

BOYS BASKETBALL

Knights take home All-Pheasant Conference honors

Kraig Hunter named COY

By Sam Stuve
Alexandria Echo Press

After a successful 2021-22 season, the West Central Area boys basketball team placed three players on the All-Pheasant Conference team and one player, junior guard Jacob Strunk, was an honorable mention.

West Central Area head coach Kraig Hunter was named the conference's head coach of the year. He led the Knights to a conference title and a 22-5 record (7-1 in con-



Contributed Graphic

ference). Sophomore guard Cam Anderson, junior guard Cole Anderson and senior

forward Ryder Staples represented the Knights on the all-conference team.

Cole Anderson scored 13.7 points per game while shooting 56 percent from the field. He

averaged six rebounds, 2.3 assists and two steals per game.

Cam Anderson led the conference in assists with five a game, and he had the second-highest made free throw percentage at 83 percent. Staples averaged 12.5 points per game while shooting 54 percent from the floor. He also grabbed 5.5 rebounds per game and dished out two assists per game. Staples helped anchor the defense as he blocked 38 shots this season and averaged 1.9 steals per game.

Strunk also anchored the Knights' defense with 2.6 steals per game, the third-most in the conference. Strunk scored eight points a game, grabbed 5.2 rebounds and dished out 2.3 assists per game.

Hancock's Matt Thompson earned conference MVP honors.

ALL-PHEASANT CONFERENCE TEAM - HANCOCK - Matt Thompson, Hudson Versteeg; WEST CENTRAL AREA - Cole Anderson, Ryder Staples, Cam Anderson; WHEATON HERMAN/NORCROSS - Dylan Bainbridge, Clint Determan; CLINTON-GRACEVILLE-BEARDSLEY - Cole Gilsdorf; ORTONVILLE - Owen Longnecker

Honorable Mention - HANCOCK - Jackson Koehl, Luke Joos; WEST CENTRAL AREA - Jacob Strunk; CLINTON-GRACEVILLE-BEARDSLEY - Charles Kleindl; ORTONVILLE - Hunter Merritt

FINAL CONFERENCE STANDINGS
West Central Area - 22-5 (7-1)
Hancock - 23-6 (6-2)
Wheaton-Herman-Norcross - 17-9 (5-3)
Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley - 3-23 (1-7)
Ortonville 1-25 (1-7)

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SLADEK

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"I think it definitely wasn't just Resorters obviously, but Resorters was a big win for me," Sladek said. "Going up and playing against some really high competition with college guys and not just juniors. I played a number of big tournaments in the summer against juniors. I played the Western Juniors in Chicago, and the Junior PGA in Kentucky. Those are basically the biggest junior events in the country. I placed solid, played well, but Resorters was definitely a big win. I'm not sure if he was following along, but I'm sure word got around to him somehow."

Bermel, in his 10th season leading the Jayhawks, helped guide Kansas to a good start to the 2021-22 season by winning four straight stroke-play tournaments in the fall. That included a win at the Gopher Invitational in Minneapolis on Sept.

12-13. Sladek is excited to join a program that has made regular appearances in the NCAA Tournament under Bermel's leadership, and he knows he needs to keep improving his game to be a contributor at that level. He has two high school seasons to keep building.

"I just want to go in knowing the potential I have with my game and being real confident," Sladek said. "Getting off the tee will be huge with that. Some of these high school courses, if I can get off the tee and get down there, there's a lot of opportunities to really shoot some low scores. Putting it in the fairways is going to be huge for not just me, but our whole team for this upcoming season."

Sladek talked with the *Echo Press* on the first day of practice for the high school season on Monday. His focus right now is on doing everything he can to help lead Alexandria to a big season after the Cardinals finished fifth at the state tournament last spring. "It's going to be the



Eric Morken / Alexandria Echo Press

Alexandria's Braeden Sladek hits an iron onto the green from the rough on the second hole at the Alexandria Golf Club during the 2021 Resorters Tournament.

focus here for a few months to win a state championship," Sladek said. "We got a really

good group of guys, and we're going to work toward that. We need to have a lot of confidence,

but not getting our heads too big."

