuals to have opportunities to be leaders. You as a coach can refer to those goals and use them as potential leverage anytime you want. Keeping in mind all of their goals will center on some amount of success. Any deviation from what a reasonable person would consider a path to success gives a chance for internal correction and leadership. For example, say you as a coach during a specific practice witness a couple players that are partnered up on a tee not going about their business with much intensity or urgency.

At the end of practice, you call those players out (hopefully coach called them out at the time, but not all players would’ve seen it). You mention their individual goals, which I bet both had something written about hitting. Say one says they want to hit .300. You pose the question of ‘does hitting .300 mean you get to move at your pace and have no urgency’. Follow up with a team admonishment. Stating as teammates, who have general knowledge of each other’s goals, they absolutely should not allow a teammate to not use their entire time with full effort. Because even if they as an individual reach their goals, if the rest of their teammates don’t, the team will fail! You put all guys on the spot and challenge them. I feel goals are critical to building a team culture and environment.

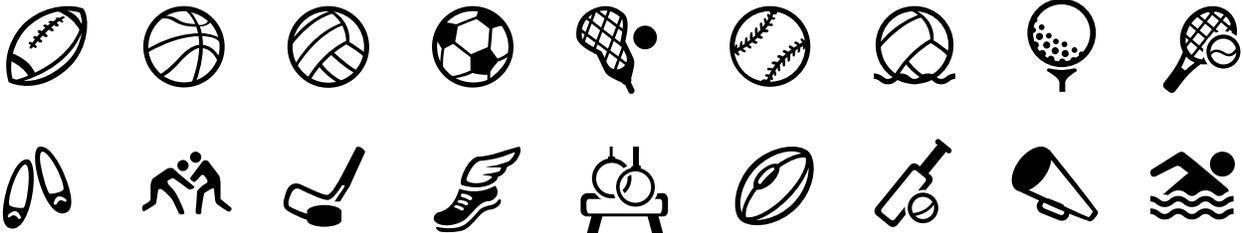
As for the idea of purpose, Terry Pettit, former head coach of the UNL volleyball team, at a leadership summit stated that having a purpose answers the question of “why” we’re doing the thing we do. This is critical in my opinion as our job of a high school coach. Critical, from both a fundamental and moral standpoint. Let me set the stage this way. Here are some rough estimates of the time you will put into your spring season. I figure there’s 67 days before districts, totaling 1608 hours. Most of us will be engaged 6 days a week with our players. Time will vary between practices, games, traveling, etc. My guess is over those 67 days, we’ll be engaged for over 350 hours with our players. Essentially nearly 25% of your player’s lives will be under your watch. And let’s be honest, we all have off season things we’d like our kids to participate in, and many do. Couple that with the fact that many play summer baseball under your guidance. We come to the conclusion these young men are spending a tremendous amount of time with you. For what? So at the end they have a .300 batting average? We as coaches have a moral responsibility to not be that shallow. If goals are mistaken for purpose, the chances of ultimate failure increase dramatically. So say the goal is to hit .300 and they don’t. Then what? Purpose is not a fallback or a consolation prize. It’s realistically grounded in life. What if they reach their goal? If that was only thing they got out of the tremendous amount of time in your program, I think it would’ve been a colossal waste of time

In my opinion, it is part of your job in preparing them for life after they’re done playing. Purpose includes teaching life lessons with the time they devote to you and the game. These can/will vary from program to program. Hard work, service, accountability, selflessness, integrity, honesty, comradery, are some of the core characteristics we try to install in our guys. I’m lucky to have been blessed with a coaching staff that sees eye to eye with me about this. Winning and losing is incidental and takes a back seat to teaching these characteristics. I absolutely will not sacrifice these to win a game. Being a competitor makes that hard sometimes. But I promise you, in the end the future dividends outweigh the short term profit. Viktor Frankl in his book ‘Man’s Search for Meaning’, said “Those who have a ‘why’ to live can bear almost any ‘how’.” Goals and purpose provide direction and the why! Challenging your players to create their own path via goals and building your programs’ purpose on high moral standards, presents you with an awesome opportunity, challenge, and in my opinion, responsibility.



