

Theme Development – Sailing to Success

Sub-themes

Student Life – Tales From The Deep

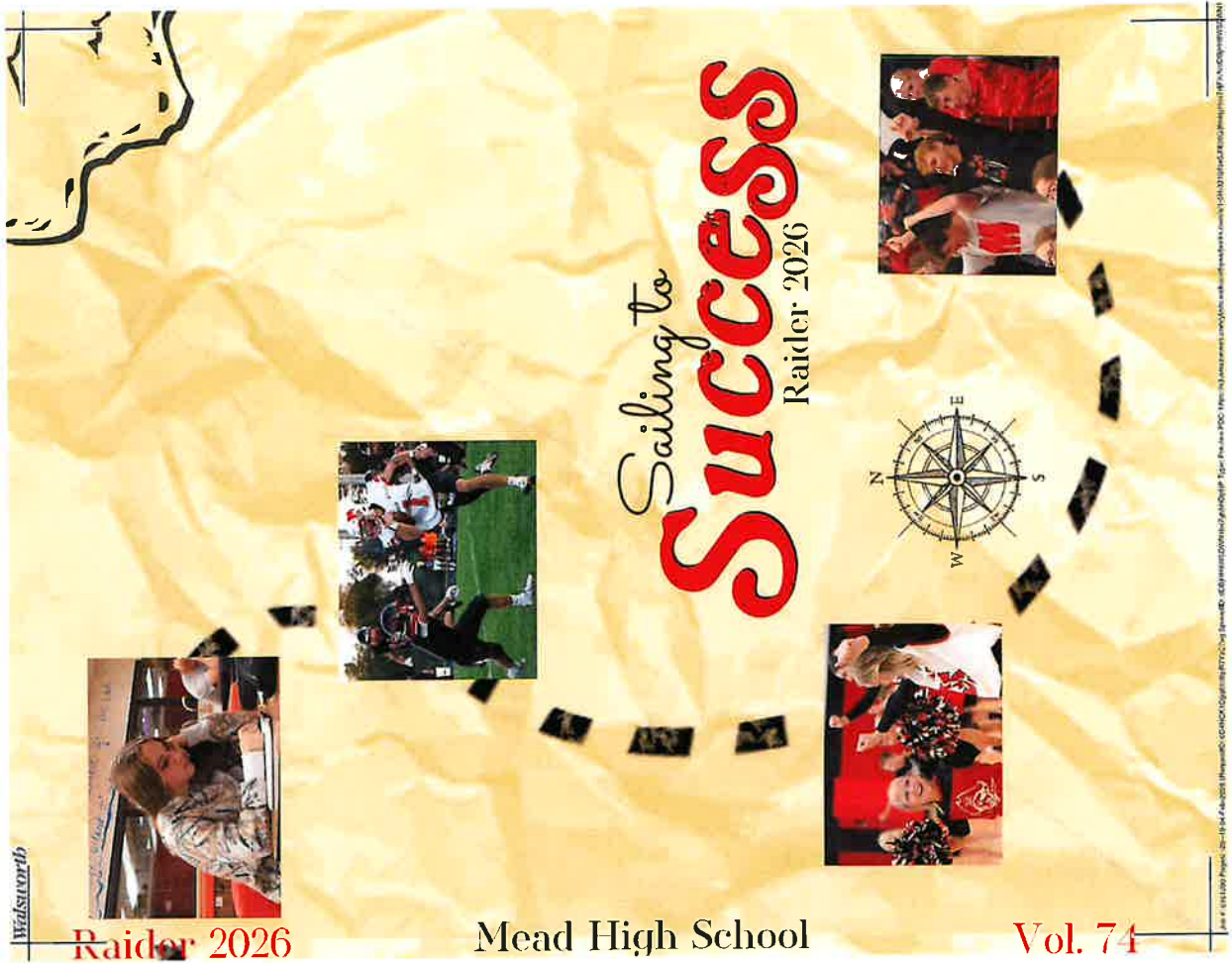
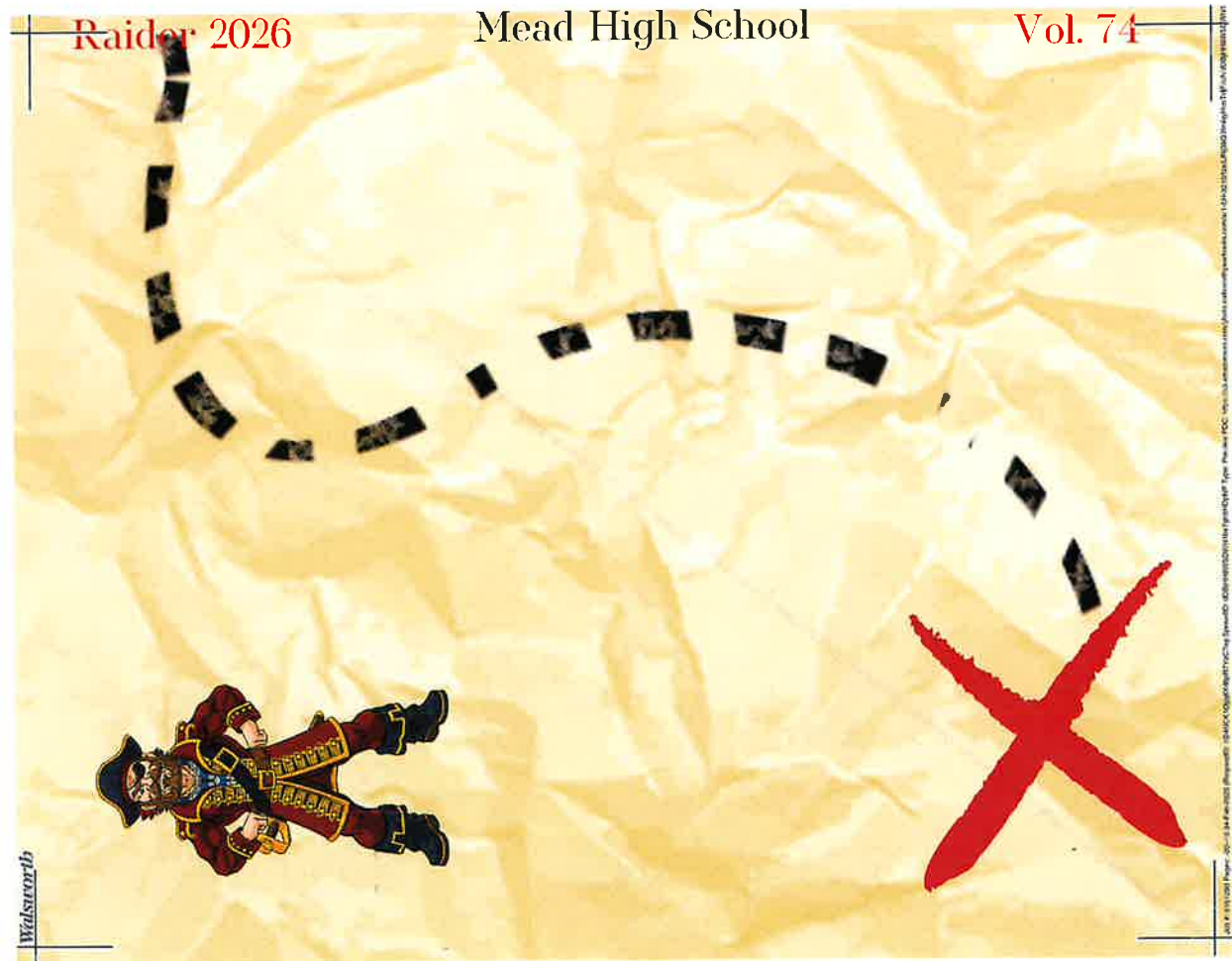
Sports – Reel It In

