

MONARCH
2026

PAPILLION-LA VISTA HIGH SCHOOL

Papillion, Nebraska

VOL.
67



SEVEN

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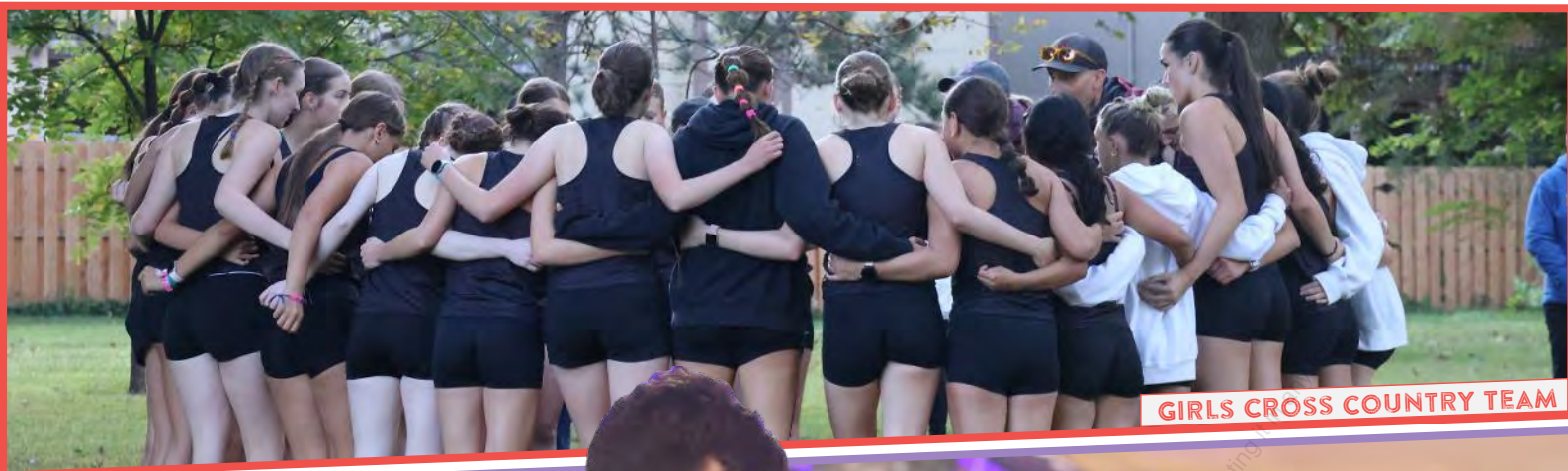
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GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY TEAM



HENRY HERNANDEZ



MATTHEW FAULK



FYNN MIKE, FAVOR KOUASSI & SARAH BINKLEY

24
SEVEN

02/10/26

Holding the world. With the weight on his shoulders **OWEN TEJRAL [11]** prepares to squat 300 pounds. "Being a part of powerlifting has taught me about grit and effort," Tejral said. Tejral was in his third year of the sport and had a PR of 330 pounds for squat but was working towards 365 pounds.
Photo By: Lucy Tejral.



ZACH BUCHANAN



MADDIE SMITH

175 DAYS
1,211 HOURS
72,660 MINUTES

Every moment mattered. **EVERY SECOND** counted. Students worked around the clock for months, dedicated to their classes, friends and teams. Practices went into **ALL HOURS** of the night, carrying over from summer training. The building was filled with passion, effort, excitement, craziness and constant motion.

Nik Kline [12] and the rest of the divers practiced **EARLY**, baseball ran laps **LATE**. Students in productions lived at school under the warm spotlight- staying for **13 HOURS** a day. **Henry Davis [11]** spent hours in a deserted parking lot waiting for the band bus to arrive. From sunrise study sessions to **MIDNIGHT** movie marathons, the Monarch spirit never slept. Music notes filled the halls, locker room speeches inspired, deadlines were met **OVER AND OVER** again.

In the dead of winter, **Gabby Mancuso [12]** won her third state championship in powerlifting, whispers of Mrs. Nicole Rother's AP Biology test content passed from student to student in the halls, long show choir competition memories were made and none of it would have been possible without **CONSTANT** commitment from every student.

Everyone at PLHS worked **ENDLESSLY** to leave their mark. Students pushed to meet their academic goals, getting A's in a collection of classes. Redoing Mr. Richard Benak's math worksheets until a smiley face appeared and reviewing for U.S History until they had every date and battle memorized. They applied for National Honor Society, earned an academic letter, and made honor roll. As students, they reflected excellence into their community **CONTINUOUSLY**.

Students overcame a power outage, unexpected snow days and disappointment with **NEVER ENDING** strength and commitment. **EVERY SECOND** we gave became a part of PLHS history. Dates, times, GPA's, records, scores, and final grades were crammed into calendars and minds.

It was chaotic. Unplanned experiences were shared but not a single moment was wasted because students gave their all

24/7

FALL

For generations students have watched the hands of classroom clocks **COUNTING MERCILESSLY** slowly. Due to some unknown problem during the first two months of the year, the clocks at PLHS literally ticked an hour behind, as students impatiently did mental math counting down the minutes of **NEVER ENDING** lectures.

Some Monarchs, however, seemed to take advantage of this symbolic gift of more time.

ECO Monarchs had a promising beginning as they reused resources to make **30** toys for dogs in need and picked up trash to keep the school sparkling clean.