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# COMMIT TO THE PROCESS

## Joe Pudenz – Papillion-La Vista – Golf



How active are you in the growth of your golf team? That is a question I had to ask myself. When I first started coaching, my focus wasn't on the golf team as a whole, just the here and now. I never talked with my players about off-season tournaments or getting instruction, all I did was show up in March and make sure the shirts got ordered. My coaching ability was there, but I didn't really address it and was satisfied with what my players brought on their own to the golf team, not necessarily what I

helped them grow into. I started to notice that coaches of other sports would spend time in the off season trying to better themselves and their teams. I decided that the program I coached was a reflection of how it was lead so I needed to become more active in the growth of the players.

When I was in college I had a professor who told the class that as a teacher you have to sell your chili. He meant that whatever you are teaching you must get the students to buy it and understand it. I believe that same thing works for a good coach. After three years of being a golf coach, I hadn't had a team qualify for the state meet. We were close, but I wasn't doing anything to make our team better outside of the three months of the season. In 2007 we qualified as a team for the state meet. This team had two seniors, two juniors, and a freshman so looking into the future we should have been solid again the next year. Again, I didn't do anything to make them better in the off season, and we didn't qualify the following year. I made a decision that if I was to be an effective coach, I too have to be actively involved in the growth of my players. Once that season was over, I told the returning players that there needed to be a commitment from everyone in our golf program to get better, and that included me. I gave them the Pepsi Tour info and also offered to drive whomever wanted to go to the state junior amateur and the state junior PGA. I took five the first year, and I caddied 36 holes each day so I could help my players develop course management skills. I continue to do this if I am available and in 2010 I added girl's golf to my duties. Our teams have taken as many as twelve players to the NGA state junior. We have become the Monarch golf family and it is something I sell to our kids.

The teams follow each other year round and make sure that they are upholding their part of the family. I will watch them play summer events and talk about goals for the upcoming season or where they had trouble at during their rounds. Most off-season events have more than one of our team members at them; that is huge because they are helping build the team. The off season is where the most improvement happens. I sell hard work and that is what the kids who play for our team buy into. With the NJGT and the NGA, I strongly encourage my players to get involved and compete during the summer. How can I expect my players to compete during the year if they never compete in the off season? These events are great because they get to play with kids from all over the state and see some top-notch players. Our school purchased nets, and we have a place to hit during the winter; those players not doing a winter sport will come and work on their game and also spend time with teammates, helping to develop a strong bond. The players know that if our team is to be successful, they have to continue to grow as an individual. Having the ability to hit during the winter months is a huge asset for both of our golf teams.

Playing golf at Wayne State College I learned quickly that small towns in Nebraska take pride in their golf courses. Several of these courses usually host a summer event and have some great players at them that we won't see during our golf season. I feel coaching golf is about growing our game as well as our players. The state of Nebraska has some excellent programs to promote the game of golf, yet they are not utilized by all of the coaches. The FORE

program is an amazing deal that gives young players chances to play some great courses for \$4. In a sport such as golf that is seen as a "rich" person's sport, the FORE program makes it more accessible. Youth memberships are also available at several golf courses and are very affordable. If a coach wants his or her program to grow and become strong, that coach will have to sell his or her players on playing more. With time being an issue for everyone, golf is becoming a less popular sport. I feel that as a golf coach I need to make sure I help grow the sport. Every summer our team holds a golf camp and we get between 70 and 90 elementary and junior high athletes. This camp introduces them to the basics of the game of golf and also develops a positive relationship between our players and the campers, which will hopefully encourage them to continue to play golf.

Two things I believe also play a big part of coaching golf is expectation and perspective. I can't expect a player to shoot 75 consistently if his or her low score is an 80. I can expect that golfer to make 80 their average and lower their low score into the 70's. Everyone who has ever played the game of golf knows that the difference between 79 and 80 is huge, but the difference between 78 and 79 is relatively small. That is the perspective kids need to understand; both situations are the same even though they feel different. Our golf teams will talk the night before a tournament about the course they are about to play. We will do a hole-by-hole and talk about certain positions that are better to be in to play each hole. During a round I feel my job is to make sure that my athletes stay focused on the hole they are playing, which may be difficult if they just got done making a mess of the last hole they played. One thing I've noticed is that when I'm around to talk with my players I can help them; whereas, if I'm not there for them, I can't help them.