People – All Hands On Deck

Academics – Staying On Course

Entry Includes:

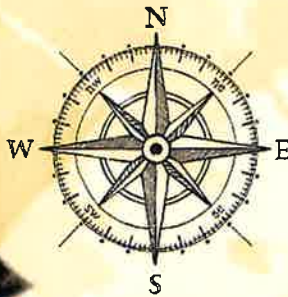
- 1. Cover**
- 2. Title Page**
- 3. Opening ~~with~~ copy**
- 4. People Division with copy**
- 5. Academic Division with copy**
- 6. Sports Division with copy**
- 7. Homecoming Double-Page Spread**
- 8. Football Double-Page Spread**
- 9. End Sheet Copy**



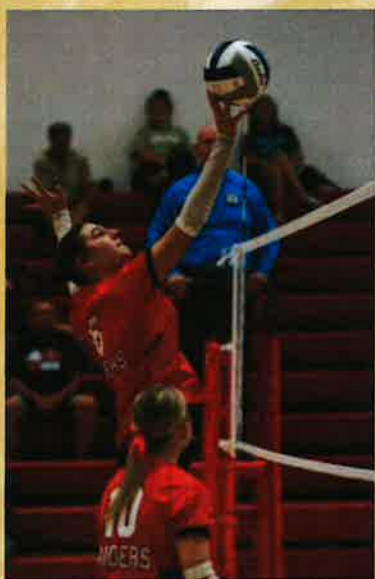




Sailing to **Success** Raider 2026



Sailing to



Success

Mead High School

Address: 114 N Vine St, Mead, NE

Phone: 402-624-3435

Website: www.meadpublicschools.org

Volume: 74

Year: 2025-2026

Students: 260

Staff: 45

Title



Ahoy there! Us Raiders aren't so different from real pirates; adaptability, risk taking, perseverance and community are all critical parts of our culture.

We're adaptable; we survived a new cell phone policy and IXL time during study hall. We manage to **Sail to Success** through the struggles of change.

We take risks, **Reeling In** our doubt and shooting our shots anyway, like junior Leigha Divoll playing basketball despite a previous ACL tear, or freshman Lauren Blomendahl joining not only wrestling but cross country as well.

Perseverance is a built-in attribute of a Raider. **We Stay On Course** through the raging sea of academics as the journalism class gains eight rookies, each one of them having to learn the rules of writing and yearbook.

Just like true pirates, our community is what matters most to us. It's **All Hands On Deck** for English teacher Alexis Pedersen, who, after 19 years of teaching, is saying goodbye to Mead.

We create our own legacy, surpassing the **Tales From the Deep**. Senior Caden Swanson is proof of that as he stars in the one-act play for the second time and achieves a 33 ACT score.

We are **Sailing Our Way To Success** – just like pirates – nothing will be able to bring us down.

Opening copy

All Hands on Deck

In a small school like ours, it takes all students and staff to be **successful**. With **All Hands On Deck**, we led our school to **success** through all different ways. Our school year was shaped by every person on board. From classrooms to competitions, our Raiders helped chart the course and pushed us closer to **success**.

The seventh graders transitioned from the elementary building to the high school by discovering how to be **successful**. Two seventh graders, Melanie Nicola and Emerson Lee, contributed to student council and helped lead them to **success**. Some freshmen, like Aubree Broekmeier and Olivia Lee, had to lend a hand with our sports teams to fill out varsity numbers. Others, like Katie Hartgrave, helped to anchor the one-act play by filling a lead role.

Sailing up to our seniors, they showed their individual **success** with the help of others. Joe Clark was the only senior in the band and one of three boys in the choir to make our music program **successful**. Beth Brennan, being very involved, created **success** in all her activities including softball, which qualified for state, basketball, FFA, one act, National Honor Society and journalism, in which she won seven state medals.

We then have the heart of our ship - the staff. We have people like Mrs. Engel, who can go back and forth between schools and still be a great teacher. And, with it being her last year, people like Mrs. Pedersen have led our voyage to **success** with our one act and speech activities.

The people on our voyage made the year unforgettable, proving that **success** comes from **sailing** together. From our sports teams to our academics, we really worked together to be **successful** with all students and staff contributing. It took **All Hands On Deck** for the Raiders to **Sail to Success**.



Gather the Crew - Senior Bryson Parsons helps junior senior class members with a book activity. On the daily, students played rock, paper, scissors to try to win a prize.



Hangin' Around - Senior Hunter Williams and Junior Wyatt Engel watch the homecoming activities. The theme was class color for this day: Seniors wore black while Juniors wore red.