Softball powered through districts, making it to state for the **33RD** time in a row.

High school Swifties eagerly refreshed their phones awaiting Taylor Swift's **13TH** album "Life of a Show Girl," which ended with disappointment because it felt different from the others.

Talented artists worked **DAYS ON END** over summer break to bring joy, color and diversity to the bricks in our school, stopping students in their tracks to stare at the creative murals.

Students reluctantly agreed with the **FIVE-MINUTE** virtual bathroom pass rule with Securly.

The **2023** bond project finally came to a close, as the auditorium received updates in lighting and sound, cleaner dance space, along with more accessibility and storage.

While students watched the red **SECOND** hand make its **50** trips around the clock each period, time didn't wait, but neither did Monarch Nation. Everyone kept moving

24/7



10/02/25

Victory. **TORIA HOLT-ROTHER [11]** hits a victory pose as the softball team is announced the winner of the annual fall pep rally dance off.

The team performed to Lady Gaga's "Poker Face," with Holt-Rother leading the team to a win even with limited time to practice. "The cheerleaders made it really easy for us to learn our dance," Holt-Rother said. "We just worked on it really hard for those two hours."

Photo By: Carly Peterson.



Say Cheese. At the pink out football game, **RAIMATH TOGBE [11]** and **NATAYA BACKEY [10]** strike a pose at EmpowerHER's pink out booth for breast cancer. EmpowerHER had a second successful year of women supporting women. "It's really positive, you can go in there and talk to girls and do fun little girl things," Togbe said. "I feel like we need stuff like that." Photo By: Yazlynn Ramos.

Reduce, Reuse. **DANIKA NOWOSLAWSKI [09]** cuts up recycled materials to make dog toys to donate to the Nebraska Humane Society. The newly founded club, ECOMonarchs, worked to help make the Earth a better place. Photo By: Surina Burlington.

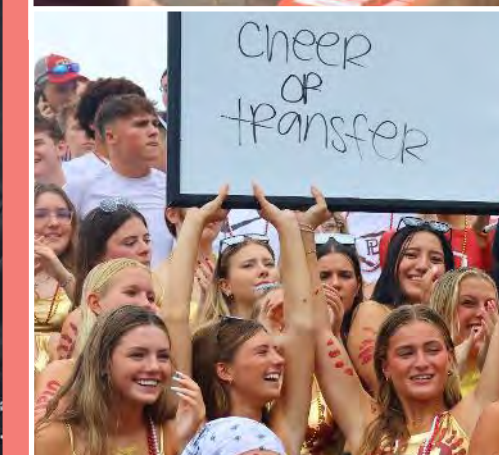


Books with Brownies. Enjoying a sweet treat, **ALLISON HARBIN [10]** previews the new arrivals at the library. The first book tasting of the year, hosted on Sept. 19, invited book lovers to check out some new additions while also making new friends.

Photo By: Arie Hollenback.

Reading the Court. As his opponent prepares to serve the ball, **BRADEN OSTLUND [10]** watches for where it will fall on the court. Ostlund played a doubles match with partner **DAWSON DIGILIO [11]** on Sept. 11 against Bellevue West.

Photo By: Carli Pew.



Get Loud. Keeping the morale high, **ADELINE BOSILJEVAC [12]** encourages students to cheer in the stands at the nail biting rivalry game. Even as the rain showered over the student section, cheering was still a must. "I hate when people don't cheer, like we'll split the sea and go up and yell at freshmen because they don't cheer," Bosiljevac said.

Photo By: Teanna Hoscheid.

Drum Roll Please. Drumming to the beat, **JACOB TANNER LOVELL [09]**, **COLLIN HASSMAN [12]** and **AJ SIGUA [11]** march to the school song down the track at the football game. Hassman was recognized for his years of determination and work in marching band for senior night on Oct. 3.

Photo By: Surina Burlington.



GUESSING GRADES

How many people do you think are in your grade?



James Jones [09]

Guess: **205**

FRESHMAN CLASS:

454



Faith Pennue [11]

Guess: **650**

JUNIOR CLASS:

452



Isaac Manahan [12]

Guess: **400**

SENIOR CLASS:

473

What is the longest amount of time it has taken you to find parking?



"**10** minutes. I ended up parking at the tennis courts." - Emily Bennett [12]

"It only takes me **1-2** minutes to find a spot." - Cardin Vuong [12]

"Not long, like **10** seconds. I don't mind walking." - Wade Guthmiller [10]

"The longest it's taken me is like **10** minutes because everybody is there at once so there is no space." - Riley Mulder [11]

Page By: Kylie Champlin, Malayah Herrera & Sophi Ritterbush

FALL DIVISION

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Students try out the new outdoor classroom while reviewing for their math midterm.

Story By: Tatum Chereck

When students walked into school on Oct. 8, they knew to come prepared with the usuals: a pencil, a clipboard, sunglasses, sunscreen and bug spray. They stepped outside, felt the sunshine on their face and their feelings about learning were permanently altered.

Mrs. Stephanie Kimball's Honors Algebra 2 classes used the new outside classroom in early fall to focus further on an interactive drawing project. The addition of tables and benches on a small patio was located right outside the south entrance. It allowed students to get a breath of fresh air during their day.

"I think [Mrs. Kimball] chose to use the outdoor classroom so that we could get out of the class and have more room to move around while we looked at everyone's drawings," **ANNA JENSEN [11]** said.

