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Cheer and dance teams back-to-back champs

By Koby Bales

The school dance and cheer teams won state champion hardware from the State Dance and Cheer competition held at the Heartland Events Center in Grand Island, Nebraska. The Class C competitions for dance occurred on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, and the Class C cheer competition was held on Saturday, February 20, 2021 at the Heartland Event Center.

In the dance competition, pom division, the team earned a total of 86.50 points, barely edging out the competition for the gold. The dance team beat out the next closest competitor, Kearney Catholic, by 2.6 points. Then in the jazz division, the team garnered 87.15 points to win the championship. The dance team edged out Wahoo winning by 3.5 points to secure the gold. This win was the program's eleventh jazz championship.

"I felt relieved that all our hard work paid off. I was pretty happy about it," Ellie Alberts (12) said.

For the second consecutive year, the GICC cheerleaders won the state championship in the game day division. A total team effort, all the ladies displayed their athletic abilities and cheer skills during the competition. Another big factor in their win was crowd participation. Crusader Nation showed up in droves to support the cheer team.

In order to abide by the new COVID-19 rules, and for the first time in the state competition's history, the events were split up into sessions. Each class was given its own session, allowing for smaller crowds.

"This year was split up into four days, so two days were for cheer and two days were for dance. Also, we had half of the usual fans there, so not everyone that wanted to come could watch," stated Maddison Urbanski (12).

In addition, the teams competing had to wear masks while warming up and



Photo By Koby Bales

The dance team performs at the State Dance Competition on February 17, 2021, at the Eihusen Arena in Grand Island. The team won first in jazz and pom.

could not sit on the court during the award presentation.

"After everyone was done competing, we would usually go down to the center on the mats and just hang out with the other teams, but this year we didn't get to," Urbanski said about the changes.

The dance team added two more championships to their storied history. The team competed in the poms and jazz competitions. It was not an easy road to a championship for the girls as they faced tough competition in Wahoo, Conestoga, and Kearney Catholic.

Leading up to the competition, the dance team practiced three days a week at six in the morning. While at practice, they would run through their performance multiple times. Also, the team performed at halftime of the girls and boys varsity basketball games.

The 2020-21 senior class was the first in school history to win back-to-back double state championships. With these two state championships, the dance team now has eighteen state championships.

"Being on the dance team has been the best part of high school for me. It brought me the best friends and teammates I could have asked for," Alberts stated about being a part of the dance team.

The cheer team had early morning practices where they had to condition to build up their stamina. Along with their early morning practices, they also cheered on the sidelines at all home basketball games.

For the game day event, the cheer team took the stage and led the crowd in a cheer using props, while the judges determined whether the cheerleaders were to perform an offensive or defensive chant, and ended with the cheer team performing the school fight song.

This year's state competition caused heightened nerves for the team. Due to COVID-19, they were not allowed to compete against any other teams throughout the season.

"It's a little bit different since we don't compete against other cheer teams at all before state, so we really don't know what anyone is like. We just have to give it our all when we go out and perform," Urbanski noted.

All the nerves turned out to be worth it when the judges announced they had won the competition.

"It was a big rush for everyone. There was a lot of excitement and shock," Urbanski remarked.

Under Head Coach Makenzie Dunham, the cheer team looks to continue their success and create a new legacy at the school. The cheer team will begin their state title defense for next year as try-outs start on Saturday, April 24, 2021.



Photo By Koby Bales

Hannah Gellatly (10) tries to get the crowd involved during the State Cheer Competition on February 20, 2021, at the Eihusen Arena in Grand Island.

Striv provides streaming services for GICC

By Hayden Price

Ryan Smith, a science teacher, felt something was missing when he first arrived at Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC). Starting a school streaming service for activities was something Smith decided to spearhead, and after examining his options, he decided that becoming associated with Striv would be the most beneficial for the school.

"My first year here, when I tried to figure out how our teams were doing on the road, I couldn't find anything... So I did some research and found the Striv company and pushed to get that here, so people can watch if they can't make it," stated Smith.

Since the genesis of a broadcasting organization at the school, Striv has soared in popularity. Smith shared that the most viewers they have ever had is 2,300 and the event being covered was the first game on the 'Sader Sod. School masses and sporting events are now streamed live and some events are archived which allows for later viewing.

Jackson Henry (11) was one of the first individuals involved with Striv at GICC. Henry has broadcasted at volleyball, basketball, and football games for a little over a year. Through his involvement in Striv, Henry has learned so much about striving services.

