

VOLUME

22.2



LINCOLN SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL

TALON
24

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

NOTHING
WE CAN'T DO.



NOTHING WE CAN'T DO

HAWKS ON TOP. Senior Malayah Long rushes from the volleyball court with her teammates to take hold of the state championship trophy. The Silverhawks beat Papillion La Vista in a 3-0 sweep and claimed the first state title for Southwest in school history. "Especially as a senior, this was my last high school game, so I think I had that feeling of 'last one best one.' It was a whole bunch of emotion within and I just had to go out there and play the game I knew I could," said Long. "I think it's such a cool opportunity that we were the first team in school history to win the state title and only school in LPS to win in the last 25 years. It's something that is indescribable." Photo Courtesy of Lincoln Journal Star/Kenneth Ferriera

ON THE COURT

SKY'S THE LIMIT

The culinary room was closed for first term to be remodeled. The new kitchen area included commercial kitchen-quality cooking stations. "The space doubled in size. We no longer have to walk through a classroom to get to the culinary room," Mrs. Sarah Morrow said. "Students have tables in a classroom space separate from the kitchen spaces."



TAKE MY ADVICE. Mr. Thomas Nettleton gives advice to the freshmen through a personal speech on Freshman Day. The auditorium was filled to the brim with new students becoming a part of Southwest. "It is difficult to know if presentations truly impact the audience. I think students were engaged and the message was intended to provide a successful narrative of how high school can truly impact individuals, schools and the community," Nettleton said. "The aim was to highlight the best parts of being at a school that works hard to provide great experiences." Photo by Khloe Swanson

STAND AND SHOUT. Sophomore Sadie Fredericks cheers to the students in the stands. All four cheer squads, freshman, reserve, JV and varsity cheered and performed at the pep rally. "My favorite part of the day was definitely doing the cheer routine," Fredericks said. "It was so exciting and such an adrenaline rush." Photo by Khloe Swanson

STRIKE A POSE. Freshman Ella Dierking poses for the crowd at the freshman pep rally. Dierking had just won the pep rally game, musical chairs. "I felt excited to get the chance to play because they could've picked anybody but they picked me," Dierking said. "I was a little nervous and I hoped that I wouldn't get out." Photo by Khloe Swanson



MUSICAL MADNESS

Freshman Ella Dierking felt excitement rush through her body as the crowd cheered her on while the music from the speakers blasted around the gym.

Anxiously anticipating it to stop, Dierking shuffled around the final chair and locked eyes with her opponent. As the speakers went quiet, the crowd grew louder as Dierking yanked the chair away from the middle and leaped into it.

As the crowd cheered, Dierking was crowned the winner of the Freshman Day Pep Rally game, and struck a winning pose for everyone to see.

"I was super excited because I always try to make little things fun or funny, but I was a little nervous hoping I wouldn't get out," Dierking said. "During the last round, all I was thinking was that I was going to pull that chair right away from her, I knew I had to."

Freshmen gathered in the gym at the beginning of their first block for a pep rally. The pep rally was led by Principal John Matzen, who introduced himself, the school and expectations that students should be aware of for the upcoming school year. He also introduced the cheerleading squads who performed their routines and the Emeralds' dance team performance followed.

"Beginning high school is a major life milestone and I love that Freshman Day acts as a celebration of that event. We are able to combine an introduction to school systems with the broader idea of embracing one's role as a Silver Hawk," Matzen said. "I think we have a fantastic year ahead. I love the Southwest community, students, staff and parents, and I look forward to what we can achieve together."

Following the performances, Student Council organized a game of musical chairs for the freshmen. The game included 20 students and 19 chairs. Sophomore Claire Timperley from Student Council explained the rules and led the game. As the speakers shuffled through the selected songs, starting and stopping for every round, the number of

chairs and students remaining became fewer. After 19 rounds the winner was crowned and received a \$10 gift card to Panera.

"We became obsessed with the idea of musical chairs and we figured it would be easy to explain and the perfect length of time," Timperley said. "I was kind of nervous to be speaking in front of so many people but most of all I was just proud to get to represent our amazing Student Council."

After the pep rally, students went to their classes on a normal Tuesday shortened schedule. Ambassadors and Student Council members roamed the halls to help students with directions and advice when needed.

After lunch, freshmen headed to the practice gym for the Clubs and Activities Fair. The fair had booths to showcase what clubs had to offer, how to sign up and more.

"The freshmen were a little hesitant, but overall, I think it was helpful for them to get to know some

"I think we have a fantastic year ahead. I love the Southwest community, students, staff and parents, and I look forward to what we can achieve together."

of the activities offered at Southwest," junior Emma Lee said. "There was a surprising amount of interest in Student Council for next school year. I'm glad to see people wanting to get involved in their school and community."

As the day came to a close, the freshmen filled the auditorium to listen to speakers, alum Mr. Cameron Pieper and Mr. Thomas Nettleton. Nettleton had games to kick off the presentation including a push up contest and a combination lock unlocking contest. Pieper and Nettleton spoke about the importance of high school and effort. Pieper told stories about his time at Southwest as a student and how it shaped his life and his football career.