The outside classroom was met with consistent praise from students because of the flexibility and space it provided.

"It [was] more of an open area; we would've been stuck in a class together," **ASHTON DEMERS [10]** said. "It would've been a little cramped because we have a ton of people in our class."

Not only was it successful, but it also gave students the chance to have a new environment and interact with other students in various ways.

"I think it's a fun environment to help get out of the classroom and get some sunlight," **SYDNEY JUNGJOHANN [09]** said.

Even on a perfect day, being outside could be an issue depending on the lesson plans. Students had to remember they were still at school and had work to get done.

"Being outside could be a challenge if [a teacher] was teaching a lesson," Jungjohann said. "I feel like there would probably be a lack of focus, but being outside makes the learning more fun."

Armed with bug spray and sunglasses, students took a step back from traditional learning and gained a fresh outlook on academics.



Sunshine Studies. In the outdoor classroom, **CONNOR MCKELVEY [10]** evaluates his midterm project. Students in Mrs. Stephanie Kimball's Honors Algebra 2 class utilized the new space across from the south parking lot to share what they learned about graphing equations. "I would prefer to work outside any day because it makes me feel good," McKelvey said. Photo By: Maggie Novak.

1. Play Ball. With focus, **WOLFGANG VALLEY [11]** loads and waits to hit the ball in his Sports Officiating class. Students in the class split their time between playing a variety of games like football, softball and volleyball, while they learned how to officiate them. Photo By: Erynn Gobbett.

2. Data Driven. In her AP Statistics class, **CATHERINE CHANDLER [12]** takes notes over scatter plots and linear distribution. On Sept. 9 the class learned about random assignments and students were randomly given a passing or failing grade. "I took stats because I plan to study civil engineering in college," Chandler said. "I think it is one of the easier AP classes I have taken." Photo By: Carly Peterson.



Deep Discussions. During their AP Language class on Oct. 17, **BENNETT CARRICO [11]** and **COLTON WOOCKMAN [11]** discuss literary analysis. "I took the class because my brother and sister told me to, and I like to push myself academically," Carrico said. Carrico's class focused on rhetorical analysis of non-fiction pieces as opposed to the usual novel study. Photo By: Sophi Ritterbush.



Hammer Time. With full concentration, **MIKAELLA ROSAS [12]** hammers a nail into place. Rosas worked to construct a balanced roof for a medium-sized dog house. Photo By: Carly Peterson.



In Another World. In her Astronomy Class, **ABBIGAIL LEDOUX [11]** works on an interactive project in which students had to find the coordinates of specific landmarks on Mars. "I really like space and NASA, so I decided to try something new," LeDoux said. In this project, Astronomy students studied the light spectrum and the sun. Photo By: Kylie Champlin.



Flame Study. In his AP Chemistry class, **JESUS RAMIREZ [12]** holds his test tube up to a flame during a lab on Sept. 11. Chemistry students focused on chemical reactions and intermolecular forces. Photo by: Elli Ridgley.



Civics in Action. In an intense discussion with Mr. Chris Curry, **CARLOS SEVILLA [10]** negotiates a trade for a snack. During World Civ, students participated in a trade fair activity where students brought items from home to trade and bargain with other students and Mr. Curry for valuable items on his desk. Photo By: Elly Traylor.

STACKS OF STUDY

What's the longest book you've had to read for school?



Eva Fuqua [10]

"The longest book I've read was 'To Kill A Mockingbird.' I like how truthful the book was and how realistic it was. It was just such a good book."

376pgs



Angela Phan [11]

"The longest book I've read for school was 'Fahrenheit 451.' It was 249 pages. I loved it; it was kinda giving our world right now."

249pgs



Riley Kaufman [12]

"'To Kill a Mockingbird' was 376 pages. I think it's had quite a big impact on me. It kind of helped me develop a little bit more empathy, understanding and some historical knowledge."

376pgs

What is the longest time you have spent on homework?



"I worked on history homework for 4 hours one night." - Holly Vo [09]

"I spent 3 hours working on physics homework. It was a lot of trial and error." - Cassidy Sokolewicz [12]

"The longest I've spent on a homework assignment was 2 hours." - Alison Kvetensky [12]

"The most amount of homework I had was 3 hours of math. I had to do a bunch of Delta math online." - Jayden Moneto [09]

Page By: Tatum Chereck, Maggie Novak & Lucy Tejral

FALL ACADEMICS

1. Hands On. ABIGAIL BUSCHELMAN [09] focuses hard while she plays the marimba at the Lincoln North Star halftime performance on Sept. 4. The show was still improving as it was only the second official performance of the season. *Photo By: Yazlynn Ramos.*

2. Sway. The haunted inn from the marching band show's "The Inn Between" possesses **KRUBEL NEGUS [11]** to stay and never leave. "Yeah, I feel like the scary vibe is well produced; you can really see it in the story," Negus said. "The sound effects also help it." The concentration needed to show every visual took some time to get right. *Photo By: Yazlynn Ramos.*



09/04/25

Horns Up. During the halftime show during the Lincoln North Star game, **KHLOE SONS [11]** stands proud and plays her part. "I'm always focused on having the best technique I can," Sons said. "Every little thing you do counts." Throughout the performance, Sons focused on counting so all her visuals were on point. *Photo By: Surina Burlington.*

MARCHING INN

The marching band sets the tone for its eerie halftime show by adding elements of acting and unique visuals.