"It [Striv] entails working cameras, because we have a few different cameras that we use to Striv the games, and then there's computers, which involve all those highlights that you see... We have to transfer them and roll them through, and then you have your two announcers that will commentate the game," shared Henry.

Because striving is a complicated

process, Smith now has many students involved in Striv. Participation in the activity is incentivized by school service hours. Students who have sought involvement in Striv since its beginning range from sixth-graders to twelfth-graders; over the past year, Smith stated that 20 students have helped with Striv. Smith can see the benefits that the activity presents to students every time they cover an event.

"It [Striv] gets them [students] out of their comfort zone. It isn't something that they've done before, especially the commentating. Talking, trying to inform people, and learning new skills that aren't necessarily taught in any of our classes here," shared Smith.

Becoming a broadcaster is not without its challenges. Announcers need a base knowledge of sports terminology, and also have to keep the conversation going with their fellow announcers while speaking with diction and confidence. Henry found that keeping the conversation going can be a difficult task.

"Definitely filling dead air time, so being able to, when the game is boring, come up with things to talk about or being able to play-by-play run the game without making it boring," shared Henry.

Being an announcer for the school's Striv program has made Henry a familiar voice around town. With his signature phrases like "that's money," he has become a staple broadcaster. The school's broad fan base takes notice of his dedication to broadcasting and even compliments him in public for his work. These compliments have become increasingly common and have fostered a love of broadcasting for



Photo By Hayden Price

Jackson Henry (11) and Striv sponsor Ryan Smith commentate a sub-district game at Grand Island Central Catholic on February 25, 2021, against Centennial High School.

Henry.

"I'll walk into Walmart, and I'll see somebody that I haven't seen in years, and they will be like, 'Do you Striv the Crusader basketball games?'. And I go 'yeah' and they go, 'That's so awesome!'... I enjoy that a lot," described Henry.

Because of experiences like these and the many hours he has dedicated to Striv, Henry has reconsidered his career plans. The experiences that high school activities provide can help teens discern the right path for their professional life, and it

appears Striv has done just that for Henry.

"My ideal career has changed. From business to sports broadcasting, and I think that it would be a lot more fun if I went into sports broadcasting," concluded Henry.

The relatively-new program at GICC has proven valuable to Crusader fans for the past year. Virus or no virus, the easy accessibility of merely doing a quick search to tune into Crusader games and activities is due to GICC strivers' dedication.

Hehnke shares advice for students

By Angela Messere

For many students at Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC), the college application process is just around the corner. Between preparing for the ACT, applying to various colleges, and the best choice, high school students have many options to consider that could be considered overwhelming. However, counselor Dr. Julie Hehnke has been resourceful in aiding students in their decision-making regarding college.

One of the first decisions students often wonder about is when is the right time to start looking for a college? Hehnke believes that the sooner an individual looks at colleges, the better.

"It is never is too early... I think it's even good to start looking at them, even

middle school aged just to look and see what's out there... And then to kind of start getting more serious of what you really want to do and what meets your needs at probably about eleventh-grade. By then, you should have a better idea of what you want to do....," stated Hehnke.

There are also many different factors to consider when choosing a college. However, Hehnke uses a program called *My Big Future* that can not only help organize personal priorities but also help recommend a college tailored to the individual.

"There's an app I like students to use called *My Big Future*. You can put in things like the size of the college, how far away from home, your major or what you're

interested in studying... You put in all the things that are important to you, and then it will take all of those things... and it helps you by giving you a list of colleges that match up... It makes you really reconsider what's important, and that helps match up the college... using things like that help us," said Hehnke.

Along with choosing the right college, students should prepare themselves for college entrance exams, such as the ACT. Hehnke suggests that preparation, as well as study tips and tricks, can lead the student to success.

"Doing well and really having a strong foundation in your math classes, especially Algebra [will help]... As you start taking your classes, you really start learning things and getting a foundation, which is what the ACT is based on... English and math start really early, and if you don't have that, then you need to back up and figure it out. If you are in a crunch, you have to think of tips and tricks, and strategies. I always say take the ACT three

times... if not more," explained Hehnke.

College preparation is not finished once the student has been accepted. Hehnke suggests that current seniors revisit their college, as well as talk to the college administration on what the expectations will be in the first semester.

"If they have decided... go back and go on a revisit [to the college]. When you do that if you know what you are going to study... Ask to meet with the Dean of Students for that department, some teachers, and even some students... so you can really get a feel of what they think and their insight into it. Talk to the admissions people, talk to the financial aid and scholarship people, and make sure you have a good understanding of housing and how it works, as well as when you have to get your application in. Lots of times, kids forget that, and they don't get what they want, and they are disappointed. Just make sure you're hitting all of those deadline dates," concluded Hehnke.