During the season here are some drills that I will do with my team. There are times that these drills can be tedious and frustrate my players, yet they know the importance of each one.

### **Up/Downs (chip/putt)**

I will place 4 or 5 aiming sticks around the practice green. Each player will have to get Up and Down from each stick to each of the holes on the practice green. The players can only use one ball and cannot move to the next hole or stick until they complete the Up/Down. This drill really focuses on making good chips and putts. If players find this to be tedious, have them use a different club for each hole.

### **5/5 putting drill**

This drill is done best if only one person is putting to a hole. The player will make five putts consecutively from one foot, then from two feet, three feet, four feet and five feet. If at any time they miss a putt, they start over at one foot. So they will have to make 25 consecutive putts to complete this drill. Most young players will get sloppy with the one or two footers and this is a great time to reemphasize that every stroke counts the same so take time on every putt.

### **Partner contest**

I usually keep twelve players, so for this drill I will partner my #1 with my #12 and #2 with #11 and so on until we have six groups. We are lucky enough to practice at a facility that has three practice holes, but you could use any three holes for this. There are three stages for this team-building contest. Stage 1 groups play three holes alternate shot. Stage 2 each partner will putt from 3, 5, 8 and 10 feet. Stage 3 is four up and downs from areas around the green; I make two somewhat easy and two somewhat hard. When they finish, the total score is similar to a normal nine-hole score for an individual. This is a very fun contest because the partners will cheer each other on, and it can get exciting.

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# CREATING MOTIVATION AMONG FEMALE ATHLETES

## Chuck Morgan – Lincoln East – Girls Soccer



I have been coaching girls soccer for over twenty years and have made it a mission to learn how to better serve and coach them. I've read psychology books, attended seminars, I've interviewed female military personnel, and I've even asked my wife for help on this topic. But over the past few years I've come to the conclusion that the question I should be asking is, "How do I get my athletes to have better motivation?"

Sure, I can pump the kids up before a game. I have given some pretty inspiring motivational speeches in pre-game talks. Over the past 15 years as head coach, I also have sent motivational letters to each member of our team on every game-day. But fiery speeches fade after the adrenalin settles down, and words on a piece of paper are soon forgotten when the starting whistle blows. I've come to understand that real motivation comes from the athlete not the coach. When the athlete understands that she or he is the only one who controls their own motivation, things begin to open up to them. Motivation comes from within. If the athlete depends on you for that motivation, how can she grow as a person or athlete?

When I was in the Army, as a private, I was taught the role of the squad leader who led me. In the event he was no longer able to lead the squad, I would be able to step into that role and keep the squad moving. As a squad leader, I was taught the role of the Platoon Sargent, and so on and so on... That has been the model the Army has used since its beginning and, to an extent, that is what I'm trying to convey. A motivated individual can take charge in given situations. A coach can't be on the field, but a motivated player can coach on the field. Motivation leads to improvisation, adaptability, and how to overcome adversity!

You can't control everything as a coach. If you try to do it all and take the creativity and motivation away from your team and athletes, you'll end up with a recipe for disaster. So what can we do?

Encourage creativity from your team. For the most part, kids feel like everything is controlled in their lives. Give them a chance for input. Allow them the choice to make team decisions.

In a pre-season meeting, I met with my seniors and captains. Together, they decided on our team mission statement. They designed our team shirt and motto. They laid out the plan for individual and team expectations. They set team rules and talked about how they would enforce them. As the stewards of our team, they set standards, implemented team rules, and defined successes they hope to achieve this season. This was empowering for them and truly motivational. They can't wait to get started because they are the vested owners of the program. It is their team!

Make sure you take time to know your athletes. Not just as players, but as students, and people. I have set aside one day every two weeks to meet with each one of my players. It may only be for twenty or so minutes, but it works. I put out a calendar and ask them to choose a day they would like to meet and just talk. What do we talk about? Anything they want to. I try not to concentrate on the sport, but on life things ... school, college aspirations, professions, anything that comes to mind. Knowing that you truly care about them as a person, that you are willing to make time just for them, is a powerful thing. I believe they see your willingness to commit to them and you will see the same motivation and commitment from them.