Story By: Maddy Howe

"GET OUT," "I SEE YOU." Unsure of where these whisperings were coming from, band members scrambled to stay alive, yet still got stuck "Inn Between" life and death in this haunted hotel-themed show.

The performance of the "Inn Between" was characterized by the members' unique acting and visuals they performed. One member, **COHEN WOODWARD [10]**, was so compelled that he wrote a four-page story.

"My character was Rupert Curmudgeon. He was an old guy from Kansas who moved to Oregon," Woodward said. "I use my trombone as a walking stick and hunch down so it looks like I'm old. I try to act angry, trying to start fights when walking around."

The show was not only engaging for the audience, but for the band itself. Students found themselves dedicated to the show because of its fun and spooky nature.

"I think giving people the option [of what character to play] makes them more invested in actually trying and doing well with it, especially freshmen,"

BRIGID KINGSTON [11] said.

Throughout the show, players not only acted and used visuals, but the sound effects added a whole new layer of scary.

"I know the music," **CAROLINE WILLIAMS [12]** said. "It's recognizable music, like 'Hello' by Adele, and 'Stayin' Alive,' obviously super popular."

With a tinge of a scary vibe on a brisk fall evening, it was sure to give some kind of a chill down the audience members' spines. Performers focused on their playing as well as their body language and acting throughout the show.

"I feel like it kind of gives an eerie vibe if everyone does it correctly: straight faces, staring out into people," Woodward said.

Although Williams saw it more as a "kooky and campy homage" to scary films, audiences and judges alike were still transfixed by the horror of the Inn Between. The band capped the season with a Superior rating at the NSBA State Marching Band Contest appropriately held in October.



DOORMAN'S TAN

Did you get any tan lines from band camp?



"When I take off my shirt, it still looks like I'm wearing a white T-shirt."
- **Estelle Anderson [11]**



"I got a really bad sock tan line from wearing my socks all day outside."
- **Ryan Baruth [12]**



"We were all so bad at the marching band pool party. Everyone had super dark arms and then pure white; our tan lines were terrible."
- **Olivia Packer [09]**



3. Unyielding. MADELYN ARCHER [12] and **LORELEI RIVA [09]** stand at carriage at the NSBA Sendoff Show on Oct. 20. "I'm thinking of all the things that I have to do in the set, like the counts when I moved or stay in place and the counts for the visuals," Archer said. Archer and Riva still brought emotion for one of their final school performances. *Photo By: Carli Pew.*

4. Crouch. Perfectly in sync for the last time, **LOGAN PHILLIPS [09]** and **KEVIN BARRETT [11]** squat down to complete a visual at the NSBA Sendoff Show. At this show, the seniors were able to march with their parents as a goodbye. *Photo By: Carli Pew.*

5. Sneak Peek. Starting the season off strong, **CHRISTOPHER REILLY [11]** and **EVAN CARLSON [11]** play against the sunset. Their first ever performance of the show was highlighted by Reilly's solos in the show. *Photo By: Alice Gifford.*

6. Sunset Scrimmage. Facing the crowd during Preview Night on Aug. 22, **BENNETT CARRICO [11]** conducts the school song, "On Papillion." "I'm really just making sure that I'm in time with my other drum majors," Carrico said. This was Carrico's first time ever conducting in front of a crowd. *Photo By: Alice Gifford.*

How many times do you hold throughout the show?



12 "I would say I had **12** hold sets."
- **Kristine Jones [12]**

"I would say I maybe hold about a solid **20** times."
- **Henry Davis [10]**

"I would say maybe **6** or **7** times."
- **Adrienne Sigua [11]**

"At least **7** or **8** rests during the show."
- **Charlotte Boehm [09]**

MARCHING BAND
Page By: Madison Blackwell, Maddy Howe & Nicole McAdams

Golden Hour. Under the sunrise, **ALEXANDRA MARTINEZ-BRAVO [12]**, **JOSELYN ANGEL [12]** and **NATALIE DIAZ HAGMAN [12]** share a smile. On Sept. 10, seniors gathered on the south side of the school for the annual tradition of Senior Sunrise and experienced joy with the company of breakfast burritos and french toast sticks from Zemogs.
Photo By: Mrs. Katie Wittrig.



Coffees and Smiles. In order to make a brown shaken espresso, **ARIESLYN KINDIG-BOYNTON [11]** pours milk into a cup. She worked part-time at Scooters off 72nd Street while actively being a good student. "The perks of my job are my free on-shift drinks and 50% off food," Kindig-Boynton said.
Photo By: Kaylee Will.



Poster Power. While holding up posters at the first EmpowerHER meeting, **ARIANNA RUIZ GARCIA [12]** and **LESLIE ESPINOZA-MACIAS [12]** pose together. On Aug. 26, students met up in the Tradition Center and made posters to spread the word of their club, EmpowerHER, which focused on feminist empowerment.
Photo By: Yazlynn Ramos.



Published Perfection. During the book Q&A for Ms. Alex Theron's new book, **GRACIE ANSON [11]** and **CHLOE WHITE [11]** sit and listen in the PLHS library. On Oct. 17, the para held a Q&A to answer questions about her newly released book, "The Fountain." Photo By: Carli Pew.



