

Finishing at the top

Campbell conquers the mat with family, faith

Addi Jones

Success isn't something that most people achieve without hard work and adversity. For senior Jordyn Campbell, a two-time returning state wrestling champion with over 200 career wins and 177 career pins, this is especially true.

"The first time I won state was surreal. I had never felt that way before. The second time, to repeat it, it really solidified that I deserved it and it wasn't a fluke the first time. It made me realize that all the time I have spent on wrestling had been paying off," Campbell said.



Campbell competes in a wrestling match at state her freshman year. Campbell placed fifth that year. (Courtesy Photo)

The journey to the top meant even more knowing the challenges she had faced along the way, tearing her labrum freshman and sophomore year.

"Going through my surgeries shaped who I am today and made me realize not to take my sport for granted and being able to move my body is a privilege. The process sucked at the time, going through two surgeries and a lot of physical therapy, but I wouldn't change it because it not only improved me physically but also mentally," Campbell said.

What helped Campbell push through those challenges was the people around her.

"I have a really good support system in the school and on my team; my family has been really supportive, and I'm just surrounded by a lot of good people who can help push me," Campbell said.

One person who has really helped her overcome challenges and reach her goals is her dad, Corey Campbell, who is also one of her coaches.

"We have a really good relationship, especially during wrestling season, because he's my coach also, and so I think it's helpful because he can push me in the wrestling aspect and help me with specific moves or just polishing up on some of the stuff that I'm doing," Campbell said. "I know that he wants the best for me, and so he's going to help me be wherever I want to be wrestling-wise but also still play the dad part and help me know that it's okay to have struggles and it's okay to go through things."

The other thing that has helped Campbell overcome obstacles is her deep faith.

"My faith plays a big role in my athletics because I remember to not just wrestle for myself but to wrestle for God because he gave me the capabilities to be good and has helped shape who I am as a person and not just as an athlete," Campbell said.

From her dad's perspective, her faith is one of the main reasons she is so successful.

"Her faith is what makes her the strongest competitor in the world because she knows that no matter what she does, she's walking the right path. She believes that there is a higher purpose for what she's doing," Corey Campbell said.

Campbell's support system and faith have helped her keep a stronger mindset throughout the season.



Campbell poses with her 200-win banner after getting the state record. Campbell now holds the state record for wins in all weight classes. (Courtesy Photo)

"I just remember what I'm capable of, knowing that the outcome doesn't really matter, and it's all going to happen for a reason, and so there's nothing I can really do about it other than trust my training and trust what I've already been through and just do what I know how to do," Campbell said.

Because of this mindset, Campbell can set large goals for herself to reach at the end of her high school career.

"An obvious end goal would be to win state again but also just to continue to get better and fix things in my performance that need to be bettered, just so that I can be a better wrestler," Campbell said.



Campbell pins her opponent at the State Duals meet. Campbell went 4-0 at this meet. (Courtesy Photo)

Campbell doesn't only want to make herself better, but she also wants to make her teammates better by being a good role model.

"Jordyn is always pushing everyone to their full potential and sees the best in everyone. She is always looking for ways to help her teammates and teach them new things," junior Ella Henkel said.

All of these qualities have helped Campbell make a lasting impact on girls wrestling in Yutan and beyond.

"She has meant an incredible amount for not only the Yutan program but the state level as well, and her impact has possibly reached farther than even she may know," assistant wrestling coach Taylor Teeter said. "I've got some youth wrestlers who see what she's done and have them give wrestling a try just because of what she's done and the good person she is."

In the end, this positive impact is what Campbell most hopes for as she finishes her high school career.

"This season in particular, my last high school season, I just have to remember that I've been given the talents that I'm given for a reason, and so that gives me more of a reason for what I'm doing, and to be an example for everyone else so I can leave a good legacy here at Yutan," Campbell said.

Tichota gains military, life experience through ROTC

Taylor Shull

People often believe there are two separate options after high school graduation: the military or college. What if there was a way to do both? That's where Reserve Officers' Training Corps, better known as ROTC, comes in. Yutan graduate Carter Tichota (class of 2022) is in the Air Force ROTC at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and has seen firsthand how this program prepares students for the future.