Conducting an Order - Sophomores Jade Graslant and Jersey O'Brien announce participants in the pep rally game. Those who were nominated played capture the pom-pom against fellow classmates.



On this day...



Searching for... Junior Alex Ellison and Junior Wyatt Engel work together to share com. By sharing these, students assist in a research project for UNL.

All Aboard! - Senior Mason Reed dances with the student body at the pep rally, when playing in the boys vs. girls basketball game.



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Gather the Crew - Senior Brayden Parsons hypes up the senior class during a homecoming activity. On the day, students played rock, paper scissors to try to win a prize.





Hanging Around - Senior Hunter Williams and junior Wyatt Engel watch the homecoming activities. The theme was class color for this day: Seniors wore black while juniors wore red.

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Searching for treasure - Junior Alex Ellison and sophomore Jaycen Wonder work together to shell corn. By shelling, these students assist in a research project for UNL.

All Aboard! - Senior Mason Reed dances with the student body at the pep rally. Reed led the boys when playing in the boys vs. girls volleyball game.



Staying on Course

We sail not only through our sports and clubs, but through the waves in the classroom as well. From listening to fun movie soundtracks in Mr. Blomendahl's shop, to locking in on projects in Mrs. Buel's art class, every moment make for our brains being in tip-top shape.

The classroom is just the beginning of where our learning **Sets Sail**. Sailing to Lincoln for state FFA and Norfolk to state journalism makes for an eventful voyage. Winning awards at SkillsUSA and CDE competitions prove just how **Successful** our Raiders can be.

New editions on the island do nothing but help our learning. IXL for nine minutes may seem like malarkey, but it really helps us **Stay on Course** in hopes of higher MAP test scores. Another way we keep our ship steady with no distractions is eliminating cellphone use during school hours. Although some fellows on deck find this change to be unusual, focus during classes has holstered.

Not only the new changes, but old customs of the coast have helped us as well. The old traditions of going fishing at the end of the year for natural resources class or playing *Guess that Tune* in Mrs. Kruse's class add fun times through the harsh waters.

All in all, the Raiders' target is to **Sail to Success**, whether that's in the classroom or at competitions. Our ultimate goal is to earn that gold and prove how sharp we are. In 2026, we sailed through assignments, rowed over changes, and most importantly, showed how successful we can be.



Academic Division



Weighting In - Sophomore Caleb Popken weighs corn cobs for his plant science class. Popken enjoyed this class because he "learned things in the class I can use for life outside of school."

Out of the Kitchen - Seniors Stella Charles and Riley Koranda play pickle ball at the park during P.E. They sometimes went outside for class when it was warm.

Locked In - Senior Brady Cartner focuses on picking out his new art project. Art was one of Cartner's favorite classes.



Chop Chop - Sophomore Jayden Reed and senior Riley Koranda chop up apples for their foods and nutrition class. In this lab, they make different animals out of fruit.

Big Sparks - Sophomore Grade Springbett performs an OK weld in welding class. Although it's wasn't her favorite class, she finished the semester with an A.

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Hot Hot Hot - Seventh grader Ayslee Anderson measures temperature in her science class. Labs like this were done often in Mrs. Miller's classroom.





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Out of the Kitchen - Seniors Stella Charles and Riley Koranda play pickle ball at the park during P.E. They sometimes went outside for class when it was warm.

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Reel It In

The Raiders started **Sailing to Success** from the first whistle to start a game until the final buzzer to end it. The athletes have **Reeled It In** in a different way.

Senior Beth Brennan had a batting average of 0.286 and started at first base to help her team qualify for state. The volleyball team found **success** and won six more games than they did last year.

The boys basketball team adapted to its third new coach in three years. Freshman Lauren Blomendahl competed in both cross country and wrestling, two of our three co-op sports, and not only found **success** in wins, but also by improving and making permanent relationships.

Many injuries occurred in various sports, like the football team. Two main seniors, Treyce Ferguson and Brady Gartner, sustained season-ending injuries, so lots of changes had to be made in order for the Raiders to make the playoffs.

Freshman Hadley Havelka tore her labrum and played through her volleyball season. These teams made the changes they needed to make to still **Sail To Success**.