"I am always thinking about how experiences can be inviting, encouraging and challenging. Cam did an excellent job of telling students about the challenges and trials that students face, and how he was able to stay focused and who helped him," Nettleton said. "I am most looking forward to students taking full advantage of what this school and community can offer them. I am equally excited to see what we can accomplish this year with our performing arts, clubs and athletics."

Story/Spread by Khloe Swanson

FRESHMEN TRANSITION INTO NEW YEAR

STUCO HOSTS SECOND ANNUAL COLOR RUN



Jack McCormick, 11 "I think it was fun and more people should do it. I really liked throwing color powder at people and the popsicles handed out at the end." Photo by Lillian Bittle

Penelope Brown, 11 "My favorite part of color run was getting to run with the group as a surprise attacker and throw chalk at them while running. It was a really great event and I had a lot of fun being able to participate." Photo by Lillian Bittle

Allison Ernst, 12 "I was feeling good. I got to do it with my friends, so it was fun. The most fun was probably knowing that I'm helping my community, but also being with my friends." Photo by Lillian Bittle

EXTREME TEMPS

HEAT ADVISORIES CANCEL ATHLETICS AND LPS EVENTS

Senior **Jamari Williams** tiredly drug himself out of bed and prepared to leave for school and football practice at five in the morning. He stepped outside into the thick air and the temperature read a high of 95 degrees at the moment. Practice was scheduled for 6 a.m. due to the conditions of the heat that week.

"Practicing in the morning was hard at first, I wasn't used to getting up at 5 a.m. but I started to love it. Nobody was complaining, we were just ready to play," Williams said. "The heat really affected us because it was game week and we weren't able to practice normally."

Students and staff were welcomed into the week with unusually hot weather. Meteorologists were predicting triple digit temperatures starting Saturday, Aug. 19, and expected to last until Thursday, Aug. 24.

Before the week started, Lincoln Public Schools families received an email about how the district would be implementing protocols to keep students safe. Early childhood classes were canceled Wednesday and Thursday. This was because roughly 850 students were transported during the afternoon, which was the hottest part of the day, on school buses that don't have air conditioning.

Students were encouraged to bring a water bottle to stay hydrated throughout the day. The district also suspended all outdoor classes, recess and activities. This included sports.

When senior **Julia Johnson** found out she wasn't able to go outside during outdoor adventure, she was bummed. Johnson was looking forward to doing the lessons like scavenger hunts, knot tying and shelter building, but all of those were postponed because of the heat.

"We were going to do all these fun activities and have a chance to try new things and it was disappointing we didn't get to do that," Johnson said. "We're supposed to be outside a lot and at first. Being inside during an outdoor class wasn't very fun."

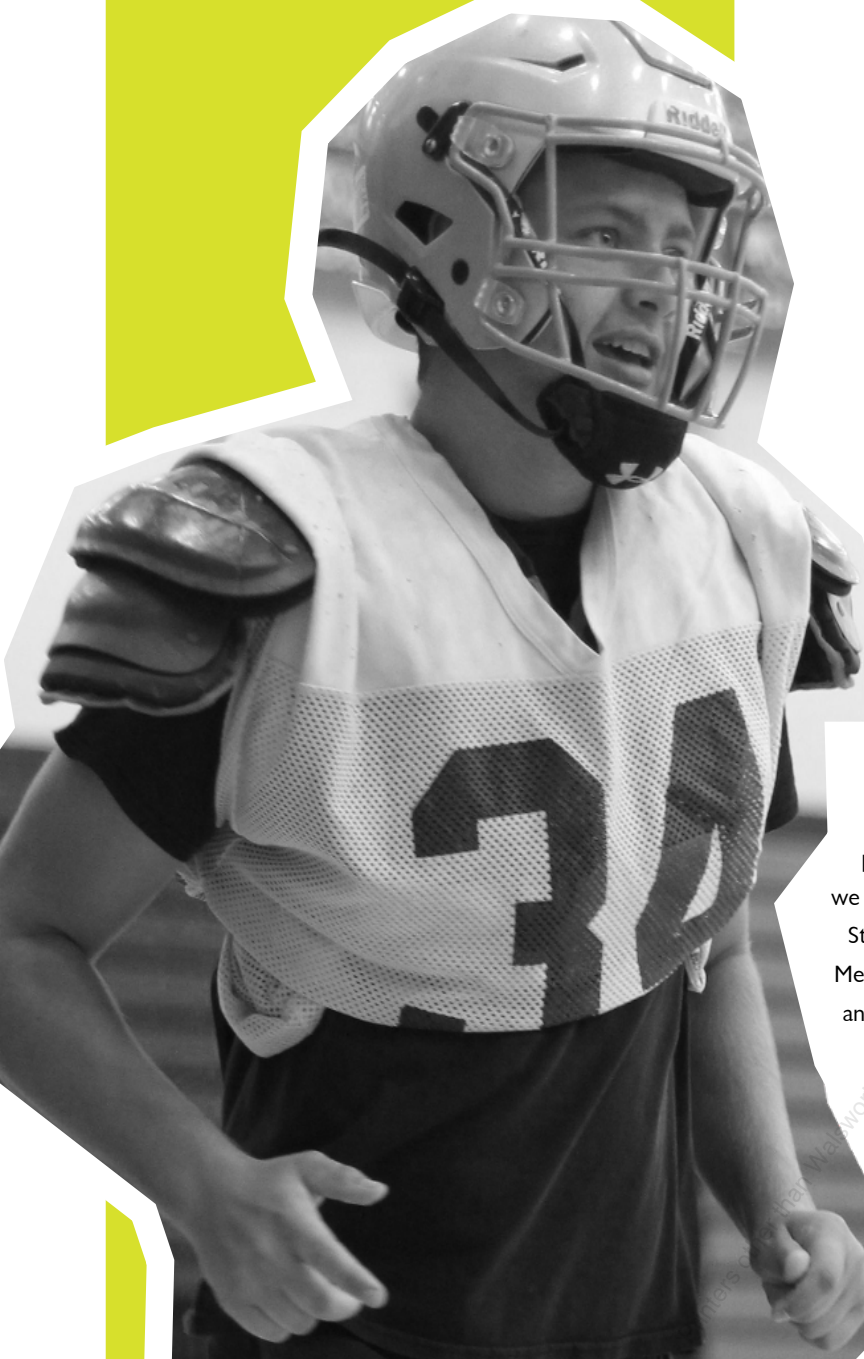
Not only were P.E. classes affected by the hot weather, fall sports spent the week working with unusual schedules and practice locations. Football started practicing at 6 a.m. outside, when it wasn't so hot out. They also spent the week practicing after school in the cafeteria and gym.

