

MINNESOTA INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES
MN IA AAA
ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

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AD ADVISORY

	CLASS A		CLASS AA
Region 1	Josh Wieme, Goodhue	Region 1	Trent Hanson, Hastings
Region 2	Jeremy Robinson, Cedar Mountain	Region 2	Todd Waterbury, Mankato East
Region 3	Patty Myrvick, Minneota	Region 3	Chris Peterson, Richfield
Region 4	Nick Rathmann, Blake	Region 4	Brian Peloquin, White Bear Lake
Region 5	Dan Krause, Maple Lake	Region 5	Will Wackman, Spring Lake Park
Region 6	Ribsy Petermeier, Browerville	Region 6	Adam Flanders, Roosevelt
Region 7	Frank Bartsch, Floodwood	Region 7	Jodi Otte, Chisago Lakes
Region 8	Bryan Wormley, Nevis	Region 8	Nick Guida, Buffalo
	BIPOC Rep		De Hanuman, ISM
	Female Rep		Kristen McRae, Bemidji





As we move toward the end of the winter season, the MNIAAA also prepares for the annual state conference. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. If you haven't registered yet, please go to mniaaa.finalforms-amp.com to do so.

In this issue of the winter newsletter, you'll see the following:

- Information from President-Elect Bill Quan about the upcoming conference.
- The conference schedule is included here. Please know that there may still be changes before we get to the event.
- A couple of summaries on the most recent National AD Conference held in Austin, TX this past December. If you've never been to a national conference, consider this in comparison to our conference...there are 20+ times the number of ADs from around the country and around the world in attendance, all LTI classes are offered at each conference, there are at least triple the number of mini-sessions available, and there are almost four times as many vendors in the exhibit hall.
- President Will Short has penned an excellent piece on Mental Health for the AD
- Our two candidates for the MNIAAA board, Todd Waterbury of Mankato East and Casey Indra of Winona are presented
- We have four individuals highlighted in the Get to Know Your Colleagues segment.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Dan Johnson, MNIAAA Executive Director

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change we seek!”

- Barack Obama

When we go to work as athletic/activities directors each day, we have a never-ending list of items and events that will invade our calendar, our comfort, our blood pressure, and our psyche. And, too many times we look to others to make things better. As administrators, we have the right, the authority, and the responsibility to make things better. We will need to develop a plan and a process for what we are going to do to make it happen.

The big question is this - What are you waiting for to be the leader you want to be? As the quote from President Obama states...we are the change we seek. So, let's go ahead and do that. Let's change the items that have been bothering us. At that point, we can move on to bigger and better changes.

If you feel your boss isn't supporting you or trusting you to do the job, schedule a time to

meet with them and share your thoughts. If people don't know there is a problem, how will they ever change? Be clear, be honest, be humble and be committed...to yourself and to the job.

If you have a coach that is struggling or is doing things that you are not crazy about, same as above. Schedule a time to meet with them and tell them why it is bothering you...not anyone else but you as the AD. “This is what is bothering me, coach, and I need you to understand where I am coming from...” The wrong thing to do is to start firing people. Education has become quite wasteful because we are too eager to “eliminate instead of educate”. People are never going to love every decision you make so stop trying to please everyone. Do your homework, talk to your colleagues, work with your boss as needed, and make the call. If you have a chance to make a coach better, that is far more advantageous for the long term health of the program than letting them go and starting over. That process will never end, once we go down that path.

None of us are without flaws or faults. I think about it every day...things I did or did not do that I wish I would have done differently. I



can't do a thing to change them now but I can work toward being better every day, at whatever I am doing.

To that end, this “movement” also applies in helping your friends and colleagues within this business. If you know that an AD has some issues that they may not be aware of, share that information with them...as their friend/colleague/mentor. It may be a behavior issue of a student or parent or coach. I learned early on in this business that if I ever heard from a colleague, it meant a great deal to me to address the issue and do all I could to take care of it. And learn to count on the experience of those around you. I had the opportunity to work with some of the finest people in this business and to learn from their experiences, as well as my own. Do all you can to be the example - to be the video that people want to see, or to be the person that gets the phone call from an AD looking for some help or guidance. Albert Schweitzer once said “a good example has twice the value of good advice”.



Be the change that you seek!