The athletes **Reel In** their focus and make themselves better. They must put in extra work outside of practice to achieve their full potential. Senior James Engel practiced the shot put in the single-degree weather to achieve his full success.

The Raiders **Reeled In** their mental game and played not just physically, but also mentally smart and **Sailed To Success**.



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Sports Division



Swinging for Treasure - Senior Beth Brennan swings at the oncoming pitch. Brennan had a batting average of 0.286 to help the Patriots reach the state

Battling the Tides - Freshman Aubree Broekemeier fights for the rebound. Broekemeier had 12 points against Falls City



Leading the Ship - Fourth grader Lincoln Engel leads the football team to their game against Centennial. Engel has been a student manager for the past two football seasons.



Silver the Timbers! - Senior Stella Chappin serves the ball towards the opposing team. Charles led the team in kills with 225.



Passing the Plunder - Senior Mason Reed looks to pass the ball to a teammate. Reed scored 15 points against Cedar Bluffs.



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Shiver Me Timbers! - Senior Stella Charles serves the ball towards the opposing team. Charles led the team in kills with 225.



Passing the Plunder - Senior Mason Reed looks to pass the ball to a teammate. Reed scored 15 points against Cedar Bluffs.

FRIDAY SPIRIT DAY - Eighth graders Bristol Dunaway and Maci Lamprecht play cards after decorating for homecoming. Friday is always Spirit Day at Mead.

FEELIN HOCO - Prior to the start of the Friday night Homecoming game, James Engel (72) greets Treyce Ferguson (63) as the announcer calls him onto the field. They went on to win the game 48 to 22 against Centennial.

BANANAS - Seniors Tony Engel, Mason Reed and Riley Koranda participate in the cheer "Banana" at the homecoming pep rally. The dance includes clapping and spinning around in a circle.



BTS OF A SUCCESSFUL HOCO WEEK

BY JADE GRASIANI

Who doesn't love homecoming week? Playing dress up, decorating hallways and having school spirit to the fullest. Although this week is the most fun time of year for students, it doesn't quite have the same effect on the staff.

Cheer coach and secretary Jess Miller has the pressure on during homecoming week. Having the responsibility of cheerleaders and students can be a lot of extra work during this eventful week.

"I didn't sleep last night," Miller said, "because I was going through a list of things that I needed to do for homecoming to make it happen."

Not only does the stress of homecoming make the staff stress, but student athletes and their coaches have some concern, too.

The homecoming football game is a huge way to end the exciting week, and a good way to begin the fun weekend. Head coach Brandon Mills knows his players may not have their full attention on their game due to the bustling week, and he tries his best to keep them focused.

"It distracts me more based on trying to keep my guys focused, trying to make sure they're staying locked in and ready to go and focus on the opponent we have," Mills said. "Because at the end of the day, that's my main job is getting them ready for the football game on Fridays."

In addition to stress in school, there's things to worry about even out of school hours. Time management can be difficult during this week especially when you only have so much time to decorate and prepare.

"This year, we've chosen to decorate the doors to match the theme of the homecoming dance," Miller said. "So that means I have to purchase items to use for those doors; with homecoming being earlier this year, we clearly don't have time to make items to go on the doors."

Although it may seem like stress is taking over, it is still homecoming week. The energy in school and on the field is always high.

"When it comes to homecoming, everybody thinks of the homecoming football game," Mills said. "It's a big atmosphere, there's more people that show up to this game, and there's a little more pressure; there's lots of excitement going on."

Even through all the stress and worries, homecoming week still finds a way to be the most exciting week of the year for students and staff. They find ways to persevere through the distractions and lock in.

"I want to say they get a little more worried and nervous about what's going on," Mills said. "Oftentimes, they focus more on the extracurriculars and not what's actually happening."



CAPTURE THE POM-POM - Seventh grader Emerson Lee tags sophomore Cayde Gartner during a game at the homecoming pep rally. Cheer captain Jade Grasiani pulled highschoolers as well as elementary kids to participate.



Homecoming

ANTICIPATION - The homecoming court, including Stella Charles and Riley Koranda, waits impatiently to find out who will be homecoming queen. Charles won, receiving a tiara and a large bouquet of flowers.