Heat waves forced softball to postpone the first game against Columbus. Senior **Chloe Jewitt** expected the temperatures to drop and didn't think their second game would be canceled. The team was able to have a couple indoor facilities to use to continue practicing.

"I understand the rules that were enforced especially because some positions have to wear a lot of gear. I definitely think it was for the best even though some games were canceled," Jewitt said. "Even though we weren't able to play out on the dirt, we didn't let it affect us. We continued to focus on team building and going all out for each other which has helped us to reach goals we set."

As the week came to an end, football was able to be played on Friday night and sports would return to their normal practice locations.

Story by Nyakuar Kuon



DON'T SWEAT IT. The extreme heat outside made it difficult for football players to practice like normal. Hearing that they would be practicing indoors made some of the players feel uneasy. "I was kind of nervous because the floors we were practicing on were really sticky," junior **Carson Langley** said. "What made practice harder was having minimal contact, so we weren't able to do all the stuff we did outside." Photo by Kirstyn Montana



MISSING MARSHMALLOW

BABY CALIFORNIA KING SNAKE ROAMS THE HALLS

The science department welcomed a new member to A105. Marshmallow, the California King snake, made her debut in August with the freshmen. However, two weeks into the school year, Marshmallow went missing. The tiny snake, which was roughly 12 inches long, was thought to have slipped out of the class by slithering under the classroom door. **Mr. Charley Bittle** sent an email to staff asking for help by keeping their eyes

open for the white snake. "Normally, these things stay in the room and are found hiding behind a cabinet," Bittle said. "I immediately sent out an email to all staff when we found it, and a lot of teachers were excited and I got a lot of emails back."

One of the main concerns with the small snake escaping was the lack of food and water sources available to him in LSW. While Marshmallow was completely harmless, her escape still made

some feel uneasy. "I felt worried," Bittle said. "I did hope that the snake wasn't gonna get stepped on somewhere."

Eight days later, Marshmallow was found alive in A105. She had not escaped but was simply roaming around on the floor.

"She was found in the classroom on the floor (well technically the greenhouse floor)," Bittle said. "Only a few cobwebs on her but very healthy."

HONORS CONVOCATION CONGRATULATES STUDENTS



1. Kai Sasaki, 12: "I was announcing the names, but the best part was that I got to recognize all my friends and people that deserved to be recognized. It was great to see all the parents smiling as their child walked past and shook Matzen's hand." Photo by Karston Dames

2. Aaron Wohleb, 12: "It was my first time talking in front of the whole school so it was a little nerve wracking, but exciting. I was there because I'm the president of the National Honors Society." Photo by Karston Dames

3. Eric Ariunsaikhan, 10: "I was nervous going up in front of a bunch of people. It was a memorable experience appearing at the Honors Convocation." Photo by Karston Dames

4. Katie Timmer, 11: "I was excited to get recognized for my hard work. I was there because of me having the highest honor roll first term." Photo by Aden Niebuhr



491 SENIORS @ LSW

5:45 a.m. PEOPLE ARRIVED

6:40 a.m. TIME OF SUNRISE

DATE: **08/18 /2023**

CHECK THE NUMBERS

RISE & SHINE

SENIORS GATHER FOR SECOND ANNUAL SENIOR SUNRISE

The 2024 senior class gathered on the football field on a warm, August morning for the second annual Senior Sunrise hosted by Student Council. The event invited students to bring pillows and blankets to lie on the turf and watch the sunrise.

