

## The dance must go on

Masked students rock the night away at Homecoming dance held at GICC  
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## Fall sports excel at state

Multiple GICC sports qualify for play-offs, state tournaments  
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# Crusaders make history in first visit to state tournament

By Koby Bales

The Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) softball team made history: for the first time in the decade-long program, the Crusaders punched their ticket to the state tournament.

After defeating the Wayne Blue Devils twice in the sub-state games, GICC was seeded sixth going into the Nebraska State Softball Tournament. In their way was the Norris Titans in the first round.

A back-and-forth game early on, the Titans were able to pull away off of four home runs, giving them an 8-3 victory over the Crusaders in the first round. The Crusaders struggled defensively with seven errors in the duration of the game.

Creighton recruit Alexis Wiggins paced the Titans finishing 3-3 on the day with two home runs while also pitching a complete game with ten strikeouts. GICC had seven hits in the opening round, including two by Andrea Palma (12).

Photo by Payton Gangwish



Second baseman Alexis Mudloff (12) anticipates the batter's moves during the Nebraska State Softball Tournament at Smith Softball Complex in Hastings, Nebraska, on Saturday, October 15, 2020.

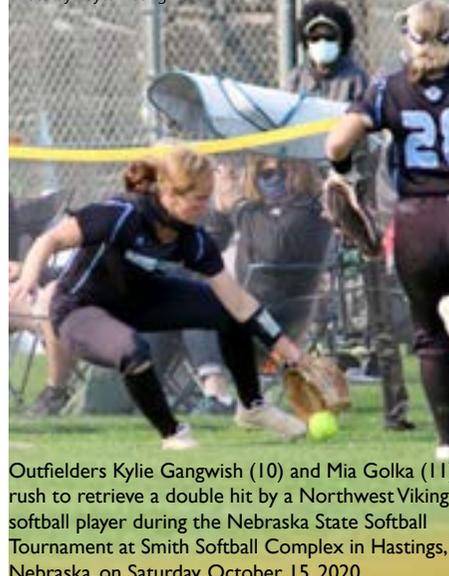
"We already knew they were a big-hitting team, so we expected them to hit the ball, but I don't think we expected four nukes in one game," Palma said about the big bats of Norris.

The Crusaders were able to bounce back in the second round elimination game against Crete. GICC beat Crete two times earlier in the season. Lexi Mudloff (12) and Palma helped lead the Crusaders to a 9-6 victory. Mudloff went three for four on the day, and Palma hit a big three run homerun.

This victory set up a rematch with cross-town rival Grand Island Northwest. The Vikings and the Crusaders had faced each other three times, with the last match ending with a 10 inning, 15-16 instant classic victory won by Northwest.

"It was honestly the draw we all wanted," Mudloff remarked about facing Northwest again.

Photo by Payton Gangwish



Outfielders Kylie Gangwish (10) and Mia Golka (11) rush to retrieve a double hit by a Northwest Viking softball player during the Nebraska State Softball Tournament at Smith Softball Complex in Hastings, Nebraska, on Saturday, October 15, 2020.

Sharing similar sentiments was Palma, who stated, "I was actually really excited to play them because they knew and we knew it was going to be a very intense game."

The game lived up to the hype going into extra innings once again. Northwest got off to a great start leading the Crusaders 8-2 through the first two innings. GICC was able to come back, something they became known for throughout the season, earning the nickname the "Cardiac Kids". The Crusaders scored five runs in the fifth to decrease the lead to one. Then Mudloff was able to tie the game off of an RBI, sending it into extras.

In the seventh, Mudloff was able to score off of an Avery O'Boyle (10) double. In the bottom of the same inning, Mudloff had to leave the game due to injury after colliding with a teammate while attempting to retrieve a ball.

Next inning, the Vikings were able to load the bases, which led to a Grace Baasch walk-off grand slam, winning the game 15-11.

This game was the last the seniors will ever play repping GICC. The seniors were a very special group for the program, setting a precedent on how to play the Crusader way.

"This year's group of seniors are incredibly talented and are a great group of girls. I don't think our season would have been as successful as it was without anyone of these seniors," Palma commented on the senior group she was a part of.

The historic Crusader season came to an end with a record of 21-10. Though it did not end with the outcome they wanted, the Crusader softball team was pleased with how this season ended.

"[I was proud of] the amount of times we fought through adversity and proved to people that we deserved to end our season at the state tournament," Mudloff stated.

# Ghosts of GICC past continue roaming the halls of school at night

By Angela Messere

It's spooky season at Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) and what better way to celebrate one of the best holidays of the year than to tell some of the school's best Halloween stories? Kerry O'Connor and Dee Hanssen, two seasoned teachers at GICC, shared their spookiest tales from the halls of the school.

O'Connor recalls a spooky incident she experienced when she came in on a Sunday evening to grade papers. Little did she know that she would encounter some ghostly activities on her way out of the school.