March - May Senior Checklist (nitrocollege.com)

March

Look for financial aid letters in the mail
Work with your parents so you understand what college will look like financially
Push for more scholarships

April

Visit or revisit your college selection
Review the advantages and disadvantages of your college selections
Compare financial aid awards

May

Work on college decisions with your parents
Be ready for National College Decision Day, May 1
If you have turned down schools, send them thank you notes
Request an official transcript
Make sure there is nothing else the financial aid office needs from you



Artists win statewide recognition for pieces

By Angela Messere and Hayden Price

Hailey Asche (12) was awarded Gold recognition for her sketch titled *Sweet* from the Nebraska State Scholastic Art competition. This sketch took Asche about one week of in-class work. Asche has been in art for three years and especially enjoys sketching portraits like this one. Asche had no real inspiration for the sketch.

"It was just a random picture. That's how I usually do portraits," stated Asche.

Art teacher Dawn Zulkoski entered the sketch into the running without Asche's knowledge, and the sketch was judged by art professionals. Asche was just as surprised as everyone else when she found out that she received the highest ranking that the competition offers.

"Honestly, I didn't even realize I was in the running," concluded Asche.



Photo By Barb Yager-Wach



Photo By Barb Yager-Wach

Makenzie Clausen (7) received a Gold award at the Nebraska State Scholastic Art competition. Clausen was recognized on February 11, 2021, for her piece titled *Dots Express*.

"Makenzie puts forth great effort to be creative. Her project was a pointillism painting inspired by Georges Seurat," stated Zulkoski.



Photo By Barb Yager-Wach

Michael Erives (9) received Honorable Mention at the Nebraska State Scholastic Art competition. Erives was recognized on February 11, 2021, for his piece titled *Man's Best Friend*.

"Hailey and Michael are natural artists. They both have a great eye for detail and skill," shared Zulkoski.



Photo By Barb Yager-Wach

Molly Graybill (8) received a Silver award at the Nebraska State Scholastic Art competition. Graybill was recognized on February 11, 2021, for her piece titled *Checked Delight*.

"The technique that Molly put in her weaving took much thought, strategy and concentration," shared Zulkoski.

Molly Graybill (8) received a Silver award at the Nebraska State Scholastic Art competition. Graybill was recognized on February 11, 2021, for her piece titled *Checked Delight*.

"The technique that Molly put in her weaving took much thought, strategy and concentration," shared Zulkoski.



Photo By Barb Yager-Wach

Emely Gutierrez (8) received a Silver award at the Nebraska State Scholastic Art competition. Gutierrez was recognized on February 11, 2021, for her piece titled *Color of Nature*.

"Emely and Molly are always challenging themselves," stated Zulkoski.

Fine arts activities prove to be valuable to participants

By Hayden Price



Hayden Price (12), Editor-in-Chief, The Lance

Some of my fondest memories at Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) have been from my participation in fine arts activities. Saturdays at speech meets have been filled with nervous joy for me for years. The excitement at these meets is unparalleled to any other experiences I have had.

Overall, society places a great emphasis on participation in athletics, but fine arts are often overlooked. I say this not to imply that athletics are over-hyped in their benefits but that the benefits of fine arts classes and clubs are often overlooked.

One benefit of fine arts is the enrichment of academic performance. In a comprehensive report sponsored by the [Americans for the Arts and Vans Custom Culture](#), it was reported, "A student involved in the arts is four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement." The arts require students to utilize creativity. By using visual skills and communication, amongst other talents, fine art participants acquire thinking skills that elevate them to a higher level of reasoning.

In a study referenced by the [President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities](#) in 2011, the study compared three arts integrated-focused schools against three control schools; the results were telling. The report shares, "The AIMS school with the highest percentage of minority and low-income students reduced the reading gap by 14 percentage points and the math gap by 26 percentage points over a three-year period." For further insight, the report shares that at the control schools, students' proficiency levels decreased by 4.5% over the same period.

There are plenty of other studies that prove that academic achievement is vastly improved with participation in fine arts. Yet, funding levels do not reflect the benefits of the arts. An article from [K-12 Dive](#) described, "81% of schools reported they had a dedicated arts budget for students for the 2018-19 school year — a significant drop from the 89% for the 2017-18 school year." If fine arts have proven to influence students academically in a positive way, schools should fully fund fine arts programs. The purpose of schools, in my opinion, is to provide students with means of learning as best they can and achieving

as much as they can. Funding the arts bolsters this purpose.