"I was really glad I brought a blanket because it was wet outside and a little chilly," senior **Elena Caballero** said. "The building was a little in the way of the sunrise but I still enjoyed it."

Along with the sunrise, students were able to paint their hands and place their prints on a poster to commemorate the event. There was also coffee and donuts provided by The Bean Box who brought a food truck as well.

"The coffee truck was cute and aesthetically pleasing," Caballero said. "I got a glazed donut for myself."

Story/Spread by Charlie Miller and Chloe Hale

PAINT YOURSELF SILLY. Seniors **Maddy Quinn** and **Donna McGrath** paint their hands to put on the Senior Sunrise banner. The second annual Senior Sunrise was held on the football field accompanied by a coffee truck. "The turnout was great and the courteous coffee truck definitely was a plus, enabling students to get their morning caffeine early in the morning," senior **Kai Sasaki** said. "Next year, Student Council can do a great deal better by advertising more heavily and adding new attractions." *Photo by Khloe Swanson*

Marco Spinar, 12

Q: How was senior sunrise for you?
A: "It was really fun, I had a good time."

Q: What major are you pursuing in college?
A: "I will probably pursue a history or political science major. History was always my favorite class, and I have always had a passion for it."

Q: What are you going to miss about high school the most?
A: "The small classes and getting to know my teachers really well is something I will miss."

Isaak Hogeland, 12

Q: How was senior sunrise for you?
A: "It was fun. I had to wake up early. I went with a lot of my friends and we had breakfast together and watched the sunrise."

Q: What are you looking forward to once you graduate?
A: "I want to go to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and hopefully do architecture."

Q: What was your best memory from high school?
A: "I would say doing the musical, 'Beauty and the Beast,' with all my friends. I was the rug that did cartwheels. I got to spend a lot of time with friends and we worked really hard to make something happen."

Malya Bussinger, 12

Q: How was senior sunrise for you?
A: "I liked how I sat with my friends and we watched the sky turn pretty."

Q: What was your favorite event to go to in high school?
A: "My favorite event was going to football games with friends and having a really fun Friday night."

Q: What was your favorite class you took during high school?
A: "The drawing classes I've taken would have to be my favorite because I love to draw and the classes are very easy going."



AUTUMN TERM TWO

POTTERY PALS. Freshman **Maarib Basi** studies her pinch pot in pottery class. Pinch pots were the first project that the class worked on to learn how to incorporate personal designs. "It was a learning process of actually making the pot, but designing after was the best part," Basi said. "The most memorable part of the class was glazing our projects and making new friends." Photo by Lisa Ngo



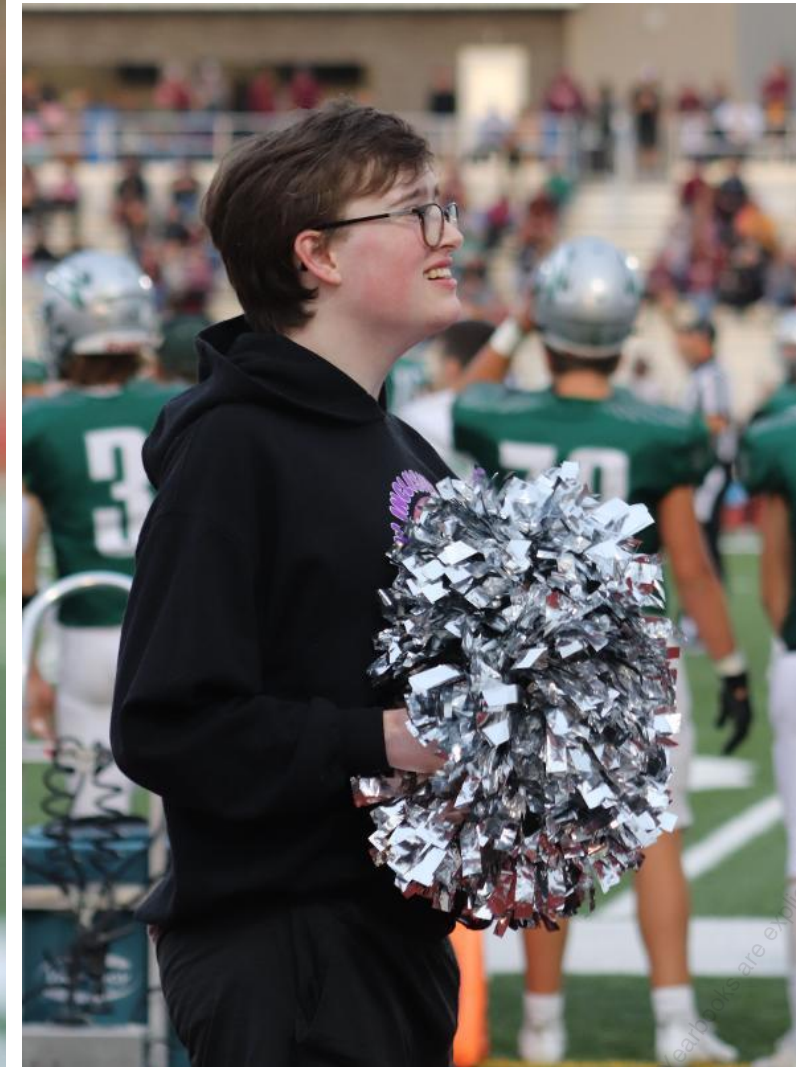
SO PROUD OF YOU

Staff members created a Culture Club to help recognize students who participated in activities outside of school.