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PRESIDENT ELECT'S MESSAGE

By Bill Quan, MNIAAA President-Elect, Osseo

MNIAAA State Conference “Creating a Culture of Belonging”

As the MNIAAA gears up for our highly anticipated annual state conference, there is excitement in the air. This year’s event promises to be an inspiring gathering of minds, ideas, and innovations—a true celebration of collaboration and inclusivity in athletic leadership.

The planning process for this conference has been a remarkable journey. Our team has worked diligently to craft an event that embodies the inclusivity and shared passion of athletic directors from every corner of Minnesota. From brainstorming sessions to fine-tuning the final schedule, each step has been fueled by the collective energy of professionals who are deeply committed to enhancing the experiences of student-athletes across the state.

A Collaborative Effort

One of the defining aspects of this year’s conference has been the emphasis on collaboration. From the outset, we prioritized

engaging a diverse group of voices in the planning process. This inclusive approach has allowed us to design an event that reflects the wide-ranging perspectives, needs and representation from multiple communities reflecting the full spectrum of human experiences in our programming.

MNIAAA 2025 CONFERENCE

Monday, March 24th

thru

Thursday, March 27th, 2025

Kelly Inn

St. Cloud, MN

www.kellyinn.com

We’ve intentionally crafted a schedule that offers something for everyone. Attendees can look forward to speakers and sessions led by the diverse group of leaders within our community. Whether you’re attending innovative topics presented by our partners and peers, mini sessions, or round tables; each opportunity will spark meaningful conversations and provide actionable takeaways.



Excitement for the Future

This year’s theme, “Creating a Culture of Belonging” captures the spirit of unity and shared purpose that defines our work. As athletic directors, we are continually striving to improve—both for our schools and our student-athletes. The state conference serves as a vital opportunity to recharge, connect with peers, and gain fresh perspectives that will help us all lead with greater impact.

We are incredibly proud of the collaborative effort that has brought us to this point. It’s inspiring to see so many individuals come together with a shared purpose: to support and elevate athletic programs and student experiences across Minnesota. We have been energized through the process of

organizing the conference and are hoping that you will feel the same way after attending.

Join Us!

The MNIAAA invites you to join us at this year’s Minnesota State Athletic Directors Conference. Whether you’re a seasoned professional or new to the field, this event offers a unique opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to the future of athletics and activities in our state.

Let’s make this conference a memorable and impactful experience for everyone involved. We can’t wait to see you there!



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Will Short, MNIAAA President, Simley

WELL-BEING OF THE ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATOR

As the president of the MNIAAA, I have had the privilege of forming new relationships and gaining deeper insights into the challenges faced by athletic administrators across the state. It has become increasingly clear that many in our profession struggle to balance the demands of the job with their personal well-being. This imbalance may contribute to the turnover rate within the profession, as administrators grapple with burnout, stress, and a lack of support. The following are some stressors that were discussed at the National conference in Austin, Texas:

1. **High Expectations and Long Hours**
Athletic administrators often work irregular hours, attending evening games, weekend tournaments, and late-night meetings. Balancing these responsibilities with family life and personal commitments can lead to chronic stress and burnout.

2. **Conflict Resolution**
Handling disputes among coaches, parents, and athletes is a routine part of the job. Whether addressing playing time concerns, eligibility issues, or interpersonal conflicts, the emotional weight of these situations can be overwhelming.

3. **Pressure to Perform**

Success in athletics is often measured by wins and championships. While administrators may emphasize the value of sportsmanship and personal growth, external pressures to produce competitive teams can create a constant sense of urgency and scrutiny.

4. **Limited Resources**

Budget constraints and staffing shortages add another layer of complexity. Athletic administrators are frequently tasked with doing more with less, which can lead to feelings of frustration and helplessness.

5. **Emotional Investment**

Athletic administrators are deeply invested in the well-being of their students and staff. Witnessing the struggles of athletes - whether due to injuries, academic pressures, or personal challenges - can take an emotional toll.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES

Athletic administrators, like anyone else, can experience symptoms of mental health challenges, including:

- Chronic fatigue or insomnia
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Feelings of isolation or detachment
- Increased irritability or emotional sensitivity

- Physical symptoms like headaches or gastrointestinal issues

Recognizing these signs early is crucial to seeking support and implementing coping strategies.