PARIS THROUGH OUR EYES

French students travel to Paris over the summer to take in unforgettable experiences.
Story By: Olivia Valadez



Around We Go! SAMANTHA MACA [12] and **MADISON STEINGIESSER [12]** pose for a selfie on a carousel during the trip to Paris. They had walked around Honfleur, a port town, while documenting their day-by-day adventures in their travel journals. "I filled mine out with all the things we did that day," Maca said. Photo By: Samantha Maca.

Nothing tests your language skills quite like a nosebleed in France. With her French skills failing her fast, **KENNEDY STIVERSON [12]** pleaded, "As-tu de la glace?" — trying to capture the attention of the receptionist for ice.

Months earlier and thousands of miles away back in Papillion, Stiverson and other French students prepared in the classroom for this once in a lifetime trip. They finally traveled to Paris in early June and explored all it had to offer.

"I liked the dinner crepes," Stiverson said. "I stayed with a vegetarian family, so we had zucchini lasagna, which was really great."

Students stayed with multiple host families and shared meals with them. They also tried to speak some French with the locals.

"They'll know you're English speaking somehow and speak to you in English, but everyone tried to speak a little bit," **SAMANTHA MACA [12]** said.

Students went to the Eiffel Tower and then saw the Mona Lisa at the Louvre. They then came to their own conclusions about the city.

"Paris has been talked up so much compared to the rest of the little cities, beautiful landscapes and castles," Maca said. "It was kind of underwhelming."

For most students, this was their first time being out of the country and without their parents.

"If I were to have gone with my family, I wouldn't have tried as many new things," Stiverson said.

Being without their parents caused some of the students to get homesick.

"It was a bit difficult," **AUBREE HOFFMAN [12]** said. "My parents were happy for me, but it was still hard."

Additionally, this trip sparked some life choices, both educationally and personally.

"I definitely want to travel the world and study abroad," Hoffman said.

Students expanded their language and explored landscapes; and in the end, Stiverson got the ice that she needed, even if it took a few stutters along the way.

THE GREAT 6-7 DEBATE

How do you feel about the latest 6-7 trend?



Jackson Stigge [09]

6-7/10

"I feel like a chill guy and it makes me feel 6 to 7 feet tall."



Reese Neu [10]

2/10

"I think it's really stupid, but I say it like ironically to my friends to annoy them, but overall it's really bad."



Jersey Neelon [11]

100/10

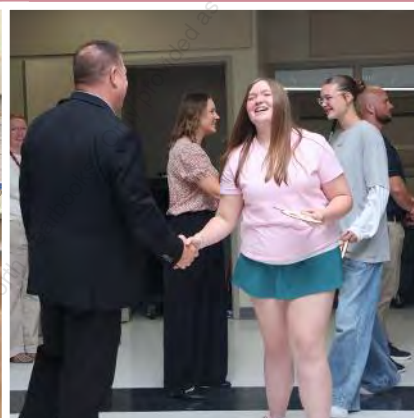
"Oh I love it so much you know. It's such a great trend!"

What is the average amount of sleep you get each night?



"I get about 8 hours of sleep each night. I like to scroll Pinterest and plan my day." - Adi DeJoy [09]

"I scroll on [Youtube] shorts until 10:30 and wake up around 6:00 everyday, so I get about 7 hours." - Gabrielle Bauer [10]



Major Achievement. JULIA RASMUSSEN [10]

walks up to achieve her academic letter. Students who maintained a 4.0 GPA were eligible to receive their academic letter and were treated to Chick-fil-A sandwiches. "When I got my academic letter, I was pretty excited," Rasmussen said. Photo By: Bennett Carrico.

Bag it Up. JADA PELSTER [11] restocks bags at Walmart. She dedicated eight months to working there five days a week. "I like working at Walmart because I get a Walmart discount card," Pelster said. Photo By: Aysela Ulkerman.

"I used to get 8 hours; unfortunately junior year has made it about 5." - Lailend Duncan [11]

"I get about 6 hours. I usually get off work at 10:00, then I do my homework at 11:00." - Eva Valadez [12]

DEFENDING HOME PLATE

Trailblazing senior leads the team to its 33rd consecutive state qualification. **Story By: Lucy Smith**

Feet planted. Shoulders down. Eye on the ball. All of these thoughts flew through **MAIZEY CARPENTER'S [12]** mind as the bright yellow ball shot toward her face moving at nearly 60 miles per hour. Deep breath in and swing. Another home run in the books for one of the queens of the Monarch softball team.

Carpenter and **TORIA ROTHER [11]** stood out as two of the four team captains, guiding the girls to their 33rd consecutive trip to state where they defeated Gretna High School in the first round.

When the team struggled at moments throughout the season, Carpenter and Rother did their best to inspire them to keep fighting with a few short words of encouragement time and time again.

ELLI RIDGLEY [11], another captain, recognized Carpenter's exceptional dedication to the team.

"[Maizey] is always just really good at picking up the team," Ridgley said.

Carpenter was the first recipient ever of the LeRoy Peterson Memorial scholarship (a \$500 scholarship created in memory of coach Todd Peterson's father) and is putting it to good use in her future career at Iowa Western.

"It means a lot because obviously that was Coach P's dad, and he was always supporting us," Carpenter said. "It just means a lot knowing that I'm going to college to play softball and I got that scholarship."

The captains tried to work harder than anyone to show their teammates that showing up and working with fidelity pays off.

"As a captain, I just want to make sure everyone is performing to the best of their abilities," Rother said. "Everyone's goal is to win; but even if we don't win, I just want to make sure we are all good teammates to each other."