The single most motivational thing I can do as a coach is the simplest. I try to make contact with them each and everyday. As they pass in the halls between classes, or at lunch, I try to say something to them. On the practice field, I have learned to start off every critique with a positive statement before I try to help correct something gone awry. I think it is especially important to talk to the players that are not always in the spotlight but who make it to practice everyday and try.

I remember listening to Anson Dorrance as a guest speaker brought in by the NSAA. He told us that women's teams are different from men's. Men tend to be more individualistic, but women move and act as a committee. If you upset one, you upset them all. As a coach you need to be mindful that women athletes work and train as hard as anyone, and accordingly should be treated the same. However, understand that when coaching women, you must realize that they are generally connected to and protective of one another. Treat them with respect always, show you truly care, and laugh with them once in a while. That's how I motivate a team.

*Coach Morgan was born in La Rochelle, France and raised in Germany until the age of 15, where he played soccer in youth leagues in Kaiserslautern, Pirmasens, and Ulm, Germany. He has coached soccer for 29 years, coaching in the high school level for the past 21 years, four years as the Lincoln East JV coach and five years as the Varsity assistant. He is entering his 13th year as the head coach of Lincoln East girls program.*

*In his previous 12 years as head coach, he has guided Lincoln East to two state championships and one state runner-up finish. He has compiled a high school varsity record of 288-73. Coach Morgan has his undergraduate Degree from the University of Nebraska in Geography and History and a Masters Degree from Nebraska Wesleyan University in Historical Studies.*

# I BELONG<sub>x2</sub>

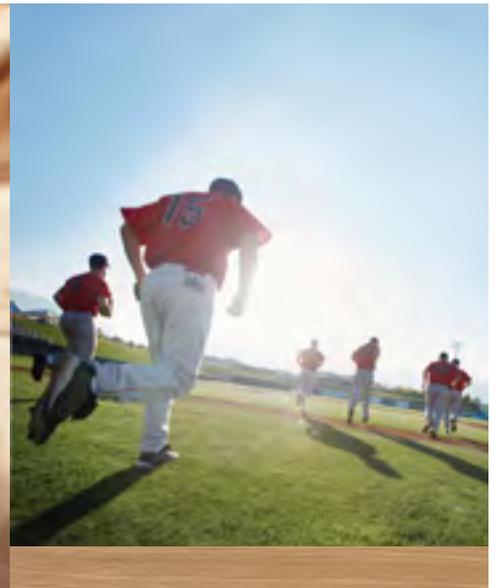
## Jason Wiese, Arlington Public Schools

- Geography, World History, Psychology, Sociology teacher
- Head coach, girls' golf; head coach, junior high boys' basketball; head coach, junior high track
- Arlington Education Association past president; past vice president; past head negotiator; member, NSEA Board of Directors

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# GETTING READY TO OUTKICK YOUR COMPETITION THIS TRACK SEASON

Matt Musiel – Lincoln North Star – Boys & Girls Track & Field



How many of you High School track runners have been outkicked by another runner in a race? Safe to say everyone has been in that situation at one time or another. Being outkicked in a final homestretch is pretty common sometime in your career. It's nothing to be ashamed of because even word class runners routinely get outkicked at the end of races.

Being a great kicker is one of distance running's most difficult challenges. If

you think about it most races from middle distance to distance races are won on a kick.

Good kicking demands many qualities. You need to have strength and speed, smart pacing, efficient running form, confidence, and be ready to make that commitment to "go" in a split decision. At Lincoln North Star our middle distance/distance track runners are continuously working on that kick throughout the track season. By working on the following guidelines I believe you will have the confidence and get the most out of what you were given when it comes to showing that speed at the end of a race.

**1. Be strong.** I believe that speed comes from strength. To be fast at the finish of an 800, 1600, or 3200 meter race first you have to be in shape from overall training. If you are not fit you won't be able to hold a good pace, compete well, and have the strength to kick. Strength comes from steady miles over the course of many weeks, months and even years of training, as well as from workouts such as hill running, track intervals, and tempo runs.