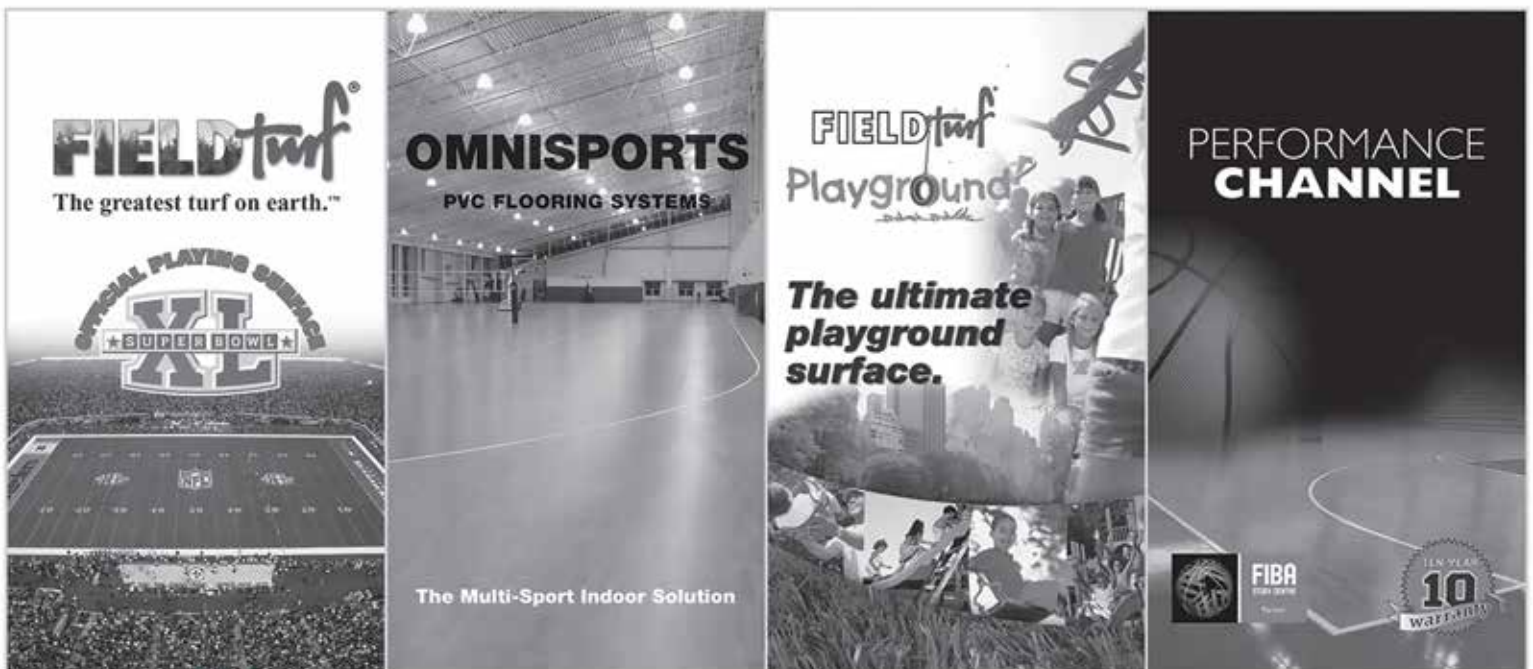
10 Strategies for Promoting Mental Health

1. Set clear work - life boundaries, such as designated "off" hours.
2. Delegate responsibilities to trusted staff members to prevent overextension.
3. Practice Self-Care - Prioritize regular exercise, healthy eating, and sufficient sleep.
4. Engage in hobbies or activities unrelated to work to recharge.
5. Seek Support Networks- Connect with peers through professional organizations or informal networks.
6. Share experiences and solutions with colleagues who understand the unique challenges of the role.

7. Develop Stress - Management Techniques
8. Practice mindfulness or meditation to manage stress.
9. Break tasks into manageable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
10. Lead by example by prioritizing mental health discussions within the athletic community

The mental health of athletic administrators is essential to the success of athletic programs and the well-being of the entire school community. By addressing the unique stressors of the role and implementing proactive strategies, administrators can maintain their health and continue to inspire those they serve. Prioritizing mental health isn't just beneficial - it's necessary for sustainable success in this demanding profession.