Sports teams and clubs gathered in the media center after school where they were met with posters and cheerful staff ready to recognize and congratulate them on their accomplishments.

"We have so many wonderful students at this school," **Ms. Brandi Benson** said. So many of them devote hours and hours to the sports and activities that they love and we just wanted to do something to recognize all of the hard work they put in. It was fun to see their smiles."

The "recognition rallies," as they became known, were also a way for staff to celebrate students whose sports or activities were held during the school day.



HERE WE GO HAWKS. Sophomore **Claire Bruns** cheers during the football game against Papillion La Vista. Bruns and the Inclusive Cheer squad cheered with the varsity cheer squad at all home games. "Inclusive cheer means a lot to everyone," Bruns said. "I like that my parents come to watch me cheer. It shows passion." *Photo by Aubriana Baxa*

SMILES AND POM POMS. Senior **Charlie Miller** encourages the crowd to get involved during a home football game. Miller enjoyed being with his teammates at games. "My favorite thing to do at cheer is cheering for all the games," Miller said. "I also like seeing my friends at practice." *Photo by Aubriana Baxa*

SAY CHEESE. Sophomore **Olivia Grieser** and junior **Faith Dierking** find their families in the stands as they cheer on the sidelines. Inclusive cheerleaders performed different cheerleaders at each game. "I like to be with my friends," Grieser said. "It's more fun." *Photo by Aubriana Baxa*



LOUD & PROUD

INCLUSIVE CHEER WELCOMES NEW & RETURNING FACES

With their flower, rainbow and smiley face hoodies to keep them warm and their pom poms to pump up the crowd, the members of the inclusive cheer team took the sidelines for each varsity football home game.

Members of the team consisted of students from general and special education whose purpose was to hype up the student section while also helping one another. During the season, students focused on creating friendships through cheer.

During games, general education and special education cheerleaders partnered together to

lead cheers, wave their pom poms and enjoy the Friday night lights. For many of the varsity cheerleaders, this was their first experience being a part of the inclusive cheer team.

"I have been in unified PE and Unified Club since freshman year," junior **Annie Sander** said. "I thought it was a great opportunity to get closer to my peers in unified cheer."

Not only did inclusive cheer take place during football season, members smiled from the sidelines of the gym for varsity basketball games as well. The cheerleaders practiced on various weekdays except Tuesdays. They

learned many chants to pep up the crowd.

"My favorite cheer that I do is 'Go Big Green!'" sophomore **Claire Bruns** said. "I decided to do cheer because I wanted to follow my heart and my favorite part is having friends that teach me how to do cheer stuff."

For students like junior **Ellie Bailey**, inclusive cheer allowed her to pair two of her favorite pastimes, cheer and helping others.

"I just really wanted to help out," Bailey said. "I love cheer. I love helping people with cheer."

Spread by Ava Mosley and Jackie Stahnke



WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO BE A PART OF INCLUSIVE CHEER?

Ellie Beerenstrauch, 12
"I like working with the kids and it always makes my day."

Ellie Bailey, 11
"Cheer is something I have grown up doing. I really like it."

Eva Anderson, 12
"Inclusive Cheer seemed like something I wanted to be a part of. It has been such a positive experience and I love being together on the sidelines. It's super fun!"

Annie Sander, 11
"I have been a part of other unified activities so being able to spend more time with them sounded like fun. Since I love cheer I could also teach them the things I've learned."

Niah Rief, 10
"I like to cheer with my friends. I like to support my friends."

Hannah Stille, 12
"I think Inclusive Cheer is a good way to get involved. It's been really fun."

TRIPLE THE TROUBLE, TRIPLE THE FUN

Sophomore **Batool, Benen and Kauthar Al-Boufradi** are triplets. They were born January 4th, 2008. Batool is the oldest, Benen is the middle born and Kauthar is the youngest. They are 15 years old and from Lincoln Nebraska.

"Being a triplet has many pros and cons, pros are that we are really close, we're basically built in friends and we're never bored. The cons are that we get compared a lot. For example, how different or similar we look and who's smarter than who. Another con is we don't get called by our names, we get called triplets. Stuff like that really annoys us," Batool said. "The thing that's easier to tell the difference between us is our heights. I'm 5'3, Benen is 5'2 and Kauthar is 5'1 and a half."

The chance of being identical triplets are 1 in a 50,000 chance. Batool, Benen and Kauthar are identical. Growing up they noticed that people mixed them up many times, so in sixth grade Batool and Benen had a great idea to switch places. They didn't get caught until someone that knew them told the teachers.

"I think we are very similar, we have the same likings and enjoy doing a bunch of the same stuff," Benen said. "When we got caught we didn't necessarily get in trouble. The teacher thought it was more on the funny side and just let us off with a warning. Kauthar didn't switch places because she was too scared to get caught. She is a good kid."