"I was up here working on a Sunday afternoon, I hadn't turned on any lights because it was still sunny out. I heard a noise... I got a little scared and nervous and I wanted to leave. I thought, 'well, I'll go to the bathroom before I leave (like an idiot).' So, I am in the bathroom, and I hear sounds like drumsticks... Mrs. Hanssen comes in the next day and I start telling her about the night before... and she opens up her desk. The only thing in her desk was drumsticks," shared O'Connor.

One would never imagine that ghostly figures would appear on the way to band practice early in the morning, but this was certainly the case for Hanssen's students.

"[The students] were coming in to march for band and it was really early in the morning... They were here early. It was right when iPods were new. A group of them were trying to unlock the door to get upstairs to get their music out of their lockers and a white figure passed by them in the window of the door. They all looked at each other and started screaming... because they saw the figure and quickly ran away and when they were running they stepped on their brand new iPod!... It was a good group of kids who wouldn't really lie so we were all kind of freaked out by them," described Hanssen.

O'Connor was also unaware that the noises she heard in the evenings after school would give her quite the scare.

"I was sitting [in my room] and I was like 'who was in the school?' I was angry... because it sounded like kids running and hitting lockers and nobody was there..." said O'Connor.

Hanssen also noted that she has found an unusual item in her classroom; this item was rather unsettling especially since there was no reason for it to be there.

"We used to have to clear everything out of the rooms, like the file cabinets and closets, before we would go home for the summer. They were going to wax the floors... [My room] was in Mrs. Yager's room [and I was] teaching reading. I cleaned it all out... nothing was in there. I know because I cleaned it out. I got back and there was this old saddle shoe from a cheerleader from the 1950s or 60s... just by itself in the cupboard. That was all that was there. We always joke that there was a drummer and a cheerleader running in the school," Hanssen said.

O'Connor also shared that she once toured the infamous Stanley Hotel and noticed a few strange things when she was there.

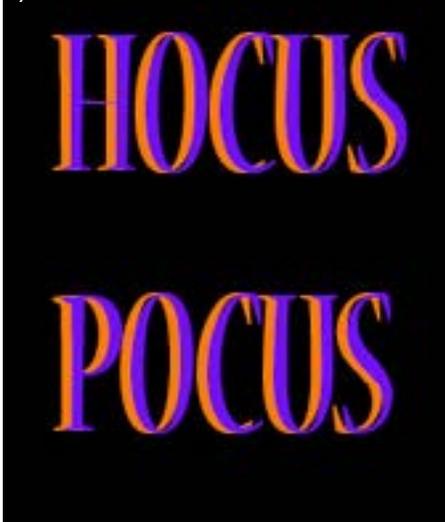
"We went to the Stanley Hotel... where Stephen King stayed and wrote *The Shining*. They were taking us on a tour... and we were going down a hallway and I turn to [my husband] and said 'do you smell that? It smells like maple, like waffle cones' and he was like... 'oh, I don't smell anything' the next thing [the tour guide] says is 'and sometimes people smell this guy's pipe!' and I turn to [my husband] and say 'that's what I was smelling!'" exclaimed O'Connor.

No matter the belief about ghosts, GICC teachers have had some bone-chilling experiences that will stay with them forever.



## HOCUS POCUS decent, lighthearted movie

By The Lance Staff



**H**ocus Pocus is a 1993 Halloween classic set in Salem, Massachusetts, a site notoriously known for the Salem Witch trials' events. The movie centers around three witches, the Sanderson sisters, who are hung for the murder of a little girl. These witches feed off of the souls of young children. So the witches murdered the girl to stay alive. This murder is where we meet one of our main characters, Thackeray Binx, who was turned into a cat by the witches centuries ago. Thackeray's sister is the victim of the witches' desire to live longer. After being hung, they were gone for three-hundred years.

Following the lighting of a black candle by a virgin, the witches were brought back to life. The candle's lighter was Max Dennison, who doesn't believe in Halloween stories and openly mocks the holiday. When the witches reappear, they quickly find another victim to extend their lives, but they only get until sunrise to find this victim. They target a girl named Dani, who is Max's sister. This unleashes zany antics from the witches which carries the plot along. The rivalry between the witches and Max is an unforgettable one.

The movie takes twists and turns and ultimately we are left with a happy ending that is sure to warm your heart during the spookiest season of the year.

*Hocus Pocus* has put a spell on us! The staff has concluded that this movie is a decent film that will enthrall one with merciless silliness. If it's around Halloween, then this film is great to watch to get you in the spooky spirit. The movie is inclusive; the entire family unit can enjoy it. Once you get past the corny aspects of some of the scenes, *Hocus Pocus* is truly a great film! You will laugh, you may cry, but more importantly, you will have a great time! We highly recommend watching this movie during the Halloween season to engulf yourself in the mood for the crazy antics of the Halloween season. This movie is the perfect embodiment of Halloween because of the use of witches, zombies, ghosts, dancing, costumes, spooks, candy and black cats. Lest we forget, there are also some remarkable costumes in this film and the makeup team did a stellar job. So grab your favorite cat to cuddle with, heat up some popcorn and turn on a great Halloween flick!