Carpenter echoed Rother's leadership sentiments. "I've started all four years and I feel like I've just been a really good leader and led the right way throughout my four years," Carpenter said.

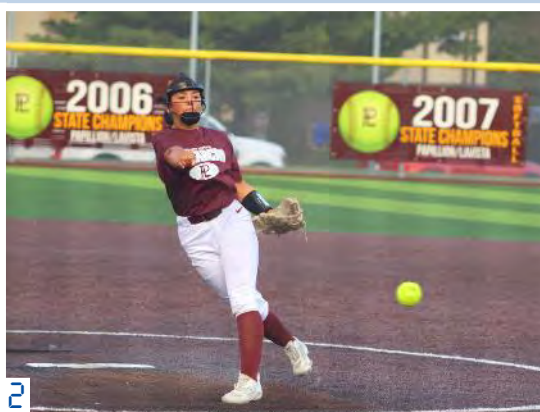
09/30/25

Unwavering. MAIZEY CARPENTER'S [12] eyes bore into the softball as she prepares herself to swing. "I know I've always struggled with [my hitting] in the past, and I feel like I finally just changed it and worked on my mindset and it's way better," Carpenter said. As a team captain this year, Carpenter racked up 12 home runs for the Monarchs throughout the season and was a huge contributor to the win against Lincoln North Star on Sept. 30. *Photo by: Madison Blackwell.*



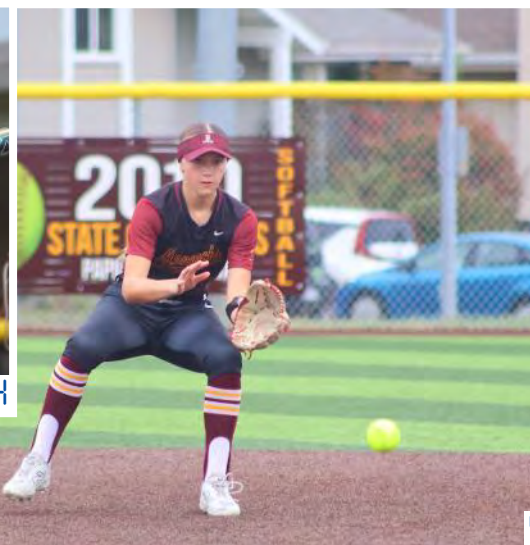
1. No Hesitation. TORIA ROTHER [11] stands in the batter's box waiting for the next pitch. Rother was elected team captain by her teammates this season and led her team to place in the top four at State. "Showing up everyday and being there and working hard was very important," Rother said. *Photo by: Madison Blackwell.*

2. Pitch Perfect. In the circle during the district championship, **CHLOE CANNON [12]** pitches the ball to a Lincoln East batter. Cannon shared her time as a pitcher with **KAYLEE HUFFMAN [11]** on the varsity team. *Photo by: Emma Danderand.*



"4 seasons, sophomore year was my favorite."
- Taylor Schommer [12]

"I've played 8 seasons of club softball and 3 of high school."
- Stella Manning [11]



3. Crowns Up. ELLI RIDGLEY [11] celebrates hitting a double. "Everybody that came in contributed somehow," Ridgley said. It took a collective effort for the Monarchs to win 11-1 against Lincoln North Star. *Photo By: Madison Blackwell.*

4. All Smiles. ALEXA TAYLOR [11] walks up to bat after speaking with her coaches. "Coach [Todd Peterson] was laughing at me, so of course I was laughing," Taylor said. The girls hit an incredible four home runs in that game and hit over .650 on Sept. 30 against Lincoln North Star. *Photo By: Madison Blackwell.*

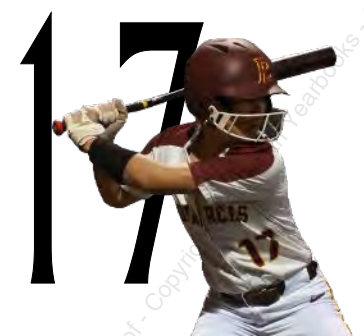


5. Undivided Attention. On Senior Night, **ALLISON DIBELKA [10]** reaches to catch the ball. The Monarchs won against Lincoln North Star 11-1, a sweet victory to take home in honor of the seniors on their night surrounded by their closest friends and family. *Photo By: Madison Blackwell.*

6. Definition of Tradition. The entire softball team memorializes its 33rd consecutive trip to state. Over the generation of success, the program has established itself as the team to beat. The 2025 season was no different, as the team worked together and placed 3rd at State. *Photo By: Arianna Sandoval.*

GEAR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

How often do you have to replace your equipment?



"Socks, really, really often. They get holes really fast."

- Drew Trofholz [10]



"Gloves are about two and a half to three years, depending on if you take care of them or not."

- Bella Arriola [11]



"I go through about two pairs of cleats a season."

- Kaylee Huffman [11]

How many seasons of softball have you played?