The 2021 varsity lineup for Alexandria featured

just one senior in Grant Rebrovich. Sladek shot a 2-over par 146 for a 15th-place finish in the Class 3A field. Bennett Olsen and Jack Holtz were freshmen on that state team, and Braeden's brother, Ashton, and Carver Larson were 8th-graders.

With his college decision behind him, Braeden is excited to keep working on his game and see what a talented nucleus for the Cardinals can do over the next couple seasons together.

"We had some guys that hadn't really been on that stage before or been to a state championship," Sladek said. "I think now all the younger guys have the ground under their feet and are ready to go. We're so close. We're all buddies and we like to work. We've kind of been anticipating this season and looking forward to it this whole winter. We've all been all in with golf and getting better. We're looking forward to proving ourselves here this season."

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ATHLETES

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Megan finished right behind Bethany in third place during the 5000 with a time of 16:26.90. She was fourth in the 3000-meter run with a time of 9:12.36.

Alexandria natives Brock Anderson and Jake Drew helped the Division I North Dakota State University baseball team to a 12-8 start.

Drew, a senior right-handed pitcher, owns a perfect 0.00 ERA through eight appearances out of the bullpen as of March 22. Drew has worked eight innings and scattered 7 hits, allowing two unearned runs. He is holding opposing hitters to a .212 batting average with 8 strikeouts as he has racked up a team-best 4 saves.

Anderson, a junior utility player and left-handed pitcher, has started 16 of 17 games for the Bison. He has a .294 batting average with 12 runs scored, 7 doubles, 2 home runs and 10 RBIs. Anderson has had three three-hit games this season.

Alexandria natives Andrew Revering and Ben Doherty helped the Division III Bethel men's hockey program to a 15-11-1 record this past season when both former Cardinals were in their freshman season with the Royals.

Doherty, a forward, played in 25 games and was fifth on the team in points with 15 (4

goals, 11 assists). Revering, a defenseman, scored 6 points in 17 games played on 1 goal and 5 assists.

Andrew Revering's older brother, Parker Revering, has been a big piece of the Division I American International College men's hockey program in recent years.

Parker, a senior defenseman, suffered a season-ending injury earlier this season, but still helped AIC to a 22-12 overall record so far and to a berth in the NCAA Tournament. Revering played in 25 games and tallied 8 points on 2 goals and 6 assists.

American International College won the Atlantic Hockey Championship Tournament on March 19 with a 7-0 win over Air Force. They will play No. 1 Michigan in the NCAA Tournament on March 25 at 3 p.m. in a game that will be televised on ESPN.

Alexandria native Noah Boraas is in his junior season for the Division I South Dakota State University men's golf team.

Boraas' tournament this season came when he helped SDSU to a 6th-place finish during an event at the Sage Run Golf Club in Michigan during the fall portion of the season. That field included 10 total programs, including Michigan State and Michigan from the Big Ten and Kentucky in the Southeastern Conference.

Boraas shot a three-day score of 226 in the tournament. That tied him for 31st place at 10-over par. In 21 career rounds for the Jackrabbits, Boraas has a scoring average of 76.67.

Alexandria's Hunter Rebrovich is in his first season playing for the University of South Dakota men's golf program.

Rebrovich, a junior this school year, spent his first

two college seasons playing at Minnesota State Mankato to at the Division II level. Rebrovich earned second-team All-Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference honors with the Mavericks as a sophomore before moving to the Division I level in the Summit League with South Dakota.

Rebrovich has stepped right into the Coyotes' lineup as a fixture. He is third on the team in season-scoring average at 76.05 with a season-low round of 69 in 21 rounds played during the 2021-22 season. His best finish overall came at the Loyola Intercollegiate Tournament Feb. 20-22 where Rebrovich shot a three-day, 6-under par 210.