# Cloud and Herbek Crowned King and Queen Homecoming dance held at GICC

By Koby Bales

The annual homecoming dance took place on Saturday, October 3, 2020, in the Schumann Gymnasium at Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC).

This year's homecoming had some differences that set it apart from years previous. The dance took place at GICC instead of Blessed Sacrament Church, where it is usually held. Being held at the school brought along a lot of positive changes: better speakers for the music to be played and a more spacious dance floor so kids could spread out and boogie.

Along with that change, the school hosted a dinner. Principal Jordan Engle bought chicken and toast from Raising Canes and taco boxes from Tucan Express.

Continuing on the changes, the dance was also casual dress, meaning that students did not have to dress up in a nice shirt and tie or a beautiful dress. All students were also mandated to wear their masks while out on the dance floor to prevent the possible spread of COVID-19.

Despite these changes, the dance went on without a hitch and students were able to bust their best moves all night long.

"This was the first year that homecoming was going to be at GICC. We had to follow COVID-19 guidelines so the old gym was the perfect open space. It seemed that many students enjoyed homecoming so it made the hard work of setting it up completely worth it," senior class president Jonathan Novinski (12) explained.

Arguably, the best dancer of the whole night was the newest transfer Theodore Toea (11), who broke out some 'sick' moves.

"I go there, I talk to people and I dance poorly,"

## St. Mary's deacon passes

# Puhalla leads full life

By Hayden Price

Deacon Robert Puhalla Sr., died on September 29, 2020, from COVID-19 complications. Puhalla was a faithful member of Saint Mary's Cathedral, where he had been a parishioner since 1980 and an ordained deacon since May 28, 2010.

Father Jim Golka, Saint Mary's Cathedral priest, was glad to serve in ministry alongside Puhalla. Puhalla was always trying to aid the priests that he assisted and conformed to a priest's wants and needs.

"He was very knowledgeable about how things had been done here [Saint Mary's Cathedral]. He wanted to know what I preferred so that he could adjust his serving to fit the priest," said Golka about his first impressions of Puhalla.

Puhalla was a dependable person who, for decades, dedicated time to his parish. Golka was happy to have someone who he could rely on serving with him. Puhalla would arrive at the cathedral daily at 6:00 A.M. and walk through to ensure everything was in proper order.

"He was responsible. I could always depend on him, and... his main motivation was that he



photo by Gavin Langer

Homecoming King Zach Cloud (12) and Queen Grace Herbek (12) enjoy the spotlight with their parents during the crowning of the court after the football game on Friday, October 2, 2020 at Five Points Bank Field.

Toea jokingly said about his first homecoming dance at Grand Island Central Catholic.

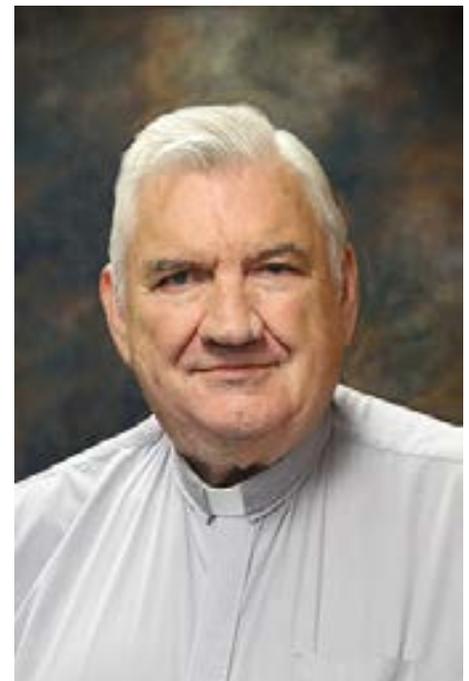
Candidates for homecoming court this year consisted of Ellie Alberts (12), Koby Bales (12), Will Goering (12), Ashlyn Kucera (12), Jackson Farias (12), Raegan Gellatly (12), Daniel Rey-Martinez (12), Julia Pils! (12), and winning king and queen were Zach Cloud (12) and Grace Herbek (12). A slow dance was shared between the two winners at the

start of the night.

"It felt like I was on top of the world," Cloud (12) said about winning homecoming king.

Before the dance had even finished, students had already begun looking onwards towards next year.

"Why not, I've got nothing else to do!" Toea quipped on the possibility of attending next year's homecoming dance.



Saint Mary's Deacon Robert Puhalla Sr. passed away September 29, 2020. Deacon Puhalla was ordained and served in Grand Island for ten years.

wanted to help," shared Golka.

Beyond serving his church, Puhalla served his country. He was a humble man who put his life on the line for others in Vietnam.