"I've played 8 seasons of club softball and 3 of high school."
- Stella Manning [11]

"4 seasons, sophomore year was my favorite."
- Taylor Schommer [12]

"Probably 11 seasons, [but my favorite] was freshman year club season."
- Reese Fitzgerald [10]

"In my whole career I have played 10 seasons of softball."
- Kristine Skinner [11]

Page By: Emma Danderand, Natalie Skaggs & Lucy Smith

SOFTBALL

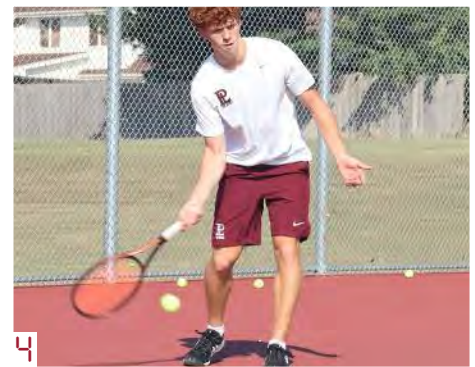
1. Locked In. Concentrating on the ball, **COLTON PETERS [12]** holds up his racket and waits to hit it. Peters has been on the tennis team for four years and on the varsity team for three. Peters ended his senior season with a singles record of 6-1.
Photo By: Surina Burlington.

2. Calm Concentration. Swinging at the ball, **JACOB FEEKIN [12]** hits it with force across the net in the match against Elkhorn South on Sept. 16. Feekin would go on to win his doubles match with his teammate **NOAH LOZIER [12]** 9-8. Photo By: Leo Mertz.

3. Pressure. **JACOB BLODGETT [11]** leaps into the air to attempt to smash a serve. It was a hard fought doubles match between Blodgett and **PRESTON AVALON [11]** against Gretna East on Oct. 3, but they ultimately lost 8-5. Photo By: Maverick Kidd.

4. Eye on the Ball. Warming up, **PRESTON AVALON [11]** steps forward and returns the ball. Avalon and his double partner **JACOB BLODGETT [11]** ended the season with a doubles record of 11-6.
Photo By: Maverick Kidd.

5. Reach for the Stars. Reaching high in the sky, **NOAH LOZIER [12]** grabs his racket and slices the tennis ball. Memorable times and fun van rides concluded his last tennis season. "The van ride up [to Kearney] is always fun because we go up as a team," Lozier said.
Photo By: Surina Burlington.



09/13/25

Simple Sweep. Swinging his racket with force, **SAM BOUDREAU [11]** smashes the tennis ball over the net. Boudreau swept his opponent 8-0 during the match against Millard South. "[My favorite memory] was the van ride up to Kearney for state," Boudreau said. Photo By: Novena Chestnut.

The varsity boys tennis team stays warm through the offseason by doing winter workouts and hitting sessions. **Story By: Isabel O'Leary**

As the school year began, fall sports prepared for their season to start with practices and conditioning in the heat of late summer. But not the tennis team.

The team started months prior, trading a long off-season for extra swings, sharper footwork and a head start on the competition by training at Genesis Health Clubs during the brutal Nebraska winter.

"It consisted of playing games to keep us warm for the season, so we don't get rusty and to keep us in shape," **CADE WILLS [12]** said.

Coaches Tony Ripa and Mariana Hurst had the idea of winter hitting, but another coach helped follow through with the practices.

"Our coach Randy Hester (consultant) is the person who usually runs those," **NATE PEREZ [11]** said.

There were many benefits to the winter hitting sessions, including keeping the boys in shape and ready to go for the upcoming fall season.

"It helped me remember my form and make sure that I wasn't rusty," Wills said. "I also learned new serves."

The cold weather sessions helped the team when the action heated up on the courts.

"It has been really helpful for me especially since I've gone from JV to varsity," Perez said.

As the season came to a close, the boys competed in matches where the stakes were the highest, the state tournament. Wills ended the State Duals Championship with a 2-1 record.

"It was a single elimination tournament," Wills said. "None of us were guaranteed more than one match. We all won our first matches."

As far as the future goes, winter hitting sessions will become a permanent part of getting prepared for seasons to come.

The extra work helped the team build more than just muscle and stamina. They began a tradition that will help improve the program as a whole in the future.

TIME FOR TENNIS

How many tennis balls do you use during a match or warm up?



Jacob Blodgett [11]



Easton Mahnks [11]



Preston Avalon [11]



6. Mind Game. Glistening sweat and hard work, **NATE PEREZ [11]** jumps up and smacks the ball down to the ground. "Tennis is definitely a mental game that cannot be negative at all, cause once you're in your head it's really bad," Perez said. "So I'm always trying to hype myself, trying to give myself positive feedback even if I lose a point." Perez ended the season with a record 5-2 in singles.
Photo By: Nataleigh Vela.

7. Soaring Singles. Watching the ball soar, **CADE WILLS [12]** lunges at it during his singles match against Gretna East on Oct. 3. Wills would go on to win his match 8-5.
Photo By: Maverick Kidd.

What has been the longest amount of time you have played pickleball?



"Over the summer the longest that I played pickleball was for **2** hours with my friends." - Maia Waszak [12]

"Maybe for **2** hours for singles and **2** hours for doubles." - Tessa Nguyen [12]

"Probably about **3** hours." - Gabby Brilz [12]

"The longest I have played pickleball for was around **3** or **4** hours. I remember going out when it was light out and then up I leaving when it was dark." - Zack Carlson [11]

1. Bulls Eye. During a triangular scramble at Elmwood Park Golf Course, **QUINNLYN JANSSEN [11]** focuses her mind on one thing, her perfect swing. The triangular scramble was held by Millard North on Sept. 4. The varsity triangular was attended by some JV swing players, like Janssen.

Photo By: Maggie Novak.