The benefits of fine arts are not just academic. Statistics show that socially the arts are beneficial to students. Quite honestly, it does not take statistics to prove this. In my own experience, I have met individuals I likely would not have met at school if I did not participate in fine arts. My experience with activities such as speech has allowed me to meet students at GICC from all high school grade levels and students from other area schools. (Not to mention that my involvement in the GICC Speech Team and One-Act Team has improved my public speaking abilities.) The talents acquired through fine arts foster a path of success for participants.

Getting involved in fine arts in high school does not just impact one during their years of involvement. The benefits are lifelong. An article from [The Crimson White](#) quotes an associate professor of music education who stated, "People who have a background in the arts are 55.38 percent more likely to have attended college and are significantly less likely to be arrested."

Arts benefit individuals academically, socially, and in a long-term way. The problem is there is stigmatization surrounding the arts. We need to do a better job of understanding and explaining the benefits of the arts. GICC may be the exception, but nationwide the arts are being discredited and defunded.

An [Ed Source](#) article referenced a report from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which describes in the western United States, amongst eighth-grade students, art class enrollment fell from 35% in 2008 to 33% in 2016. A lack of arts-related classes in middle school leads to decreased participation in fine art activities in high school. As funding soars for athletic activities, the arts are often left behind.

I have referenced this outrageous expenditure before in an editorial, and I will reference it once more. In McKinney, Texas, an [American School and University](#) article shared that the independent school district is building a 12,000 seat stadium, which costs \$70 million. Taxpayers funded the stadium through bond initiatives.

Lavish expenditures like this put into perspective the disparities between funding of athletics and fine arts.

There is a solution, which does not impact the funding of athletics but boosts fine arts funding. Because I am also involved in a sport, I know there are numerous benefits to athletics as well; this solution accounts for these benefits. The solution entails working with nonprofits, corporations, and parents to provide adequate funding to expand arts programs.

In the aforementioned EdSource article, it is shared that a school district in Orange County, California, Irvine Unified, has half of its students enrolled in some type of an art class. This high enrollment is due to \$2 million in corporate and parent donations. To put this amount into perspective, at high schools throughout this district, each school has three or four jazz bands and multiple orchestra classes.

With increased knowledge of what activities like band, orchestra, and choir offer, students of all socioeconomic standings can be positively impacted by participating. Advocacy of the arts can not be lost at this time. Schools must ensure funding prioritizes healthy student activities. An escape to theatre or an instrument may be all that a student has to look forward to in a given day. The arts can be life-saving.

At GICC, we are blessed to have excellent fine arts programs and teachers leading these programs. As you find ways to fill your free time, students, forget not the many opportunities our school presents in the fine arts.

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Editorial Policy
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 Journalism Dept.
 Grand Island Central Catholic Middle and High School
 1200 N. Ruby Ave
 Grand Island, NE 68803

Any and all submissions must be signed to be considered for publication, and the editor reserves the right to edit or print any submissions.

Letter(s) to the Editor

Letter to the Editor:
 I would like to commend the J-crew on an excellent start to the school year. The pictures I have seen have been full of emotion and really tell a story. My one gripe is with one of the writers of the Lance. Koby Bales tells me his stories are scathing, I am yet to read a scathing article. Also shoutout to Duane Wach and his fire jerky.

-Tanner Turek

Letter(s) to the Editor

Letter to the Editor:
 Dear Editor,
 Godzilla would absolutely destroy King Kong. The following are my reasons why:
 1. Godzilla is a radioactive dinosaur that shoots lasers. 2. He is four times as big as King Kong, and has a wider girth and tonnage. 3. King Kong is just a gorilla, and there's nothing even remotely special about him. Game on the line, if martians were pointing death rays at the earth, I would choose Godzilla to defend our world.

Sincerely,
 William Goering

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EA NCAA Football returns

College football game returns after 6 year hiatus

By Payton Gangwish

On February 2, 2021, EA Sports, a subdivision of Electronic Arts (EA), announced that the NCAA Football series would return under the name *EA Sports College Football*.

"Today, Electronic Arts and CLC, the nation's leading collegiate trademark licensing company, announced the expected return of college football to EA SPORTS™," (Electronic Arts).

Issac Herbek (11) was more than excited to hear this news.

"I heard about the game being rebooted whilst at school learn-

ing...[and] I heard about it from a notification on my phone, as well from my buddies telling me," said Herbek.

The release of *EA Sports College Football* will be the first college football theme game released by EA since *NCAA Football 14* was released on July 9, 2013.