"He was the kinda guy where there was a lot more to him than meets the eye. I did not know that he was jumping out of helicopters in Vietnam, I didn't know he was a trained medic in Vietnam, I didn't know that he was a trained sniper, I didn't know, until recently, that he was an airplane pilot. He had many skills that people would not notice unless you got to know him better," stated Golka.

An outpouring of support was shown after Puhalla tested positive. Around this time, Father Tom Ryan also tested positive, and Golka was showing COVID-19 symptoms.

"I think people in the parish were very worried and concerned," said Golka.

Although Puhalla may have been a man of many hidden talents, it was clear that he had an apparent knack for spreading God's love. Puhalla leaves behind a legacy of love and three children along with many other loving family members.



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

John F. Kennedy once said, "The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all."

In four days, we will experience an event that will impact our country for decades, if not centuries, to come. On November 3, 2020, the election will determine how our country rebuilds in the aftermath of a worldwide pandemic. In addition, this election will continue to alter our country's judicial makeup. These factors have immense consequences and showcase the importance of our participation in this election. This election is not just exclusive to the presidency; it reaches further. There is a lot at stake in this election. In a time when our country is experiencing hurt, we have to take action and step up.

On the Hall County ballot, one will find initiatives that will determine the legality of games of chance in our state at licensed racetrack enclosures. There will also be an initiative asking voters if they would like to cap annual interest rates on payday loans at 36 percent. Two amendments will be on the ballot. One asks voters if they'd like to do away with involuntary servitude as a punishment for conviction of a crime. The other potential amendment would allow the legislature to extend the maximum length of time to repay debt related to tax-increment financing from 15 to 20 years if more than half of the property in the project area is designated as extremely blighted.

Other races include Sen. Ben Sasse's re-election campaign against Democrat Chris Janicek. Our unicameral district, district 35, is up for grabs with Dan Quick and Ray Aguilar running. Nebraska's 3rd congressional district race pits Rep. Adrian Smith against Mark Elworth Jr. Beyond these races, there are school board elections, city council elections, and several other ballot items, such as judge retention.

The initiatives and amendments on the ballot seem to be common-sense choices and straightforward. The most controversial initiatives are the three that pertain to games of chance or gambling. Although gambling has

# November set for record-setting voter turnout Ballot showcases importance of voter participation

By Hayden Price

apparent negative effects, it is naive to think that gambling isn't already accessible to Nebraskans. In fact, in an article published in 2014 from the [Associated Press](#), it is revealed that in 2013 Nebraskans generated \$327 million for Iowa casinos. That was seven years ago! One can imagine how the numbers have only increased. Additionally, casinos are present in Colorado, Kansas and South Dakota. Missouri also has river-boat gambling, so it's easy to imagine the amount of money that soars out of our state is far more widespread than we know.

The decision seems complicated; we have to decide whether we want to generate more money for property tax relief or maintain a comfortable no gambling status. In reality, gambling is already present within our state lines with Keno, the Nebraska Lottery, horse racing, fantasy football, etc. There is unaccounted money going out of Nebraska due to gambling in nearby states that could go towards making Nebraska more affordable, if these three initiatives pass. [The Tax Foundation](#) shares Nebraska has the eighth-highest property tax in the United States. This rate, 1.65%, puts a heavy burden on Nebraska farmers and homeowners. Make no mistake, if Nebraskans vote to legalize gambling, we must strike a balance between reducing taxes to help Nebraskans and mitigating the negative impacts that gambling presents.

This election could also determine the future of abortion laws in this country and how quickly an economic rebound occurs. Whether it is former Vice President Joe Biden elected or President Donald Trump re-elected, virus vaccine distribution will be a big priority at the beginning of the 2021-2025 United States presidential administration. The election will also have consequences for our environment's future, which will significantly impact generations of Americans and worldwide citizens.

Again, one of the hottest issues this presidential election is economic recovery. Both candidates have different approaches. Biden has said numerous times that if he were to be elected president, he would raise taxes on everyone who makes over \$400,000.

"Nobody making under 400,000 bucks would have their taxes raised.

Period. Bingo," said Biden in a [CNBC](#) interview.

Whereas Trump has cut taxes for all brackets except the 10% and 35% taxed brackets, this is evidenced on the [Tax Policy Center's](#) website. He also lowered the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21% with the passing of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (2017). Biden has stated he would do away with this act on many occasions even though it is clear it reaps benefits for people who make under \$400,000. He has since clarified he would get rid of the tax cuts for high earners.

However, even if you aren't a big believer in "trickle-down economics," it is clear Biden's economic policies seem flawed, especially after what our economy has been through these past few months. Trump's economic policies spurred economic growth before COVID-19 hit. One example of this was the unemployment rate before the virus. [The Wall Street Journal](#) describes the unemployment rate fell from 4.7% after Trump's 2016 win to 3.5% by the end of 2019.