"ROTC is a college military program that trains and prepares students to become commissioned officers in the United States military after graduation," Tichota said. "It's like being a part of a team sport, but at the end, you graduate and become an officer and join the U.S. Air Force."

Before entering the program, Tichota says that there aren't many specific requirements to join.

"You must be a U.S. citizen before you commission. There are some other requirements while in the program, but to join initially there aren't any big ones," Tichota said.

Regular requirements need to be met once in the program, however.

"You have to maintain a good GPA, physical fitness standards, Physical Training and Leadership Labs," Tichota said. "For ROTC, as you go up over the years, there is added responsibility and more leadership. Juniors and seniors are also in charge of training sophomores and freshmen."

One requirement is LLAB, or Leadership Laboratory, where 64 individuals complete 2 hours of training once a week.

"Usually, it consists of presentations for a little bit and then different skills. Skills include marching, expeditionary skills like land navigation, small unit tactics and problem-solving exercises called GLPs among others," Tichota said.

Not all work happens during the school year. Three weeks of training in Alabama is a requirement for all before entering their junior year of the program.

"Generally, I would say there are some hard parts and there are easy parts. A lot depends on who you are doing it with because a lot of it is leadership-focused," Tichota said.

While Tichota prepares for his future with his military officer position, he is also taking classes towards a bachelor's degree.

"I'm a biomechanics major, so I will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Biomechanics," Tichota said.

This semester, Tichota has three classes to take while managing all ROTC training to meet his degree requirements. His daily schedule also includes time to volunteer, work part-time, study and manage his little free time.



Carter Tichota stands in full gear at SWOC. Special Warfare Orientation Course, SWOC, is a two-week training program with the Air Force Academy. "I was able to try on somebody else's gear, and it was pretty cool," Tichota said. (Courtesy Photo)

"I will be honest and up front and tell you that I am kind of busy, and I wish I had more free time at times. With ROTC and school, work part-time and volunteering, it can be difficult," Tichota said. "However, I absolutely love everything that I do, especially outside of school."

To get more social interaction within busy schedules, Tichota finds ways to study with peers.

"I like to try and study with people. Sometimes we just start yappin', but it is also fun to be with others and help each other," Tichota said. "Collaborate to graduate as we say."



Carter Tichota, right, holds a stick called a guidon during a Flight Drill Evaluation. This was a demonstration showing how well the cadet in charge can march their people in a box. (Courtesy Photo)

With the support from the program, Tichota finds his intimidating schedule manageable.

"I just feel like my path helped give me guide rails to do what I want. There is a great support system, mentors and everyone there to help you accomplish your goals," Tichota said.

Amid the busy schedule, Tichota has made many memories in activities and with other individuals.

"Planning missions and playing paintball/airsoft in the woods is fun. Flying in helicopters is cool, and running out of the back of a Chinook as it lands is all fun," Tichota said. " But the thing I will cherish the most when it is all said and done is without a doubt the people."

After graduation, Tichota will continue his work in Texas while moving up in ranking.

"ROTC is the stepping stone that will make me an officer in the United States Air Force after I graduate college in May 2026," Tichota said.

Family time is something that will be cut down when leaving for training, but Tichota says so far, ROTC has not affected his family.

"It hasn't affected my family in any big way. If anything, it has made me value family time more because I know I will be leaving to go to Texas for training in about a year," Tichota said.

Amy Tichota, Carter's mother, agrees that ROTC hasn't affected their family day to day but expresses how ROTC has had a positive impact on Carter's college experience.

"Being in ROTC has brought Carter a group, something to belong to. As I think about kids moving to college, as a parent, you want them to find a group that they can get involved with that helps them in the transition and not feel lost on campus. This was Carter's group," Amy Tichota said.

Carter's parents have also noticed how ROTC has helped him prepare for his future.