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Minnesota Interscholastic Activities Administrators Association (MNIAAA) 2025 State Conference Schedule

MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025

1:00PM - 2:30PM	MNIAAA Board Meeting	Husky Room, Kelly Inn
3:00PM - 5:00PM	Region Representative Meeting	Husky Room, Kelly Inn
5:30PM	Region Representative Dinner	TBD
5:30PM - 9:30PM	LTC 638 - Creating an Awareness of Diverse Groups within Athletic Programs Rick Tune & Bret McNeal University A, Kelly Inn LTC 502 - Strategies & Organizational Management Dan Roff & Kevin Kleiner Room: University B, Kelly Inn	

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2024

9:00AM - 1:00PM	LTC 726 - Student Leadership Development Jaime Sherwood & Mark Kuisle Room: University A, Kelly Inn	
9:00AM - 12:00PM	LTC 616 - Athletic Facilities: Planning & Development Dan Johnson Room: University B, Kelly Inn	
12:00PM - 2:00PM	Conference Registration for Attendees Terry Haws/Convention Center	
12:00PM - 5:30PM	Vendor/Exhibit Hall Open Terry Haws/Convention Center	

PLEASE VISIT THE VENDORS IN THE EXHIBIT HALL!

12:15 PM -o 12:55 PM	New AD Cohort 24 Andy Ourada and Jeff Boran Room: Weidner	
12:15 PM - 12:55 PM	Private School Roundtable Emmett Keenan and David Perkins Room: Bell	
1:00PM - 1:40PM	BIPOC Activities Administrators Roundtable Bill Quan & Rick Tune Room: University B, Kelly Inn	



TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2024

- 1:45PM - 2:25PM Female Activities Administrators Roundtable
Meghan Potter
Room: University A, Kelly Inn
- 3:00PM - 4:15PM OPENING GENERAL SESSION
Introduction of At-Large Candidates
KEYNOTE - Rick Tune - Creating a Sense of Belonging on Athletic Teams
Room: Herberger Suite
- 4:45PM 1st Door Prize Drawing
Retired ADs
Room: Exhibit Hall - Must be present to win
- 5:00pm - 5:30pm 1st Mini Session (30-minutes each)
De Hanuman - Small School AD
Doing it All on Your Own
Moderator Julie Friend (Minnetonka)
Room: Bell
- Room: Rick Tune - Boys Volleyball
Moderator - Tony Fisher (Minneapolis)
Alexander
- Dean Haugo - Supporting Spud Athletes
Moderator - Andrea Schmidt (Roseville)
Room: Clarke
- Lake Shirts (Steve Miley)
Moderator Brandon Morris - (Hiawatha Prep)
Room: Weidner
- Affinity Solutions - Steve Holewa
Moderator - Trevor Mbakwe (Tartan)
Room: Stockinger
- 5:45pm - 6:15pm 2nd Mini Session
De Hanuman - Small School AD - Doing it All on Your Own
Moderator - Brandon Morris (Hiawatha Prep)
Room: Bell
- Rick Tune - Boys Volleyball
Moderator - Tony Fisher (Minneapolis)
Room: Alexander
- Dean Haugo - Supporting Spud Athletes
Moderator - Julie Friend (Minnetonka)
Room: Clarke





TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2024

2nd Mini Session
Steve Miley - Lake Shirts
Moderator - Andrea Schmidt (Roseville)
Room: Weidner

Affinity Solutions - Steve Holewa
Moderator - Trevor Mbakwe (Tartan)
Room: Stockinger

6:15PM - 7:15PM Breaking Bread - Vendors & ADs
Bags Tournament - Jed Helwig & Trevor Mbakwe
ADs, Vendors & Admin Assts are invited to be in the
bags tournament! Sponsored by BSN
Exhibit Hall

7:30PM - 10:00PM Pool Side Conversations & Treats
Sponsored by MECA
Kelly Inn Pool Area

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024

7:30AM - 8:45AM Breakfast - Open to all attendees!
Sponsored by Fellowship of Christian Athletes & Affinity Solutions
Kelly Inn Pool Area