These two have very different views on encouraging economic growth, and it is up to us, the voters, to educate ourselves on which economic plan we prefer.

Both candidates are also at odds over health care, which has become an increasingly important election issue. Trump is keen on ending Obamacare but has yet to offer a superior replacement. Joe Biden would like to keep Obamacare but has yet to address how he will fix its apparent flaws, such as rapidly increasing premiums. Healthcare seems to sum up the race pretty well: not many issues have been addressed with real policy proposals.

This presidential election is also pivotal because Trump is 74 years old, and Biden is 77 years old. This election is one in which we should intently examine vice-presidential candidates just as closely as presidential candidates. Vice President Pence is much like Trump on policy but he conducts himself with more civility and is far more religious. Sen. Kamala Harris is far less moderate than Biden but brings diversity to the ballot. For sure, although still a typical debate, the vice-presidential debate was easily more bearable than the spectacle

that was the presidential debate on September 29, 2020.

President Trump easily earned my vote earlier this month on my absentee ballot. Although this election is divisive, he was my clear choice. As shared in my August editorial, there is no way I can vote for a ticket that condones murder through abortion. Trump is a proven pro-life leader, and Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett, one of his three confirmed Supreme Court justices, will certainly not hurt the pro-life movement. Another four years of Trump will cement a pro-life legacy in our judicial system that spans decades. Although the president often has an alienating leadership style, he is our best option. I've unfortunately begun to learn that there's very rarely a politician who isn't nasty to their opposition. If Trump does what he did during the first three years of his term, we will have a rapid economic rebound.

As for the argument that is often used against the president, COVID-19, I think it is a poor campaign strategy. I had COVID-19, and I assure you I feel no contempt towards President Trump because of my illness. No one could have anticipated a virus of this magnitude would have hit our country. No leader could have navigated through this pandemic perfectly, any assertion otherwise is rooted in fantasy.

The president did the best he could at the time, and no matter what he does now, he continues to get blamed. This blame is typical politics. There is a delicate balance between keeping COVID-19 numbers low and jeopardizing millions' mental health by instituting extreme orders. The president did, however, disappoint me with his reluctance to promote masks at first. But, this campaign has become so dominated by the virus that we have lost sight of the fact that a cure will likely come early in the next four years. Hopefully, the next four years will not entail virus management for the presidency, yet it continues to be a cornerstone of this campaign.

Like me, almost everyone seems to have an opinion on the upcoming election. I urge you, if possible, to make your opinion known and vote. If you want your voice heard, you have to step up. Go and vote!

Rice, Woods, and Glade spark team on to victory over “other Crusaders”

# Volleyball team makes quick work of LC

By Angela Messere

On Tuesday, October 20, 2020, the Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) volleyball team defeated Lincoln Christian in their last home game of the season. The Crusaders cruised to victory in a three-set game: 25-16, 25-12, and 25-6.

The Crusaders came out of the gates firing bullets at the Lincoln Christian Crusaders. A strong serving run by Evan Glade (10) secured their lead. In addition, Rylie Rice (11) led with an impressive serving game, with a 100% serving percentage and three aces.

“We’re taking it one game at a time. Right now we’ve got a little work to do to try and improve some areas... We’re going to give it our shot,” said head coach Sharon Zavala.

GICC won their first set with Rice leading in kills, and Haily Asche (12) leading in digs.

“I think it was a good win on senior night. It’s the seniors last home game and they gave it out on the win,” said Rice.

Set two saw both Crusader teams taking turns with the lead until GICC shut down the Lincoln Christian Crusaders. The Crusader blocking game came alive as Chloe Cloud (11) and Gracie Woods (10) both had solo blocks. The Crusaders finished with seven blocks on the night.

GICC sealed the coffin in the third set with an astonishing 25-6 win. Senior night allowed Maddison Urbanski (12) and Asche to shine where they do their best work: Asche with 16 digs and Urbanski with 15 total serves. Additionally, many underclassmen were able to shine, including



Carolyn Maser (9) and Chloe Cloud (11) stop a kill by a Lincoln Christian Crusader during the final home battle of the season.

Alyssa Wilson (11) who came on hot with eight kills for the night. Woods assisted the team with an impressive seven digs. Woods, who has typically been a front-line threat, was seen all over the back row adding to the defensive line up for GICC.

“We had a different lineup and everybody played well. We got a lot of kids in... I think the kids had a lot of fun. It’s really nice to have a good game when it’s senior night,” commented Zavala.



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## Editorial Policy

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Outside submissions, suggestions, or letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. They may be brought to Mrs. Yager-Wach in Room 213 or emailed to [journalism@gicc.org](mailto:journalism@gicc.org). Submissions may also be mailed to:

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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.

# Golf team excels at state

By Hayden Price

The Crusader girl's golf team finished their season October 12-13, 2020, at the state meet at the Elks Country Club in Columbus, Nebraska. The Crusaders finished 13th place in Class C, shooting 848 over two days.