CLOSER THAN KING & QUEEN

BY ALIVIA DUNAWAY

Homecoming royalty is typically important to whoever wins it, but for this couple, it was more emotional.

Queen Stella Charles and King Mason Reed have been dating for more than two years. They were placed on the court together with their peers. Candidates were Rylie Koranda, Ava Schaal, Beth Brennan, Brady Gartner, Preston Price and Treyce Ferguson.

The fact that they won together was important in their relationship for numerous reasons.

It felt really good to know the person I got king with," Reed said. "I know everyone, but I know her on a different level."

At the dance, the king and queen always dance together.

"I didn't want to dance with someone, and it be awkward," Charles said. "So, it was nice being able to dance with someone I'm used to being around."

Charles, being named queen, followed up on the reputation her family had set and made her start to fall in line with it as well.

"My whole family has gone to Mead and set some kind of

reputation there, so this is me starting to set mine," Charles said.

Some wonder if they received king and queen together because they are a couple.

"I definitely think that played into it a little bit," Charles said. "Some people have told me that if they were going to vote for me, they had to vote for Mason and vice versa."

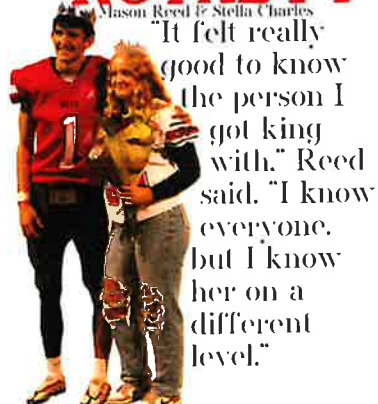
After hearing he was on the court, Reed wanted to win.

"When I heard my name, I was super excited, just because I know that's a big accomplishment and really does show that you have more friends than you think you do," Reed said.



MEET THE ROYALTY

Mason Reed & Stella Charles



"It felt really good to know the person I got king with," Reed said. "I know everyone, but I know her on a different level."

WHAT DO YOU BRING TO HOMECOMING?

"I usually keep five dollars in my shoe, just in case I get thirsty afterwards."

Rylie Axland



"A hair tie, so that when I get tired of my hair being down I can put it up."

Anne Nygren

"Probably lip liner, in case I need to reapply."

Peyton Markvicka



"Definitely a hoodie for after because it's always cold when I leave."

Jersey O'Brien

"This year I brought a deck of cards for if I got bored."

James Engel



APPLE BOTTOM JEANS - Sophomore Jade Grasiani and freshman Olivia Lee get low to Low by Flo Rida at the homecoming dance. This song has been a staple at the dance for years.

SISTER LOVE - Freshman Hadley Havelka cheers with her younger sister Brooklyn at the homecoming pep rally. This was Hadley's first year in cheer.

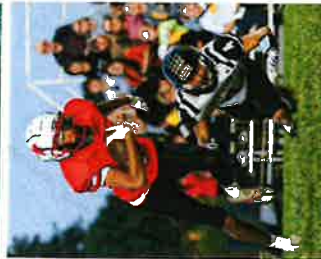
SLOW DANCING - Freshman Katie Hartgrave and senior Ashton Vera dance during a slow song. There are typically 2-3 slow songs each year.

Homecoming

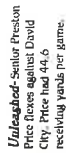


Raiders Make State Following One-Win Season

"I was crying a lot, because I heard a pop and I knew it was going to be my last game ever," Gartner said.



Football



"Knowing we beat an unbeaten C-1 size team really helped give me mental boost," Mills said, "and felt like I had added a feather to my cap."

Unleashed-Senior Preston Price flexes against David City. Price had 44.6 receiving yards per game.



Football

22-14 W

Football



Breaking Free Senior Master Reed stumbled away from a 12-in. Reed that cut 62-year-old Jonathan Ang.



Turning the Tides

Raiders Make State Following One-Win Season

After a 1-7 record a year ago, expectations for Raider football were uncertain. But a 2-0 start to 2025 quickly made players and fans realize the season was going to be different.