Batool, Benen and Kauthar always get asked if they have the same personalities, they see themselves as pretty similar but they do have a few different characteristic traits.

"I would not take back being a triplet and I would most definitely not want to be the only child." Al-Boufradis said. "I love my sisters and I would never want to have it another way."



It all started three years ago when junior **Muhammad Iskovo** started to gain a love for shoes. His desire for collecting shoes started when he could sell a pair of shoes and gain more profit than when he first bought them.

In July of 2021, Iskovo purchased his very first pair of shoes. They were Volt Gold Jordan 1s. Later on, he also bought University Blue, Mocha and Strange Love Dunks.

"What made me start liking shoes was selling them to make more money. I started collecting shoes because they look cool and they add more character to my outfits," Iskovo said. "My favorite pair of shoes that I own are my Pure Moneys. My least favorite are my Air Forces. The most money I've spent on a shoe was \$500, and the least I've spent on a shoe was \$80."

The process of selling shoes started when Iskovo and his friend, junior **Mehvan Mustafa**, decided to open an Instagram account in 2021. They named this account Culture Sneakers. The account gained over 1000 followers in over a few months. Iskovo

and Mustafa discontinued the account and now sells shoes on Snapchat and Alias Goat.

"I have sold a pair of PSG 4s and made a good \$300. I think the increase of sneaker hype is killing the profit resale," Iskovo said. "The longest I've waited for a shoe to come after ordering it is four weeks."

Iskovo planned to continue to grow his collection of shoes and continue his journey of selling them.

"I'm not gonna stop collecting shoes because they look cool. I buy my shoes from Nike and Exclusive Hype." Iskovo said "Jordan is my favorite shoe brand because they make nice designs, and my dream shoes are Fragment Travis."



EVERY STEP MATTERS

DRIVEN BY PASSION

Sophomore **Sami Hussien** began his soccer journey when he was four years old to lead him where he is today. Hussien is a 15-year-old who already has had multiple colleges interested in him.

"I started playing soccer in Africa because there aren't any other sports over there, so I started playing soccer with my friends," Hussien said. "My friends influenced me to play soccer. Soon after, I just started watching soccer videos which pulled my interest more."

The first soccer team Hussien played for was Glenview Middle School in Illinois. Now, he plays for an academy from Spain called Villarreal FC.

"A soccer player I like is Bukayo Saka because he looks like me," Hussien said. "A soccer player I look up to is my friend Momo because he is my cousin and he is one of the best soccer players. I'm looking forward to seeing him go pro next year."

Hussien practiced soccer almost everyday by going to a soccer pitch with his friends. He also played inside his room with a ball or he watched videos to practice his skills.

Hussien has played with an age range of 19-20 years olds. The position he currently plays is forward. Hussien plans to continue to play soccer, until something were to get in his way.

"The best compliment I have ever received is when I made a quarter kick and a bicycle kick," Hussien said. "I see soccer in my future and I'm not planning to ever quit soccer unless I get a really bad injury."



STANDING OUT NATURALLY

Sophomore **Jaron Kildare** was six feet tall by the time he entered sixth grade at age 12. He was the tallest kid in his class in both sixth and seventh grade. At 16 years old, Kildare is 6'4.

"When I was in sixth grade, I felt kinda weird because I was six feet tall with a little mustache," Kildare said. "So I always looked way older than everybody else. I always thought people thought I was some creepy dude just lurking around a bunch of kids, but nowadays, it's not like that."

Kildare is the second tallest in his family and he inherited his height from his dad who is 6'5. Kildare has a half brother that is 22 years old and is 6'2.

"The pros of being tall is that it's helpful with sports and it's easier to play basketball," Kildare said. "The cons of being tall is not being able to find pants that fit me. It's either the length is good but the waist doesn't fit or the other way around. I literally wear shorts all year round."

Kildare plays JV basketball and runs JV track. Kildare started basketball in first grade but he started playing competitively in fifth, and he plans to continue playing after high school.

"I would definitely want to be taller. I would say anything more than 6'9 you're probably going to die early so I would say my dream height is 6'8," Kildare said. "I most definitely see basketball in my future. I would like to play in college if I could."

Kildare can see way over fridges, he's taller than most mirrors, taller than everyone of his friends and he is taller than most teachers but he has no problem with it.

"I like being tall. A lot of people don't like the attention really, but obviously I don't mind it," Kildare said. "I would never want to be shorter. I like being tall too much, and I wouldn't mind another growth sprout."



Story/Spread by Alijah Gibson



IN IT FOR THE LONG RUN

PLATTE RIVER RUMBLE BOASTS FASTEST TIMES OF THE SEASON

As the sweat dripped down his face and his pace began to quicken, senior **Max Myers** could see the finish line at the Platte River Rumble race. With burning lungs and legs, his feet crossed the line and relief flooded through him.

Immediately after he finished, Myers was told by his coaches that he had broken a new school record. By the end of the race, everyone on varsity had broken a new personal record that day.