The team had success that culminated into qualifying for the state tournament despite the lack of returners.

"Only half of the varsity team were returners while the rest were new or fairly new to golf," said Madeline Logue (9).

Elks Country Club was new to almost all of the players. To get a feel for the course, the team walked the course the day before the state tournament began, and Angela Messere (11) had the opportunity to play the course before the state tournament.

"It is a very difficult course [Elks Country Club] with trees like Riverside and greens that do not run true to their read," explained head coach Dee Hanssen.

The conditions over the two-day tournament were not bad for October; it made for great golfing weather - not too hot, not too cold.

"The conditions at the state tournament were pretty good. It was a little bit cold in the morning and then warmed up both days, and there was

a slight breeze that was nice to keep us cool," explained Logue.

Hanssen agreed. She thought the conditions made for great golfing weather and was proud of how her athletes capitalized on the favorable conditions.

"Of the 13 years I have been coaching at state, the weather conditions were the best this year," shared Hanssen.

Messere placed in the top ten at the event, tying for seventh place, shooting an 84 the first day and an 83 the second day.

"Angela placed in the top three most tournaments, even winning a few. I think her highlight of the year was winning districts and placing seventh at state," said Hanssen.

The team also had to overcome challenges with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the athletes felt under the weather because of COVID-19 but still performed as best they could. Ashlyn Kucera (12) and Ember Kleint (11) were unable to complete the second day of state due to COVID-19. Hanssen was glad to have them for at least one day of competition.

"She is a quiet, self-driven individual and performs even when she doesn't feel well," said Hanssen of Kucera.

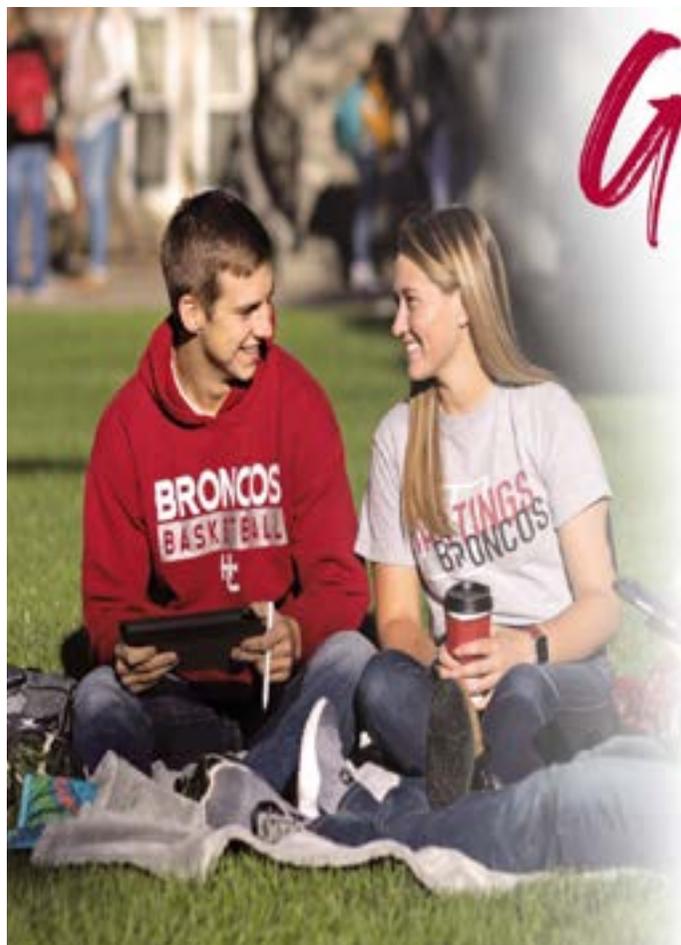
Overall, despite disappointing setbacks, Hanssen was proud of her team and looks forward to seeing how they progress next year.

"We accomplished our goal of making it to state as a team this year. Our district is one of the toughest, so we were very excited about qualifying. I again am very proud of this team, and I see great things in our future," concluded Hanssen.



Photo by Colleen Childers

Angela Messere (11) digs into her back swing during the conference tournament at Quail Run Golf Course on September 30, 2020. Messere placed seventh at the state competition held October 12-13, 2020 in Columbus, Nebraska.



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# Crusaders fall to Centura to end regular season

By Koby Bales

The short-handed Crusaders fell to the Centura Centurions, 15-12, at Five Points Bank Field on Friday, October 23, 2020.

Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC), who were missing nine players, came out firing on all cylinders in the first half.

Quarterback Russell Martinez (12) put together a few spectacular runs early in the ball game to move the Crusaders down the line. On a big third down, Martinez was able to run for 20 yards to give the Crusaders the first down, and on the next play, Martinez was able to find the endzone off a quarterback sneak.

On the following Crusader offensive possession, Martinez found Will Goering (12) on a bobbling one-handed grab in the corner of the endzone.