That was good for seventh place out of 110 golfers. Rebrovich shot individual rounds of 71, 69, and 70 in the tournament. He followed that up with a 4-over par score of 220 to finish tied for 13th at the Jackrabbit Invitational March 11-12.

Alexandria's Brianna Holm is getting acclimated at the Division II level on the University of Sioux Falls (South Dakota) women's tennis team.

Holm, a freshman, is 2-0 playing in the singles lineup for a 7-5 USF team early in the 2022 season. Former Minnewaska Area High School graduates Danielle and Joelle Thorfinnson also play for USF in both the singles and doubles lineup.

The Thorfinnsons have both posted winning records in doubles where Danielle, a sophomore, is 6-2 overall, and Joelle, a graduate student, is 6-3. The two have teamed up in doubles to go 4-2 this season when playing together.

Alexandria's Mayson Toft was again a part of a talent-

ed roster for the University of Wisconsin women's hockey team.

Toft, a sophomore defender this past winter season, played in 37 games for the 26-8-4 Badgers. She tallied four assists, and also posted a plus-9 rating during her time on the ice.

Toft and the Badgers were ranked No. 6 in the March 21 DCU/USCHO women's Division I poll. Their season came to an end in the NCAA Regional round when No. 3-ranked Northeastern (31-5-2) won a 4-2 game on March 12.

Alexandria native Drew Olson is a junior sprinter on the University of Mary track and field team.

Olson competed in his first outdoor season for the Marauders during the 2020-21 school year where he posted season-best times of 10.62 in the 100-meter dash and 21.81 in the 200-meter dash.

Olson recently competed in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference Indoor Championships on Feb. 25 and 26. Olson finished 13th in the 60-meter dash in a time of 7.02 seconds, and added a 20th-place finish in the 200 in 22.89.

Alexandria's Brianna Timm is a sophomore swimmer for Division III Concordia College in Moorhead.

The Cobbers recently competed in the 2022 MIAC swimming and diving championships in late February. Timm was part of the Cobbers' 400-yard freestyle relay team that finished seventh in a time of 3:46.91.

Alexandria natives Meg Shercliffe and Mataya Hoelscher are also a part of Concordia athletics, where Shercliffe is a sophomore track and field athlete and Hoelscher was a freshman this year getting acclimated to college bas-

ketball.

Shercliffe competed in three events for the Cobbers at the MIAC Indoor Championships in late February. She ran with the 4x200-meter relay team where she helped the Cobbers take sixth in a finals time of 1:51.46. That was more than a two-second drop from the group's seed time.

Shercliffe also joined Concordia's distance medley team to finish fifth in a total time of 13:03.64, and was part of the 4x400 relay group that finished ninth in 4:17.24.

Alexandria's Bryce Ludwig is an academic junior thrower for the Division I South Dakota State University track and field program.

Ludwig most recently competed in the SDSU Last Chance Meet on Feb. 19 where he finished eighth in the men's weight throw with a toss of 49-feet, 1.75-inches. Ludwig has college-best marks of 48-feet, 11.5-inches in the shot put, 145-feet, 10-inches in the discus, 54-feet, 5.5-inches in the weight throw and 161-feet, 11-inches in the hammer throw.

Alexandria's Caitlin Bright also competes for the women's track and field program at SDSU as a distance runner.

Bright, a sophomore academically and a freshman in terms of athletic eligibility, has proven to be a versatile athlete for the Jackrabbits in both track and cross country. She recently finished eighth (9:56.48) in the 3,000-meter run and seventh (17:23.78) in the 5,000 at the Summit League Indoor Track and Field championships.

Bright's career-best times so far at SDSU are 2:34.01 in the 800, 5:05.51 in the 1500, 4:59.64 in the mile, 9:56.48 in the 3000, 17:23.78 in the 5000, 19:43.7 in the 5K cross country race, and 22:19.8 in the 6K.

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