2. In Line for the Dime. While playing Skutt Catholic at home, **REGAN SCHNABEL [11]** and **MARA BRIGHTON [11]** ready themselves for the ball approaching overhead. The Monarchs lost a close match against the Skyhawks. "I was definitely very focused and locked in," Schnabel said.

Photo By: Kassie Sigua.

3. Adrenaline. While swinging for varsity softball at La Vista City Park, **AVERY SKRADSKI [09]** heads home to score a run. She scored two runs and stole a base in the 12-5 district championship victory against Lincoln East on Oct. 9. Photo By: Carly Peterson.

4. Ball in Hand. At a tennis match against Bellevue West, **CADIM DORTCH [09]** looks back at his opponent and readies himself to serve.

Papio JV boys tennis faced the Thunderbirds at home on Sept. 11. Dortch and his team went home with a dual win. Photo By: Carli Pew.

5. The Push. While running the Metro Championship 5K race at Walnut Creek, **NORA JOHNSON [10]** braces herself for the last 3K loop of the race. Metro Cross Country was attended by many on Oct. 10 and was the last race for most JV runners this season. Johnson placed eighth overall and first for the JV girls. "I was tired but I was close to the end, so I just had to push through to the end," Johnson said. Photo By: Ellery Hamilton.



08/30/25

Finish Line. While at Walnut Creek, **BRADY ROSS [10]** runs his first race of the season at Class of the Metros on Aug. 30. This race was marked as the season opener for the cross country teams. Competition was tough, but Ross placed fifth overall for the sophomore runners. He opened his season with a time of 20:42.

Photo by: Maggie Novak.

An unfortunate accident at cross country practice leads to an unexpectedly strong performance two days later.

Story by: Lilly Lemus

Exhaustion filled his body, all he could see were those dreaded bright lights quickly approaching, as the screeching of tires and yells of teammates blended together in his memory.

On Oct. 1 **BRADY ROSS [10]** was attending his morning cross country practice when a car struck him while he was crossing on 96th Street.

"It was making a turn, I was wearing a dark shirt, it was pitch black outside and they didn't see me," Ross said. "It was making its turn and it hit me."

The car struck suddenly leaving Ross and his teammates in shock and panic. Ross only had one thought on his mind.

"Oh shoot, what am I going to do next?" Ross said.

After being hit his teammates were worried and scared yet didn't hesitate to do as much as they could to help. They acquired all the necessary information from the car.

"We got their phone number and then just called his dad," **BRAEDEN BERST [10]** said.

Ross was then taken to the hospital. It was confirmed that he had no serious injuries and only received a few bruises and scratches.

"He's a tough man," **HAYDEN CARPENTER [11]** said.

Although the runners were freaked out, there was a moment of humor that balanced it out.

"I was making sure he was okay first, and then I was trying not to laugh because he was saying some pretty funny stuff," Berst said.

While his teammates were very concerned, Ross was able to bounce back quickly, as he ran in the Millard West Invite 5K race two days later. The race landed him close to breaking his personal record.

After his race Ross and his teammates were able to find the good throughout the bad. Carpenter was able to stay sarcastically optimistic after everything ended so well.

"I thought I was going to lose a friend," Carpenter said.

UNWRITTEN RULES

What's your sports ick?

"Big egos."

- Leah Cherrington [11]
JV GIRLS GOLF



"Being disrespectful."

- Natalie Skaggs [11]
JV VOLLEYBALL



"Conditioning."

- Noah Cho [10]
JV FOOTBALL



What's the latest you've stayed up before competing?

8:30

"If I had to give a time I would say **8:30.**"
- Grace Kusler [09]



"I think the latest I have stayed up before a race is **11:00.**"
- Andrea Hensel [09]

"I usually go to bed a little earlier than usual, maybe **9:00-9:30.**"
- Eli Skaggs [09]

"The latest I have stayed up before a softball game is **11:00.**"
- Aubrey Skradski [09]



6. Eye on the Prize. While on defense at Papio's home field, **DANTE STARR [11]** goes in for a tackle against a player from Millard West. Starr chased the thrill of being on the field, but the game was just short of a win for the Monarchs. "I like to do it; I just think about the play," Starr said. Photo by: Carly Peterson.

7. Set it Up. During a match against Westside, setter **PAISLEY SMEJKAL [09]** prepares to set a ball. "My favorite part of being a setter is being able to control the court and the leadership skills I gain," Smejkal said. Photo by: Lilly Lemus.

FALL LOWER LEVEL SPORTS
Page By: Lilly Lemus & Amelia Moore

Theme Explanation - "24/7"

This year our theme is "24/7". We wanted to capture the numbers that shape our lives. The hours spent at school, practice, studying, working, and trying to sleep. 24/7 reflects the constant motion of our school. The craziness, the excitement, the passion and the effort that fill our building everyday. Our theme is highlighted by the repetition of numbers seen throughout the book. The countdowns, dates, times, records, and final scores are all details that fill students' calendars and stay in their memories. The bold fonts and imperfect boxes represent the chaotic, unplanned experiences we shared this year. It is a testament to all the late nights students spent working and thinking and planning. The bright colors symbolize the bright energy that makes our school what it is. This book is a testament to the late nights spent working, thinking, planning, and showing up for each other. It combines the long-standing school traditions with moments that make this year special. Every long day and short week, every early morning and late night is accounted for. Our book represents everything that goes into not only making a yearbook but being successful in our own way 24/7.