"I was extremely proud of my team, especially our sophomores who broke 17 minutes, which is something that is very rare in our program," Myers said. "Every race is different, from competition to the course. I think the biggest tactic is to be focused and pay attention to what you are doing. Remaining conscious during a race is key and keeping yourself motivated and confident in your abilities is a great moral to have on race day."

Two weeks following, every school received news about their scores. The race coordinators decided to re-measure the course, due to the large group of new personal records. They had been 40 meters short of 5,000 meters in their original readings. As a result, all times were disregarded.

"We all thought the meet felt a little weird before our scores were even counted. The meet was great but very different from our usual meets," Myers said.

"The team felt disappointed, some were hoping they would add a little bit of time to make up for the distance not recorded."

Although they had to readjust their times, the Hawks had a successful season leading up to that point.

The Titan Classic in Papillion was the first meet of the season. Myers won the meet with a time of 16:16.23. In addition,

sophomore **Connor Boyle** placed 13th with a time of 17:18.21. Overall, Southwest finished in fourth place with a score of 77.

"I feel pretty good about the season so far, so I think I'll be able to add up

pretty well at the end of the year," Boyle said. "I think the team has all gotten to experience good scores this season. I'm hoping at the end of the year we'll all be able to collectively have good progress."

With a time of 15:51.81, Myers finished the Lincoln North Star Meet in second place. Junior, **Connor Rowe**, followed in 17th place at 17:28.

"We normally run at Pioneers Park so the course is very familiar for us. Pioneers Park is one of the toughest courses I've ever ran, so every race that takes place out there is pretty difficult," Rowe said. "During a race, I try not to focus on how bad it hurts and focus more on what I need to do to push the team to success."

At the LPS Championship, Southwest came in fourth place overall. Myers finished the race in first place with a time of 16:11.

"Not focusing on the race is the best way for me to get prepared for a race. We push our bodies to the brink during a race and if I focus on how painful it will be, I'll freak myself out and it will do more harm than good," junior **Noah Smith** said.

"Physically I make sure I get a good nights sleep and a good breakfast. Throughout the day, I make sure my muscles are stretched and ready."

At the District Meet, Myers placed in second at 15:46.21, Boyle placed 10th at 16:40.12 and Rowe placed 12th at 16:53.12. Their placings allowed them a place at state.

"My teammates always motivate me. We all work together in practice every day, so we grow really close. I know they count on me like I count on them, so I want to push myself for them," Rowe said. "The senior leaders have been a really great help this year. Seniors **Jacob Rinn** and Myers push us to do our best every day, and since they have been a part of the program all four years, they know how to lead us."

At State, the team ended the season with a ninth place finish and an overall score of 195. Myers finished in at fifth.

"I felt alright with my performance at state. There was a lot going on the day of state so I was happy to place in the top five. I also knew that I had a lot to improve for the upcoming track season," Myers said. "The most influential people to me were the seniors my freshman year. They were great role models and made sure I was prepared to lead the team after they graduated."

Story/Spread by Lyric Lee



TOO QUICK TO QUIT. Senior **Max Myers** leads the pack of runners at the LPS Championship. He finished the race in first place with a time of 16:11.68. "I was very happy with my performance at the championship, but I was still eager to improve," Myers said. "I didn't have any competition and I was very prepared for my race so I could tell I would win." Photo Courtesy of Lincoln Journal Star Justin Wan

DEF•I•NI•TION

DAY-BY-DAY (noun)
A preface chant meaning to strive to get better every day and take every day one at a time.

CHIP (noun)
An electronic device laced into the shoe used to detect when runners cross the finish line.

SPLITS (noun)
The time it takes to run a certain distance within a race, usually means a mile.

SAVE IT FOR STATE (noun)
A reminder to make sure the team hits their splits and not overworking themselves, to save a bit of fitness for championship meets.



MAKE A RUN FOR IT. Sophomore **Cole Cover** dashes towards the end of the Lincoln North Star invitational course. He placed 20th with a time of 17:33.05. "Before a race I make sure I get good sleep the night before and eat well," Cover said. "When I'm running I always try to remember that I'm running for my teammates, not just for myself." Photo by Lyric Lee



MAKE A RUN FOR IT. Senior **Isaak Hogeland** concentrates his way through the North Star meet. He finished 37th overall with a time of 18:27.69. "To stay motivated, the team like to say 'who's gonna carry the boats' telling us to step up and do things others can't do," Hogeland said. "I always try to rely on my training and know that at the end of the day if no one else does then you have to carry the boats yourself." Photo by Kirstyn Montano

ONE STRIDE AT A TIME. Sophomores **Connor Boyle** and **Cade Cover** sprint alongside one another at the Lincoln North Star invitational. Boyle finished in 26th and Cover followed in 27th place. "I recently PR'd at the Platte River Rumble with a time of 16:38, but I'm hoping I can get on the record board," Boyle said. "One of the biggest challenges is just realizing that results aren't always the best so you just have to keep working hard and doing what you need to do." Photo by Lyric Lee