"ROTC has helped define who he is as a person, and it has given him opportunities to see where he wants to go in life. He has a call-to-serve mentality that I didn't see as much in high school as I do now. He wants to help people so much that sometimes it comes at sacrificing his own priorities, such as school work or having downtime," Amy Tichota said.

Tichota acknowledges the impact that the program had on him, ranging from his viewpoints, self-respect and plans for the future.

"It has expanded my worldview, and it has helped me become a better young man. It has helped me know what I really want in life, and it has helped me develop into a better leader," Tichota said.

Because he has seen a positive impact from this program, Tichota believes incoming college students should consider it.

"I highly recommend it. It has given me a path that allows me to get a college degree as a normal college student would, get scholarships to help pay for school, the opportunity to be a part of a team while in college, and the opportunity to serve the country and lead as an officer after graduation," Tichota said.

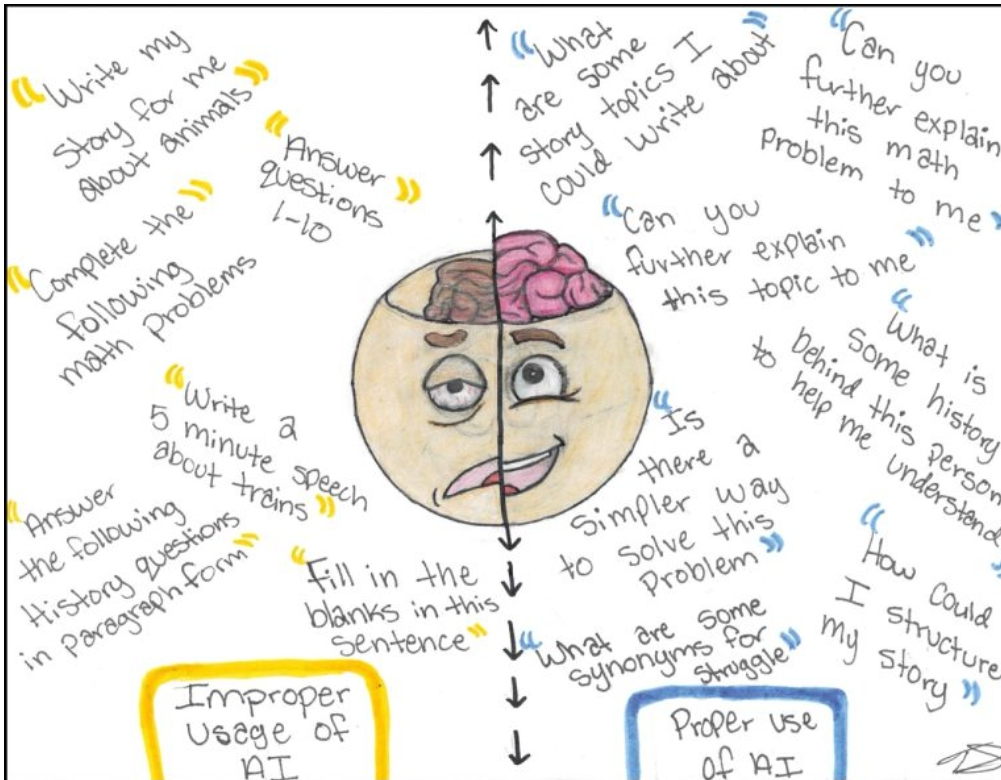


Carter Tichota lies in a field during a paintball game of capture the flag. Tichota was the last line of defense during his sophomore year. (Courtesy Photo)

Student opinion: Advancing with AI

Shull describes improper, proper usage of artificial intelligence

Taylor Shull



Taylor Shull

When I first started high school, AI was something that I was utterly oblivious to, not using it in my daily or school life. If I were trying to complete an assignment, I would have to deep-dive into countless Quizlets to find half the vocabulary in the class that I was taking at the time. Now that I am a senior, I can no longer say that. Today, I can sit in the back of a class, clueless, watching underclassmen mindlessly enter information into an app named "Chat GPT" while it completes the homework for them. Students are learning how to work with AI, finding ways to incorporate it within their school day, for the better and worse. The evolution of AI has brought problems such as cheating and dependence on technology; however, it is not going away, so students must learn the benefits of AI and use it correctly.