While not much is known about the content that will be in the game, college football fans and gamers alike will be more than thrilled for a possible return of *Road to Glory*, the game mode that allows a player take

control of a custom high school player with a goal to play college football and achieve glory and at the same time achieve college football immortality.

"I am undoubtedly getting the game once it is released and cannot fathom how excited I am to play the career mode (*Road to Glory*) once," said Herbek.

While Herbek is more into the single-player-oriented modes, some fans of the series, such as Creighton Mehring (11), are looking forward to multiplayer modes that give gamers a nostal-

gic feeling while playing.

"Just old memories of playing with my friends in elementary school... I was really sad when they announced that they weren't making any games after 2014... So it'll be just like old times," Mehring said.

For legal reasons, players' names, images, and likenesses (NIL) can not be used in the game. This rule has been a subject of debate for those in the NCAA, former college athletes, and fans alike.

"It's been a topic of debate

for several years at least since 2000, but it really became a hot button topic ...six years ago with the major lawsuit (O'Bannon v. NCAA) against the NCAA from former athletes, more specifically former football players about their likeness being used for monetary purposes," Head Football Coach Tim Dvorak added.

While not much is known about the finer details of the game and its release date, the game is under development for the next-gen PS5 and XBOX series X.

Students honored to serve as varsity boys basketball team managers

By Angela Messere

What happens when you take junior high students and let them act as student managers for a team? Absolute fun! Just watch the three sixth-grade students who follow every move made by the high school players.

Dax Gellatly (6), Will Maser (6), and Brandon Cloud (6) are three of the many student managers for boys basketball. The boys started student managing this year, and all share immense excitement for claiming their roles. During games, Gellatly, Maser, and Cloud can be seen not only helping out the team, but also having an amazing time interacting with the team.

"It's just really fun because you get to interact with all of the team players," stated Cloud.

Cloud, Gellatly, and Maser can be seen fulfilling their manager duties before, during, and after games.

"You get to do different things to help the team as the role of a student manager," added Gellatly.

You can spot the boys filling water bottles for the team, grabbing towels for the players, and giving teammates like Dei Jengmer (12) and Koby Bales (12) congratulatory high-fives.

"We have to fill waters and film the games. We also have to keep track of the towels and basketballs and kind of be a cheerleader on the bench," stated Gellatly.

"We have to go into the locker room at halftime to give people their towels and their waters during halftime and when [Head Coach Tino Martinez] talks to them," shared Maser.

"Sometimes, if they need to have a ball passed to them, we will pass it to them," added Cloud.

In addition to sharing responsibilities, they also have front-row seats to the most exciting games, and witness the team's extraordinary achievements. As student managers, they have seen many memorable moments that

left them in awe of their varsity teammates. However, they all share a favorite moment in which they will never forget — an impressive dunk by Gil Jengmer (11) during the St. Cecilia game this past season, in which the three remember fondly.

"So [Gil] got a fast break. And then he went up, with a [player] right in front of him. When he went up, he went up with one hand and dunked right over him," stated Maser.

The trio still support and cheer for their role models even when things do not go their way.

"In the Heartland Hoops game, even though we lost, it was still a cool environment... We got to sit on the bench, and we got to experience high-level things," stated Gellatly.

Even though high school seems far away to the boys, their outlook on their own basketball careers' certainly is not. Their dreams of becoming a successful student athlete are quickly becoming a reality through their efforts as managers.

"You know the expectations going into high school. You know the expectations of how you have to act and how you have to play," said Cloud.

Although their student manager roles take precedence

"It's just really fun because you get to interact with all of the team players."
-Brandon Cloud (6)

during the basketball season, the boys are always sure to hit the court in their free time. They enjoy shooting hoops with each other, especially when the varsity players are practicing.

"Yes, [it has helped me become a better athlete], because we see them in practice working very hard and doing what they do, and it makes us want to work



Photo By Hayden Price

Student managers Thomas Birch (7), Brandon Cloud (6), Dax Gellatly (6), and Will Maser (6), watch the Crusader boys basketball team in action. The sixth-grade boys are in their first year as student managers for the varsity team.

really hard at practice," stated Maser.

Even though the varsity basketball season is coming to a close, they enjoyed fulfilling the role of a student manager and cannot wait for the opportunity to manage next year when they are in the seventh-grade. They are excited for new faces to join the management team, and hope that the new recruits enjoy it as much as they do. All three agreed that the most important thing to remember as a student manager is to always keep the ball on the court.

"We haven't experienced this yet, but don't have a ball run off the court when they're practicing," expressed Maser. "You'll get yelled at," concluded Gellatly.