In addition, the Crusader defense stepped up big in the first half forcing two Centura fumbles. GICC went into the half with a comfortable 12-0 lead.

In a herculean effort by Centura, quarterback Eli Wooden propelled the Centurians to move beyond the Crusaders during the second half.

On the first possession of the second half, Wooden led Centura the length of the field to score their first touchdown of the game. A defensive stand in which they stopped the Crusaders short at their one-yard line led to Wooden racing to the endzone to give Centura the lead in the fourth quarter.

GICC was able to find some momentum as Martinez found Goering once again to put them in striking distance of the endzone. That momentum was quickly squandered when on the next play a fumbled snap went in possession of the Centurians. Centura was then able to run the clock off, giving them their third straight victory in three years over the Crusaders. This victory also punched their ticket to the state playoffs.



Photo by Payton Gangwish

Crusader quarterback, Russell Martinez (12) tucks the ball during the run as two Ord defenders attempt to stop the forward progress on Friday, October 2, 2020.

The Crusaders finished the regular season with a record of 5-4.

"The difference between the first half of the game and the second half was that we just kind of relaxed and didn't bring as much energy. You have to give Centura credit, they came out of the second half ready to play, and they outplayed us,"

Goering said about the outcome of the game.

The Crusaders will have to put this one behind them as they return to the field tonight against Wilber-Clatonia in the first round of the state playoffs.

## Tennis team places well at state tournament in Lincoln

By Angela Messere

On Thursday, October 15, 2020 and Friday October 16, 2020, the Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) boy's tennis team placed fourth at the Nebraska State Tennis Tournament at the Woods Tennis Center in Lincoln, Nebraska.

This team's well-earned finish was aided by a third place finish in number one doubles by Jackson Farias (12) and Jackson Henry (11). Farias and Henry finished their season firing a 28-5 record during the regular season.

"My personal experience at state was outstanding. My freshman year I played number 1 singles at state and lost in the first round... but this year was so much fun because I was able to go out there with confidence and was able to compete well and finish third, losing to the champions in a tiebreaker, and barely losing to the runners up in a close match," added Henry.

The Crusader's single players also spurred the team's finishing rank, with number two singles Bowdie Fox (10) placing fourth. Fox finished his regular season with a 19-10 record.

Other notable finishes included Jonathan Schardt (11) and Koby Bales (12), who earned fourth place in number two doubles after a 2-2 state record. However, this doubles pair was unplanned, as Alex King (11) was quarantined due to COVID-19. Notably though, Schardt and his former partner, King had a 26-4 regular season record prior to the state competition.

Head coach James Lowry was impressed with

how the pair played considering the last minute changes.

"I was really happy about how they finished... I was very upset that one of them did not get to play but I thought Koby stepped in and played very well," said Lowry.

As for the team's fourth place finish, coach Lowry was not hesitant to express his approval of his boys.

"I thought fourth place for us was really good. We got beat by Mount Michael, who won it, [Omaha] Skutt, who got second, and then Nebraska City with the help of their foreign exchange player getting second at one singles... I thought the kids did very well to finish fourth," shared Lowry.

Members of the team were also satisfied as a whole with their performances at state and their season as a whole.

"I think our whole team performed really well all year... We all improved tremendously since last year. We worked very hard this summer to be able to come out and play well throughout the season... My doubles partner Jackson Farias was the best partner I could've asked for. Not only did we play well but I think we made each other better during the season," commented Henry.

Even though the season may have ended, Coach Lowry is already focusing on next year's performance.

"I think every year we have the same goals - we would like to go down and get a trophy at state as a team," stated Lowry.



Photo by Angela Messere

Koby Bales (12) returns a ball using his strong backhand swing while competing in doubles with Jonathan Schardt (11) at the Nebraska State Tennis Tournament in Lincoln, Nebraska on October 15-16, 2020.

# Cloud 2nd at district meet, 6th at state Gellatly and Herbek finish top fifteen

By Payton Gangwish

On October 15th 2020, the Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) girl's cross country team placed third in the C-4 district meet in Minden, Nebraska, automatically qualifying the team for the 2020 NSAA State Cross Country meet at the Kearney Country Club in Kearney, Nebraska.

Raegan Gellatly (12) and Grace Herbek (12) finished in the top fifteen, with times of 20:33 and 21:04 seconds, respectively, followed by Rylee Lonnemann (11), Allison Haney (9), Brooklyn Kolbet (11), and Lidia Ramirez (12).

"The team has built a great bond with each other," Gellatly added regarding the team's new runners. Along with the ladies team, the lone male runner, Zach Cloud (12), finished 2nd with a time of 16:57.98 in the C-4 District meet, giving him a bid at state.

"When I won my first meet, I knew there was a chance that I could make it to state," said Cloud. He also said he saw himself in a position to possibly medal at state.

Neither Cloud nor Gellatly made changes to their training routines to prepare for state, although many runners change their training or routines to prepare for big meets.