As AI has evolved, students have learned how to exploit loopholes in cheating. Cheating has always been a thing, just not with this technology that is evolving as we speak. A study conducted by Emmanuel College found that 70 percent to 80 percent of high school students have cheated using AI during their time in school. An example would involve an English class, where I had to write my own obituary. We wrote about how we died, when, where and what we accomplished in our lives; while working on this, I saw many students in my class have ChatGPT write it for them instead of taking the time to complete the assignment themselves. The problem here is how students cheated by using AI to write a creative story that was supposed to be completed by themselves. In the end the teacher found out that there was cheating being done, making the students redo the assignment.

English isn't the only subject where students can cheat using AI. I can use a personal experience for this; there have been many late nights when I was tired and didn't want to do the rest of my math homework. I would proceed to take a picture of it and send it to an app named "Photomath." It would solve my math homework for me and even show me the work. A few days later, I had to complete a quiz. Due to the fact that I hadn't taken the time to learn the material, I did very poorly, learning my lesson on AI usage. AI doesn't help students learn to their full potential due to cheating and easy access to AI. It may help complete homework at the time; however, later on in class, it will come back and bite you in the rear. From a January 2026 survey, 53.8 percent of Yutan teachers stated that AI has affected their classroom mostly negatively. One teacher specifically stated, "AI is making it way too easy for students to cheat and not to learn the content themselves."

Cheating isn't the only issue we have with AI; students are too dependent on this form of technology, making them reliant on an app. This puts a block on their learning and open-mindedness to want to expand their learning. Most students have basic skills that aren't being put to use; AI is reducing students' ability to develop critical thinking skills that they can take outside of the classroom. The students who only use AI to answer their questions or complete their homework will, truthfully, not go as far academically as the students who take the time to learn. "AI is a definite problem that people are becoming dependent on; it only creates a problem for them and their future," one Yutan senior stated.

Though ChatGPT and other AI sites have many different tools that are being used incorrectly, there are countless possibilities for it to be used to assist our learning in and out of the classroom. When writing a story for an assignment, instead of having AI write your story for you, ask it to give you points to help build a structure for your story. When you don't understand a math problem, AI can help break it down, giving you different viewpoints to help build your understanding. In this way AI can be like a personal tutor to students who are struggling. "These systems utilize natural language processing and machine learning algorithms to engage in real-time conversations with students, answering their questions, providing explanations and offering targeted feedback. Intelligent tutoring systems empower students to seek assistance whenever needed, enhancing their understanding of complex concepts and promoting self-directed learning," Urbe University professor Abel Guerra stated.

Furthermore, AI can be used in many different ways to help build your knowledge in any class you are taking in school. At times, perplexing topics are being taught in the classroom. AI can help you break down your issue while giving more information that wasn't included in the lesson. Another positive aspect would be the more comprehensive explanation of facts about a person or the topic's background. It can and should be used as a tool to help and guide us in the right direction. It starts with the willingness of students to want to learn and grow to the best of their abilities. AI isn't the solution to students' problems but a stepping stone that can lead them in many different directions, rather than one blocked path.

I believe that AI can be used for good in the classroom but also used in the outside world as well. For example, AI can give you a meal plan for a week, list ideas for crafts, suggest some new hobbies to try out and even help you understand anything going on around the world. In fact, over a third of Yutan's teachers stated they often use AI outside of their job at school. One teacher stated she used it to help plan their wedding, giving her ideas.

AI is only evolving and changing every day; it isn't going anywhere, so we can't pretend it doesn't exist. However, because our knowledge as students is at risk, and that includes our future and the future of generations to come, I believe all students need to learn how to use AI correctly. I believe it can be done, but I cannot be the only one who believes. So the next time you open AI to complete an assignment, remember that it should help you learn instead of having it complete things for you. You are the person who controls whether it does or not. We are in control of AI; AI is not in control of us.