Senior Sweethearts leave an impact on school

By Koby Bales

Romeo and Juliet, Bonnie and Clyde, Adam and Eve — all legendary couples who have left a lasting legacy in the hearts of people on earth with their examples of love. Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) Crusaders Brayden “Beebs” Wenzl (12) and Julia Pilsl (12) fit that bill.

It was a cold December night, and a young seventh-grader Brayden Wenzl sat upstairs in the wrestling deck with his friend Micah Bernal in the Five Points Bank Gym as the girls varsity basketball team was playing, when someone caught his eye. An attractive young girl walked in through the entrance of the gymnasium with her family. His heart skipped a beat.

Wenzl became intrigued and wanted to know more about this girl. When school returned from winter break, Wenzl had his chance to meet his new classmate when she sat down at the desk beside him in one of his classes. Her name was Julia Pilsl, and she, along with her three brothers, had moved from Kansas to Grand Island. Wenzl instantly felt something he had never felt before: the feeling of being in love.

“I noticed her and was like ‘Woah, who’s the new chick?’” Wenzl said.

From that feeling, Wenzl knew he had to make a move. The summer going into his eighth-grade year, Wenzl and his cousin, Isaac Ziller (10), devised a plan to ask her out. That September, Wenzl put his plan into effect. The Nebraska State Fair had come to town that month and Wenzl texted Pilsl to meet him there. While at the fair, Wenzl took her on the swings and popped the question: “Do you want to go out with me?” Pilsl, overcome with emotion, passionately said yes.

“When me and Peabody [Ziller] were talking about it in the summer heading into eighth-grade, I was like ‘Dang, I can really feel a connection between us.’ That’s when I knew I had to ask her,” boasted Wenzl.

For the past four years, Wenzl and Pilsl have been seen walking through the hallways together. They enjoy each other’s company. The couple enjoys binge-watching TV shows with each other on their Netflix accounts. They endured the quarantine by watching *Outer Banks* together, although they claim it only took them two days. Along with binge-watching, they love to play with each other’s dogs. Wenzl loves to roll on the floor with Pilsl’s dog Rosie. Pilsl can be seen at every one of Wenzl’s sporting events. She loves to attend these games and watch as her beau tries his hardest to be the best. Wherever one half of the couple is, the other is not far behind.

Besides the activities they do together, they are also fond of each other’s physical and emotional being. Pilsl loves Wenzl’s



Photos Courtesy Julia Pilsl

ocean-colored eyes. Wenzl blushes and claims that his eyes are not that color. Wenzl opens up and claims that he respects Pilsl’s honesty towards him.

“She is so truthful, and she is always there for me,” Wenzl confidently says is his favorite thing about his girlfriend.

As their high school years quickly come to an end, they are grateful they got to spend it together. With correlating schedules, Wenzl and Pilsl can be seen in the senior lounge together or leaving school early to get some grub together.

“We are always around each other this year which is nice,” Pilsl boasts.

Next year possesses new challenges as the couple, for the first time in six years, will be at different schools. Wenzl will attend Nebraska-Wesleyan, and Pilsl will be joining her brother Ryan at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Both schools are located in Lincoln which will allow Wenzl and Pilsl to continue to spend time together. Both agree that not being at the same campus will be different since they rely on each other so much, but only being five minutes apart helped ease some of the nerves.

“We’ll be five minutes away from each other, so it doesn’t really scare me that we aren’t going

to the same school since he will still be right there,” Pilsl said.

The past eight years have taught Wenzl and Pilsl valuable lessons. Wenzl has learned to compromise through school dances. Early in his high school

career, Wenzl did not like to slow dance; but as he grew older and wiser, he realized that dancing was the right thing to please his girlfriend. Through the ups and downs, the couple has learned many important things about

each other.

“Don’t be so over-possessive and obsessed. Let them hang out with their friends every once in a while and just have fun. Most importantly, just go with the flow,” Pilsl said.



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Boys team plays well against Aquinas; prepares for post-season play

By Payton Gangwish



Photo By Hayden Price

Marcus Lowry (11) goes for a layup in a game against Lexington High School on February 5, 2021.

On February 16, 2021, the boys basketball team came out on top against David City Aquinas Catholic 65-31. In an easy win, Gil Jengmer (11) finished strong, leading the team with 15 points, followed by Russ Martinez (12) with 13 points.

"We got a lot better, and we got a chance to run our offense and improve defensively, and it was one of those games where everyone gets in, and we try to get them a bucket," said guard Brayton Johnson (11).