**2. Run smart.** How much energy do you have at the end of a race? Finding that answer is based on how much energy you saved up to that point. The better shape you are in the easier it is to conserve energy. But you can also save also of energy with proper racing. It always baffles

me to see high school runners, for example boys that run their first lap in the 1600 meters in sixty seconds or the two milers that sprint out to a seventy second first lap. Sure there are a handful of runners that can maintain that pace but they are a minority when it comes to high school track and field. No your ability and swallow your ego if you want that new P.R. (personal record)

**3. Run smooth.** Conserving energy also depends on your form. If you waste energy by flailing your arms, slouching, not running "tall" you will waste energy, tire sooner, and lose that fire from your kick. Work on this during your practice sessions. It's always good to see your form at the end of races by having your parents or coach video tape yourself to see if there are any improvements or corrections that can be corrected.

**4. A kick is a sprint.** You have to become like a sprinter who runs the 100 meters. You will have to make that transition from distance runner, which you have been mainly heel-toe with a controlled stride and arm carry, to sprint mode in which you run on the balls of your feet and pump your knees and arms hard as you drive to the finish line. Maintaining that relaxed sprint without pressing is the key. If you press and tighten up you will get that tight feeling in the arms, neck, and shoulders. Big arms and high knees are two words to live by.

**5. Practice kick workouts.** There are many workouts out there that your high school coach will have you do to work on that kick. Pickups are simple runs varying in distance from 50 to 200 meters that "pick up" the pace of the run with rest between each rep. Take your time between reps and do anywhere from 6-20 of these. Another workout to do after your main speed session would be strides. Strides are more of a continuous run of 100-200 meter distances that maintain a relaxed but faster pace effort that also works on your form when tired.

Finally, developing a kick at the end of your race is something all high school runners can do. All young runners have different amounts of slow and fast-twitch muscle-fibers which we can't control because of heredity and genes but what you can control is the developing your own ability to kick and crossing the finish line knowing you gave it your all.

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# THE BENEFITS & IMPLEMENTATION OF THICK BARS INTO A HIGH SCHOOL STRENGTH TRAINING PROGRAM

Kyle Van Wyk, MSED, CSCS



The incorporation of thick-handled barbells and dumbbells into strength training programs has been practiced by strength competitors and coaches for decades and is re-gaining recognition within weightlifting and strength coaching circles. Compared to a standard barbell that has a 1.1 inch grip diameter, a thick bar has a grip diameter that measures 2 inches or greater. As early as the 1920s, training with thick bars has been endorsed

throughout the decades in practical application texts written by several notable and respected strength coaches. Due to their larger handle size, which is perceived to result in an increased effort to grip the barbell while performing repetitions, thick bars are believed to improve grip strength, increase muscle activation in the hands and forearms, and induce muscular hypertrophy to the forearm muscles while performing traditional upper-body exercises. These types of adaptations can benefit high school athletes who compete in sports that require intense gripping actions such as football and wrestling, and their inclusion into a strength training program is simple due to the fact that most traditional upper-body resistance training exercises (pulling, pressing, elbow flexion, elbow extension, etc.) can still be performed using a thick bar. While thick bars and thick-handled dumbbells can be expensive, there is an affordable alternative that turns any standard barbell or pair of dumbbells into thick-handled equipment.

In what is considered to be a classic text in strength training circles, Calvert (1924) describes the use of thick-handled barbells and dumbbells as the best way to develop and improve gripping power. His recommendation is to use a grip diameter that is at least two inches or larger in order to create this unique training stimulus. Channell (1990) discusses the practical utilization of thick-bar training in an article published by the National Strength and Conditioning Association. He describes the thick bar's versatility in that it can be used for pressing exercises such as the bench press, incline bench press, and overhead press as well as pulling exercises such as dumbbell rows, pull-ups, and arm curls. Channell highlights the training stimulus of increased effort exerted by the forearm flexor and extensor muscles during the eccentric part of a repetition. An individual's grip on the bar becomes a major component of the exercise and must be engaged the entire time while the movement is being performed. Kubik (1996) devotes an entire chapter in his book to thick-bar training. He believes that the effectiveness of thick bars comes from the increased intensity that is required in order to securely grip them during an entire set of a particular exercise. He goes on to explain that he believes this stimulus leads to an improvement in the connection between the brain, nervous system, and muscles due to the constant increased gripping intensity and mental focus that is required in order to perform exercises, especially those of pulling and gripping nature. More recently, Poliquin

(2010) promotes thick-bar training by advocating its ability to increase motor unit activation as well. He postulates that this is a result from staying fully engaged from a grip and mental perspective because of the required increased power that is needed in order to complete repetitions. While these texts aren't scientific in nature, it shows that thick-bar training has been discussed and endorsed for quite some time.