Photo by Gavin Langer/Koby Bales

Photo by Gavin Langer/Koby Bales

Grace Herbek (12) and Raegan Gellatly (12) battle the weather at the Nebraska State Cross Country Meet on Friday October 23, 2020, at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Herbek and Gellatly placed in the top 35 of the womens field.



Photo by Tena Herbek

2020 Cross Country team: Coach Phou Manivong, Jarit Mejia (11), Victor Castellanos (9), Rylee Lonnemann (10), Isaac Henry (9), Chris Kizitos (10), Allison Haney (9), Kylan Puente (10), Brooklyn Kolbet (11), Sara McCarragher (11), Austin Miller (10), Ayden Encinger (10), Zach Cloud (12), Lidia Ramirez (12), Raegan Gellatly (12), and Grace Herbek (12).

Not always visible to the fans, both boys and girls teams are full of comradery.

"My teammates help motivate me... We encourage each other everyday... My teammates push me every day and we push each other and make it fun... I probably wouldn't be in cross country if it weren't for moments like that," added Gellatly.

At the end of the season, Manivong praised both his teams saying that, "The continuity of this team makes them special. We have been stressing all season the importance of hard work, positivity, and being in the right mindset. They have taken it all in stride and it has translated into a successful season." Manivong also added that, "When they hold each other accountable in everything we do during the season...they know how to have fun and know when it's time to work."

Working hard paid off for three seniors, with their individual scores helping the team qualify for state competition on October 23, 2020. The team competed in the Nebraska State Cross Country Championships at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and the three seniors finished with positive results.

Cloud, in his first year participating in the sport, placed sixth with a time of 16:58.0 and had a mile pace of 5:28. For the girls team, Gellatly finished 17th with a time of 20:49.14 and Herbek placed 32nd, finishing at 21:38.20. The team finished 13th overall. Manivong credited the seniors' leadership skills as part of the team's success.

"Our four seniors Raegan Gellatly, Grace Herbek, Lidia Ramirez, and Zach Cloud have taken responsibility for leading this team. It's a credit to their hard work and motivating their teammates to do the same," Manivong noted.



Photo by Tena Herbek

Zach Cloud (12) pushes through to the end during district competition on October 15, 2020, at Minden Country Club.

# Will COVID-19 forever change face of high school sports?

By Payton Gangwish

COVID-19 has been a planning nightmare for governing bodies of high school athletics across the nation. The Nebraska State Athletic Association (NSAA), Nebraska's lone high school athletic association, has been busy putting in place new rules brought on by the infectious respiratory illness. Jay Bellar, the Executive Director of the NSAA, has led the charge to follow rules set forth by governing bodies and at the same time kept high school sports moving in a forward motion.

In March, amid the growing concerns that Nebraskans were getting COVID-19, the NSAA announced that only family members that lived in the same household as the players were allowed to watch the boys state basketball tournament in person. Everybody else who had previously planned to watch, could only watch from home, on TV, which was done on the day of the state championships. All of which had a lasting effect on the rest of the year. Later that same month, NSAA made the decision to cancel the remaining spring sports. The NSAA was then quiet until June, when they began to ease restrictions on the use of weight rooms in high schools, further loosening restrictions in preparation for the next sports season.

"One thing I've learned this year is you have to be flexible... You have to have the best plan at that moment and in place," Bellar added, "We don't know. We ask a lot out of the medical experts and the education department now more than ever," said Bellar.

On August 3rd, 2020, as reported by Dave Griek of NTV News, the NSAA unanimously voted to start fall sports on schedule and allowed school districts to make the best choice for themselves regarding the participation in sports while continuing to have a strong dialogue with their local health departments. The report also said any missed games because of COVID-19 are being ruled a no-contest and that the NSAA has chosen to allow schools the flexibility to reschedule with any other programs that have a potential open date. The only school district to do so was Omaha Public Schools.

"We submit the recommendations for rule, and we let the school districts enforce those rules. We [NSAA] change the scope of the rule based on new information briefed to us," Bellar said when asked about the enforcement of the rules.

"With the new rule we've put in, there are some like expanding fan seating to the outfield in softball. Another question we are asked is will all of the remaining state championships be played in Lincoln and Omaha, with those places being hotspots right now. We've looked at other places too like Hastings, Grand Island, Fremont and Norfolk as possible locations for state," said Bellar. As of October 31, 2020, state volleyball continues to be scheduled in Lincoln.

As of October 23, 2020, district competitions proceeded on schedule. In football, Class A and Class D2 began playoffs on October 22-23, 2020 and Class B,C1-2, and D1 will start the following week. In Volleyball, subdistricts began on October 26-27, 2020.

At the end of the first round of fall sports in Nebraska, and with COVID-19 numbers on the rise, the unanswered questions still remain: Will the changes made to accommodate COVID-19 last beyond the pandemic and will sports ever return pre-COVID-19 status?



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