Scoring in double digits were also Marcus Lowry (11) and Dei Jengmer (12) who

both finished with 10 points to contribute to a blowout victory.

With their win over Aquinas, the Crusaders improved to 18-4, with sub-district play looming in the distance. The class C2-8 sub-district is the most competitive sub-district in class C2, with the four teams competing (GICC, Doniphan-Trumbull, Centennial, and Heartland) have averaged a record of 15-5, with the Crusaders earning the number one seed.

"We think that our schedule has prepared us well for the postseason. Our kids have had great focus and effort in practice,

so we feel good about where we are at as a team," said Head Coach Tino Martinez.

Doniphan-Trumbull is the only team in their sub-district that GICC played throughout the regular season.

"We don't have a lot of familiarity with the teams in our sub-district, with the exception of Doniphan. All of them have had great seasons, and we look to be challenged by any of those teams we may encounter. Hopefully, we are up to the task. We definitely look forward to it," Martinez added.

While Martinez is confident in his team's ability to deal with what lies ahead; most of the players are just as confident as their coach, some, like Brayton Johnson (11), are more confident than others.

"We fully expect to run through our sub-district without much competition," Johnson added.

The Crusaders played Heartland (13-5), on Tuesday, February 23, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., and hosted the Class C2-8 sub-district game.



Photo By Hayden Price

Russell Martinez (12) prepares to defend a player in a game against York High School on January 12, 2021.

Girls basketball team continues to win; defeats Columbus Scotus in hard-fought game

By Angela Messere

On Thursday, February 18, 2021, the girls basketball team cruised to a victory over St. Paul in the Class C1-8 sub-district game. The Lady Crusaders won in a heated game against the Wildcats 38-30, effectively sending GICC into the

district finals game.

Lucy Ghaifan (10) led the Crusaders, scoring 12 total points, while Alyssa Wilson (11) scored 11 points, sinking an impressive two 3-pointers. Jenna Heidelk (11) also sank nine points to help GICC

win.

Heidelk was proud of both her and her teammates' accomplishments and believes that they are deserving of their win.

"I feel really great, really happy. It was a win, and we played together perfect... I don't think I did the best, but I came out as a team player and just played my game even when things weren't going my way.

"It was definitely a game of ebb and flows... You just didn't know what's going to happen. I was just proud of our girls for sticking to our game..."

-Kevin Mayfield
Head Coach

I think other people stepped up and did good," stated Heidelk.

Head Coach Kevin Mayfield was also satisfied with the girls' adaptations to their opponents offense and defense throughout the game.

"It was definitely a game of ebb and flows... You just didn't know what's going to happen. We knew St. Paul would try to throw stuff at us... we handled that well... It was a lot of different things and I was just proud of our girls for sticking to our game plan and adjusting when they give it

to you," stated Mayfield.

Mayfield commended the team's performance as a whole. He also complimented the energy put forth by those sitting on the bench, who cheered the girls on.

"They all did [well]. The girls who played did a great job... our bench was good. They were into the game, they were exciting, they stayed focused. As I was on the sideline, they were in my way half of the time. They weren't just sitting there observing... They are part of this team and they did a great job," emphasized Mayfield.

As the team enjoys their success, Mayfield and the girls take each game as a way of learning from their shortcomings and planning for the games ahead.

"Obviously we have to put an emphasis on defense. We need to find a little bit more scoring... We just have to hopefully keep working hard, figure out who we are going to play, and make another game plan," said Mayfield.

The team begins their championship journey on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, as the Lady Crusaders face eighth ranked Winnebago (15-0) at 1:30 p.m. in the Pinnacle Bank Arena.

"We just need to learn to relax a little bit. We were jacked up a bit before the game... I don't know if we were nervous, but we wanted to come out and get a good start. Everybody was pressing hard. We just have to believe in ourselves and relax and do what we do," concluded Mayfield.



Photo By Angela Messere

Lucy Ghaifan (10) goes for a layup against St. Paul High School on February 17, 2021, in the Five Points Bank gym.

Swimmers successful at conference meet

By Koby Bales

Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) swimmers competed at the Heartland Athletic Conference (HAC) swimming championships on February 13, 2021, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Michael Sambula-Monzalvo (10) placed second while also recording a personal record in the 500 freestyle with a time of 4:51.69. This time qualified Sambula-Monzalvo for the state competition. Sambula-Monzalvo also competed in the 200 freestyle, placing fourth while also earning another auto state time.

The men's swimming team had two relays place at the event. In the 200 freestyle relay, the team of Sambula-Monzalvo and Jonathan Schardt (11) placed fourth and acquired an auto state time, which automatically qualified them for the state competition.