From a scientific perspective, although there have been a limited number of studies devoted to this topic there is evidence that handle size has an effect on muscle activation and effort as well as muscular size. Grant, Habes, and Steward (1992) performed a work ergonomic study where forearm muscle activation was measured while completing a prescribed work protocol that utilized weighted handles of differing grip sizes. It was observed that muscle activation and perceived effort were greater when using the largest handle size. Ratamess, Faigenbaum, Mangine, Hoffman, and Kang (2007) performed a study that observed the effect of various barbell handle sizes (1.1, 2, and 3-inch bars) on 1-RM testing for six exercises (deadlift, bent-over row, upright row, bench press, shoulder press, and arm curl). Although reductions in 1-RM loads were recorded for the deadlift and upper-body pulling exercises when using the 2-inch and 3-inch bars, test subjects noted that they experienced more soreness in their forearms indicating that there was possibly a greater stimulus to the muscles that are responsible for gripping the bar. Lastly, a master's thesis conducted by Van Wyk (2015) observed that thick-bar training is capable of significantly increasing forearm muscle size compared to the utilization of a standard barbell, which resulted in no change in forearm muscle size. Additionally, it is important to remember that an increase in muscular size is strongly associated with an increase in muscular strength. Although it was not measured, it is conceivable to think that an increase in grip strength would have resulted from the thick-bar training as well.

While it is important to acknowledge and understand both reputable endorsements and scientific evidence, knowing how to implement

the safe and practical application of thick-bar training into a workout might be of more value to coaches. Fortunately for strength coaches, the incorporation of thick bars into a training plan is done rather easily due to the fact that most strength exercises performed with a barbell or dumbbells can also be performed with thick-handled equipment. Upper-body movements that are pulling in nature such as rows, pull-ups, lat pull-downs, and arm curls will be more difficult to perform since gripping and holding on to the barbell or dumbbells will be more challenging. As a result, initial use of thick bars might require the use of lighter loads while the athlete's grip strength improves enough to handle heavier loads. Thick-bar training can also be beneficial while performing pressing exercises as well. Due to a larger grip diameter, the load of the barbell is displaced over a greater surface area in the hands and less stress is placed on the athlete's wrists. Lastly, thick-handled barbells and dumbbells can be used while performing lower body movements as well. Exercises such as the barbell RDL, dumbbell RDL, dumbbell lunges, and dumbbell split-squat will promote lower body strength while simultaneously working on grip strength. With the inclusion of functional and applicable grip strength work into a standard workout, extra time, sets, and reps will not need to be devoted to exercises that solely focus on grip strength such as wrist curls and wrist extensions.



Thick-handled pieces of equipment are rather expensive, however. If a high school weight room does have a thick bar, there is typically just one and it is not very feasible to expect several athletes to be able to use it to its full potential. Fortunately, there is an alternative called Fat Gripz that work seamlessly with both barbells and dumbbells and are much more affordable which might allow a coach to purchase several pairs for the same price of one thick bar. Fat Gripz are hand-sized sleeves made of durable rubber that can easily be placed onto a barbell or dumbbells. You simply position them in the same area on a barbell that you would typically grip, but now you have a much thicker handle

to grasp. They could also be placed on a pull-up bar, lat pull-down handle, or dips station in order to help take full advantage of their versatility. It is common for a coach or athlete to wrap a towel around a barbell in order to create a "thick bar" effect, but the grip diameter of the bar will become smaller when the coiled towel is gripped with intensity. The rubber material in which Fat Gripz are constructed remains solid throughout while performing repetitions.