A big milestone for the Raiders was beating David City, who hadn't lost a single game since switching to 8-man football. This win gave the team a lot of momentum to attack every game with the same intensity for the rest of the season.

"I've heard a lot of seniors talk about this game," said head football coach Brandon Mills. "It was definitely a special moment to them."

After being led by one senior last season, the Raiders had six seniors leading the team. Unfortunately, they would drop to four by the end of the regular season.

Senior Treyce Ferguson suffered a terrible leg injury on homecoming night, breaking his fibula, dislocating his tibia and tearing his deltoid ligament.

"I knew right away it was broken when I heard the snap," Ferguson said. "It was a very emotional moment, because I knew it was the end of my season and football is my main sport."

In the Raiders' last regular season game, a senior Brady Gartner tore his MPFL ligament, dislocated his kneecap, fractured the kneecap and broke cartilage off the knee cap.

"I was crying a lot, because I heard a pop and I knew it was going to be my last game ever," Gartner said.

With two injured players, the Raiders knew they still had to keep

the energy up going into the first round of playoffs. Although Pender was 8-2 and the Raiders were 4-4, they were not going down without a fight.

"With two injured players, Cayde Gartner really stepped up, and the training wheels were pulled off right away," Mills said. "It was a sink or swim kind of situation."

The Raiders ended up losing and finished the season with a record of 4-5. As this was the last season of 8-man, many good memories were made.

"Knowing we beat an unbeaten C-1 size team really helped give me mental boost," Mills said, "and felt like I had added a feather to my cap."

Unleashed-Senior Preston Price flexes against David City. Price had 44.6 receiving yards per game.



Full Effort - Junior Abram Lee dives for the endzone while being tackled from behind. Lee had five catches for 78 yards against David City.



Need for Speed - Senior Tony Engel outruns the McCool Junction defender. Engel had two receiving touchdowns against the Mustangs.



Get Hyped - Junior Oswaldo Cruz and sophomore Austin Kellams celebrate a big play. Kellams scored his first varsity touchdown against Centennial.



Football

Scoreboard

4-5

	22-14 W
	40-33 W
	40-28 L
	48-22 W
	52-36 L
	40-26 L
	56-18 L
	56-30 W
	47-6 L

What is your Pre-game Ritual?

James Engel

"I apply IcyHot and take Ibuprofen before games"



Wyatt Engel

"I always listen to music prior to the games"



Micah Christiansen

"I take a quick nap before I get ready"



Treyce Ferguson

"I take some pre-workout and put on my eye black"



OPENING Copy FRONT ENDSHEET

Theme: Sailing to Success

Subthemes: Sports – Reel It In

People – All Hands On Deck

Academics – Stay The Course

Student Life – Tales From The Deep

Join us Raiders as we set sail and navigate through the challenging or calm moments. The journey might be difficult, but it can also be exciting. We Raiders will push through the waves together and achieve success, no matter how big or small the task. We will be *Sailing to Success* and covering our journey.

Sailing to Success is not just a theme, but it shows how we as a school grow together. Through sports we always strive to *Reel In* all our successes. Although sometimes our lack of numbers can make things difficult, we always make it work in all our sports. Only two of our girls played softball and we still celebrated a trip to state.

Every journey needs a crew, and ours consists of students, teachers and staff who help each other every step of the way. Leaders help us through this course and friends keep us steady through the rough waves. It truly takes *All Hands On Deck* to make our voyage a success.

On our journey, the real stories unfold below the surface and beyond the classroom. From unforgettable events to everyday moments that make us laugh, these *Tales from The Deep* shape our memories in ways we will never forget. Sophomore Lauren Miller brought her bunny to school for her demonstrative speech. This memory became part of this great adventure that carries us closer to success.

With our academics, we make every effort to be our utmost best. We always try to *Stay on Course* and work together as Raiders to be successful. In Spanish II, sophomore Jade Grasiani beat Cayde Gartner in the Slap Game and there were many smiles and laughter shared.

Although sailing can be difficult, doing it together makes the journey much more exciting. We tackle every storm, we figure out every challenge, and most importantly, we *Sail to Success* together.

Ava Marshall

Hunter Williams

Wyatt Engel

Mead High School