"I did great at conferences. I had my fastest time of the year, and we qualified for state in both of our relays. I also got a medal for the 200 free relay," Schardt said.

The 400 freestyle relay also earned an auto state time while placing fifth at the competition. Sambula-Monzalvo was on that relay team as well.

Overall, the men's swimming team placed fifth in the competition with a score of 179.

Kate Novinski (9) paced the way for the girl's team. She competed individually



Photo By Angela Messere

Michael Sambula-Monzalvo (10) swims during practice at the Grand Island YMCA. Sambula-Monzalvo qualified for the state meet in four events, and he ended up placing at the state meet.

in the 100 backstroke, where she placed fourth with an auto time and she also competed in two relays, in which both earned her auto state times.

"My coach thought that I did well at conference but also noted a few things I could fix in my races to go faster. My biggest takeaway from this last competition is to keep moving forward and don't let one race that you didn't do the best in affect your next one, and that you should just focus on one race at a time," K. Novinski stated.

The girl's swimming team accumulated 137 points and placed seventh in the competition.

The HAC competition prepared the team for the state championships. GICC

had four swimmers plus one alternate competing at the championships, on Friday, February 26, 2021, and Saturday, February 27, 2021.

Jonathan Novinski (12), who did not compete at the conference competition due to injury, looked to repeat as champion in the 500 freestyle; he holds the state record for the event with a time of 4:32.04.

Four other swimmers from GICC competed at the state competition alongside J. Novinski. K. Novinski competed in the 100 backstroke, 100 freestyle, and 200 freestyle relay. Sambula-Monzalvo competed in the 200 and 500 freestyle, along with the 200 and 400 freestyle relays. Schardt was in the 200 freestyle relay and acted

as an alternate for the 200 medley relay. Lastly, Zach Cloud (12) was an alternate at the state competition.

J. Novinski and Sambula-Monzalvo took fourth in the 400 freestyle relay with their Grand Island Senior High (GISH) teammates, Luke Dankert and Kai Wilson. Sambula-Monzalvo also took home hardware in the 500 freestyle and the 200 freestyle. K. Novinski finished 13 in the 100 freestyle and 11 in the 100 backstroke (Grand Island Independent).

"I will remember all of the countless memories we had in the locker room, bus rides, and meets. I will never forget about our stay in a hotel for conference, the funny conversations we had with each other," Cloud noted.

Wrestlers finish season at David City

By Hayden Price

On February 6, 2021, the wrestling team competed for the last time this season. The team finished the season at David City High School. Jackson Farias (12) was sad to see the season end but proud of what the team accomplished.

"The last meet didn't go how any of us wanted. My goal the last couple years was to make state once so it was disappointing that that didn't happen. But it was a fun season and I'm glad to have been apart of

"It was a fun season and I'm glad to have been apart of the team and hopefully I was able to be a good leader and mentor to all of them."

-Jackson Farias (12)

the team and hopefully I was able to be a good leader and mentor to all of them," shared Farias.

GICC wrestlers like Farias hoped to place at the meet and potentially advance to the district tournament. Farias competed in the 106 weight class, Hunter Borges (9) competed in the 170 weight class, Sam Mueller (9) competed at 132, Connor Johnson (9) competed at 145, and Barret Obermiller-Snyder (9) competed at 182. The meet at David City was sub-districts, and in order to advance to the district tournament, an athlete had to place in the top four in their weight class.

"My goal for this meet was to medal," stated Mueller.

Although he did not place, he still

looked fondly upon the season. He, along with his teammates, enjoyed the countless hours of practice shared together. At David City the team was up against steep competition.

"David City was the defending state champ as a team overall, so David City had some really good kids. Boone Central had a defending state champion," shared Farias.

Looking forward to next season,

despite losing a leader in Farias, Mueller is confident the team will become a force to be reckoned with.

"I'm most proud of improving each and every day and becoming super close with my team. They're a great group of guys. Grand Island Central Catholic wrestling is going to be pretty good in these upcoming years. I think we'll impress a lot of people," stated Mueller.

Farias agrees the team will be impressive. One addition to next year's roster will be the return of Ben Alberts (10), who was injured this season. With full health, Alberts will return rested and experienced next year along with his fellow teammates.

"I think the future is bright. Especially with Ben [Alberts] coming back next year, he'll be healthy. It'll be good to have him at practice to get better," concluded Farias.



Photo By Barb Yager-Wach

Connor Johnson (9) wrestles against a competitor at the conference meet in David City. The conference tournament was held on January 23, 2021.