In conclusion, the use of thick-handled equipment can provide any weight room with more variety in training as well as an added challenge and increased stimulus that could benefit athletes, particularly those who compete in sports that require intense gripping actions. Wholesale changes are not needed in order to incorporate thick-bar training into a strength program as most traditional upper-body exercises and even several lower-body exercises can be performed with thick-handled equipment. An affordable alternative to thick-handled barbells and dumbbells such as Fat Gripz are available so that coaches can incorporate this training method without putting a considerable dent into the school's sport equipment budget. As a result, high school athletes have the opportunity to use a training tool that has a low learning curve, is safe to use, and provides a stimulus that could support progress in physical training that would then ideally translate to improvements in competitive performance.

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# 2016 GIRLS BASKETBALL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS



Class A — Lincoln East



Class B — Waverly



Class C1 — Lincoln Christian



Class C2 — Superior



Class D1 — Cambridge



Class D2 — Lyons-Decatur



# 2016 BOYS BASKETBALL SPORTSMANSHIP AWARDS



Class A — Fremont



Class B — Gretna



Class C1 — O'Neill



Class C2 — Battle Creek



Class D1 — Lourdes Central Catholic



Class D2 — Mead





# 2016 WINTER STATE CHAMPION COACHES

## Wrestling

Class A	Doug Denson	Millard South
Class B	Chas DeVeter	Omaha Skutt Catholic
Class C	Tahner Thiem	David City
Class D	Tyler Herman	Amherst

## Wrestling Duals

Class A	Doug Denson	Millard South
Class B	Curtis Gocke	Plattsmouth
Class C	Tahner Thiem	David City
Class D	Tyler Herman	Amherst

## Swimming

Girls	Leigh Ann Fetter-Witt	Lincoln Southwest
Boys	Tom Beck	Omaha Creighton Prep

## Girls' Basketball

Class A	Dennis Prichard	Lincoln East
Class B	Terry Graver	Elkhorn South
Class C1	Rick Petri	Kearney Catholic
Class C2	Aaron Losing	Crofton
Class D1	Troy Haberman	Emerson-Hubbard
Class D2	Steve Wieseler	Wynot

## Boys' Basketball

Class A	Bruce Chubick	Omaha South
Class B	Brad Freeken	Gretna
Class C1	Mike Weiss	Bishop Neumann
Class C2	Kevin Asher	Hastings St. Cecilia
Class D1	Joe Tynon	Lourdes Central Catholic
Class D2	Eric Kessler	Humphrey St. Francis

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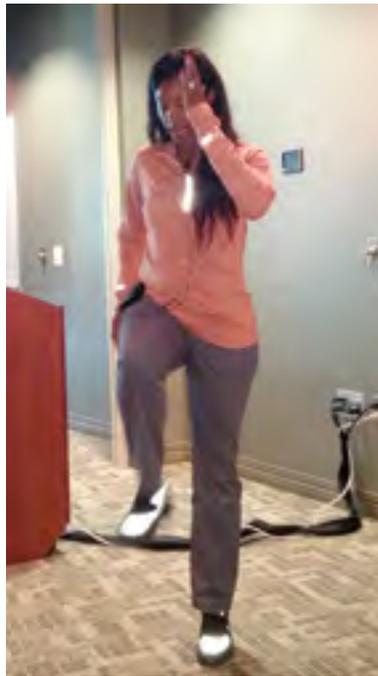
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# NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOL COACHES NAMED AS NATIONAL COACH OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

The National High School Athletic Coaches Association (NHSACA) and the Nebraska Coaches Association (NCA) announced the advancement of 11 coaches and an athletic director as finalists for the National High School Athletic Coaches Association national coach of the year:

Steve	Larson	Keamey	Asst COTY, Boys'
Mark	Armstrong	Lincoln Southwest	Athletic Director
Frank	Ryan	Millard West	Baseball
Duane	Mendlik	Wisner-Pilger	Basketball, Boys'
Sean	McMahon	Fremont	Cross Country, Boys'
Jeff	Bellar	Norfolk Catholic	Football
Steve	Ekstrom	Minden	Golf
Patrick	DiBiase	Omaha Marian	Swimming & Diving
Troy	Saulsbury	Keamey	Tennis
Dean	Korus	Humphrey St. Francis	Track & Field, Girls'
Rochelle	Rohlf	Omaha Marian	Volleyball
Tyler	Herman	Amherst	Wrestling

Eight finalists from across the nation, in nineteen recognized sports categories will be honored during the National Coach of the Year Awards Banquet which will take place at the NHSACA's national convention in Louisville, KY on the evening of June 29, 2016. The highlight of the banquet will be the naming of the NHSACA national coach of the year in nineteen recognized sports categories.