LAST ONE BEST ONE

GIRLS SWEEP MONARCHS TO WIN FIRST STATE TITLE

SENIOR SEASON. Senior **Julia Trost** celebrates with her team after an ace. The Hawks played in the State Championship game and won 3-0. "My motivation is to always play like it's my last because it now is my last season and my last chance to play with these girls," Trost said. "It always pushes me and makes me give one hundred percent and it's what has made me keep going this season." Photo courtesy of Lincoln Journal Star Kenneth Ferriera



SUPERSTITIONS AND SUCCESS. Senior **Teagan Little** cheers with her team after a rally. Little had 993 career digs at the end of this season. "One of my traditions and rituals is my teammate and I, **Emerson Lionberger**, do handstands before a game," Little said. "It's a pre game superstition so we don't feel like we'll lose." Photo by Lillian Bittle

**MALAYAH LONG:
1067 ASSISTS**

393 DIGS
TEAGAN LITTLE

**ABBIE APPEGET:
82 BLOCKS**

274 KILLS
JULIA TROST

CHECK THE NUMBERS

Senior **Emerson Lionberger** stood behind the service line, slowly breathing in and out as she bounced the ball on the court. She lifted the ball onto her hand and anchored her shoulder back to serve. As she swung her hand through the air, the ball floated over the net and landed on the court on the other side. Lionberger aced Papillion La Vista and marked another point in her 10-point run.

"While on my serving streak, I honestly didn't know the score of the game," Lionberger said. "I kind of was just taking it one point at a time mentally. Every time I got the ball back, I was able to reset, do my serving routine and then keep the ball in play so that my team can continue playing."

The Hawks entered the championship game in the State Tournament with the opportunity to win Southwest's first volleyball state title.

"When walking onto the court for the final time this season, we wanted it to be our best game since it would be our last," senior **Aaliyah Bradford** said. "We just wanted to give it our all and enjoy it, while having a lot of fun."

The Hawks' began the season with a lake retreat. They all stayed in a cabin, played sand volleyball, roasted marshmallows and spent time on the water. This allowed the Hawks to enter the season with a trusting mentality to be able to work together.

"We lost a lot of key factors from our team last year so just coming together was really fun and a good bonding experience," senior **Malayah Long** said. "Being able to get away from everything and from volleyball was helpful too."

The Hawks went on an 11-game winning streak at the beginning of the season, sweeping nine of the eleven teams. Their first loss of the season was to Papillion La Vista South, 2-1.

"Our winning streak felt really good," Lionberger said. "It gave us such a strong start to help our team build confidence at the beginning of the season."

The team's strong motivation to perform to their best ability and the 10 seniors also helped them strive to make it their best season.

"Our community is a lot stronger this year. We all play because we love each other out there not because we have to win," senior **Teagan Little** said. "I think the fact that we've just come short the past two years during State, the idea of failure has just been burned into all the seniors' brains, and this year, I feel like that just really pushes us to be something great."

For the remainder of the season, the Hawks went on to win all but three of their games with losses to Omaha Westside, 2-0, and to Lincoln East twice, 2-0 and 3-2.

"After our second loss to East it was a wake up call and got us a fire under our butts," Long said. "We realized we needed to pick things up and focus on

the intensity and every bump in the road made us that much better."

The Hawks won the HAC Tournament and the girls felt confident entering the District Tournament.

"As we went into Districts, I felt like that was the prime of our season," Long said.

"Everything was starting to feel smooth and meshing very well, which allowed us to feel good going into the postseason."

The Hawks swept both Omaha North and Millard North, 3-0, to take the District title and secure their spot in the State Tournament.

"It felt amazing going to State for the third year in a row, especially because we had so many seniors, we just wanted to do the best we could at state," Lionberger said. "I was feeling happy, excited, proud and I wasn't really nervous at all because I was very confident in my team and their ability. I knew if we played to our standards we could take care of business."

The girls swiftly took the first round, winning 3-0 against Pius X. In the semifinals they beat Bellevue West, 3-0. They headed into the championship round of the tournament where they faced Papillion La Vista.

"As we went into the second round, I found myself a little more nervous than I usually ever have been before a game," Long said. "After winning the semis, I was on top of the world, ready to show everyone what Southwest volleyball was all about, and I knew that this team could win it all."

The Hawks won the first set 25-14, the second set 25-17 and swept the Monarchs taking the final set 25-16. The Hawks won the State Championship for the first time in school history and finished the season with a record of 33-4.

"It was a really special experience to play that well in the finals and I worked really hard to get there, but I wouldn't have been able to if it wasn't for my team," Lionberger said. "My teammates and coaches trusted me to serve and play defense in such a big game like the State Championship, especially for those last ten points."

Story/Spread by Khloe Swanson



SUPER SUPPORTER. Junior **Olivia Kremer** passes the ball in serve receive. Kremer had a total of 224 digs for the season. "My mom is someone who always comes to my games to cheer me on," Kremer said. "She's my number one supporter." Photo by Khloe Swanson

NEXT LEVEL. Senior **Abbie Appleget** tips the ball over the net in the state tournament. Appleget had a hitting percentage of .375 for the season. "I hope to play volleyball at the next level in college," Appleget said. "I think the most important aspect of volleyball is getting along with your teammates. Sometimes that's more important than your skill level." Photo by Lyric Lee