All Nebraska coaches were selected for this national honor by the NCA. The selection is based on longevity, service to high school athletics, honors, championship years, and winning parentage. The nominees and finalists are evaluated by experts in the field of coaching using a sport-specific rubrics to assign points in each category. NHSACA is the oldest coaches association in the nation formed by coaches, for coaches, and has been recognizing national coaches of the year since 1978.



Past NCA President, Bob Whitehouse of Papillion (center), accepts his induction into the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association' Hall of Fame in Orlando, FL on December 15, 2015 – NCA Photo

## NCA Award Programs Benefit Coaches & Students

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

This program recognizes different levels of coaching achievement in both individual and team sports. The Level I, II, and III certificates will be presented at the NCA Multi-Sport Clinic in July. The Level IV winners receive a plaque presented at the NCA Award Banquet on July 24 in Lincoln.

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

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

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

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

#### **Service Award Criteria:**

NCA member for at least 10 years

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

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

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

### **Nebraska Coaches Association/Country Inn & Suites Scholarship: (Deadline April 18)**

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

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

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

#### **Scholarship Criteria:**

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

Scholarship winners will be announced in early May.

### **Ed Johnson Scholarship (Deadline April 11)**

The award is given to a senior boy who is a member of a high school varsity basketball team in the State of Nebraska. A medal and \$300 cash award will be presented to the recipient at the halftime of the NCA All-Star Boys' Basketball Game (July 25, 2016), and a travelling plaque will be presented to the recipient's head coach. For more information: <http://www.ncacoach.org/edjohnson.php>

#### **Scholarship Criteria:**

Excellence in Scholarship Leadership Sportsmanship Loyalty Citizenship.

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

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

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

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

### **Special NCA Awards (Deadline April 1)**

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

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

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

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 Tumbling Millard West  
 Sideline Millard West

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 Tumbling Elkhorn South  
 Sideline Skutt Catholic

## Class A/B

Game Day Skutt Catholic

## Class C1 Cheer

Non-tumbling Cozad  
 Sideline Norfolk Catholic

## Class C2 Cheer

Non-tumbling Elmwood-Murdock  
 Sideline Weeping Water

## Class C1/C2

Game Day Broken Bow

## Class D Cheer

Non-tumbling Alma  
 Sideline Alma

## Class A Dance

High Kick Lincoln Northeast  
 Hip Hop Millard South  
 Jazz Millard North  
 Pom Millard North

## Class B Dance

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

## Class C1 Dance

High Kick Boone Central  
 Hip Hop Louisville  
 Jazz Grand Island Central Catholic  
 Pom Norfolk Catholic

## Class C2 Dance

High Kick Centura  
 Hip Hop Hartington Cedar Catholic  
 Jazz Lutheran High Northeast  
 Pom North Platte St. Pat's

## Class D Dance

Hip Hop Archbishop Bergan  
 Jazz Friend  
 Pom Archbishop Bergan

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 Class B Aurora  
 Class C1 Johnson County Central  
 Class C2 Loup City  
 Class D Alma

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- Facilities/Operations Managers
- Strength & Conditioning Coaches

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# NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD

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## SCHEDULE ONE OF THE BELOW PROGRAMS FOR YOUR CLASS OR TEAM!

**BOOT CAMP  
CHALLENGE**



**WARRIOR  
CHALLENGE**



### TEAM OR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Warrior Challenge
- Football Toss
- Basketball Toss
- Boot Camp Challenge
- Fitness Challenge
- Army Physical Fitness Program
- School Banner Program

### CLASS PRESENTATIONS

- Career Exploration
- H.E.A.R. (Anti-bullying)
- Health & Nutrition
- Conflict Resolution
- Diversity
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Communication
- Paying for College
- Heritage Outreach
- Homeland Security
- Budgeting
- Leadership
- Iraq/Afghanistan Speaker
- Problem Solving
- Study Techniques



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