7:45AM - 8:45AM FCA Meeting & Featured Speaker
Room: State/Sunwood

8:00AM - 12:00PM CAA Exam
Room: University A, Kelly Inn

8:30AM - 1:00PM Vendor/Exhibit Hall Open
Convention Center
Room: All

8:30AM TO 1:00PM **IS YOUR TIME TO VISIT THE VENDORS IN THE EXHIBIT HALL!**

9:00AM - 9:45AM	REGION CAUCUS MEETINGS	
1A - Alexander	5A - Stockinger	1AA & 2AA - Clarke
2A - Convention Center	6A - Suite(6A)	3AA & 4AA - Bell
3A - Board Room C	7A - Poolside	5AA & 6AA - Edelbrock
4A - University B	8A - Herberger Suite	7AA & 8AA - Wilson Suite

10:00AM 2nd Door Prize Drawing
Retired ADs
Exhibit Hall-Must be present to win



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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024

- 10:15 AM - 11:00 AM Hot Topic: TBD
Bob Madison & Lisa Quednow, MSHSL
Room: Herberger Suite

- 10:15 AM - 11:00 AM Retired AD Meeting
Room: Husky Suite, Kelly Inn

- 11:15AM 3rd Door Prize Drawing
Retired ADs
Exhibit Hall

- 11:30AM - 12:30PM Lunch - Deli Buffet
Exhibit Hall

- 1:00PM - 2:00PM 2nd GENERAL SESSION
Erich Martens. Executive Director, MSHSL
Room: Herberger Suite

- 2:15PM - 2:45PM 3rd Mini Session
Steve Throne - Culture in the Department
Moderator Dan Johnson (MNIAAA)
Room: Bell

- Dr. Kiristen Robinson - Stress Management and Mental Health
Among HS Athletes in MN
Moderator Megan Chatterton (Delano)
Room: Alexander

- Adrian Turner and Brian Peloquin - AD / Asst AD Relationship,
Roles, How To Get One
Moderator Sara Palodichuk (East Ridge)
Room: Clarke

- Justin Reese and Nathan Bellefeuille - Coaching while being an AD -
Managing Time and making other programs still feel valued
Moderator Larry Tate (Armstrong)
Room: Weidner

- Matt St Martin / TCO - AD/Trainer partnership
Moderator Jared Ellerson (Hopkins)
Room: Stockinger

- Keelie Sorensen - Student Leadership: Fostering Growth
and Connectedness
Moderator Taylor Tvedt (St. Paul Academy)
Room: Wilson

- Laura Mackenthun, MSHSL - Website/Tech
Moderator - TBD
Room: Herberger



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024

3:00PM - 3:30PM

4th Mini Session

Steve Throne - Culture in the Department
Moderator Dan Johnson (MNIAAA)
Room: Bell

Dr. Kiristen Robinson - Stress Management and Mental Health
Among HS Athletes in MN
Moderator Megan Chatterton (Delano)
Room: Alexander

Adrian Turner and Brian Peloquin - AD / Asst AD Relationship,
Roles, How To Get One
Moderator Sara Palodichuk (East Ridge)
Room: Clarke

Justin Reese and Nathan Bellefeuille - Coach While Being an
AD - Managing Time and Making Other Programs Still Feel Valued
Moderator Larry Tate (Armstrong)
Room: Weidner

Matt St Martin / TCO - AD/Trainer Partnership
Moderator Jared Ellerson (Hopkins)
Room: Stockinger

Keelie Sorensen - Student Leadership: Fostering Growth
and Connectedness
Moderator Taylor Tvedt (St. Paul Academy)
Room: Wilson

Laura Mackenthun, MSHSL - Website/Tech
Moderator - TBD
Room: Herberger

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Past President's Reception
Husky Suite, Kelly Inn

3:45PM - 4:45PM

Athletic Administrators Roundtable Sessions
"A" School AD Round Table
De Hanuman (International School)
Herberger Suite

"AA" School AD Round Table
Jed Helwig (North St Paul) and Andrea Schmidt (Roseville)
Room: Weidner

Assistant AD Round Table
Adrian Turner (White Bear Lake)
Room: Stockinger



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024

- 5:00 PM - 6:45 PM 3rd GENERAL SESSION - ALL AD's
Room: Glenn Carlson Hall
MNIAAA Annual Awards Banquet
Region AD's of the Year
Distinguished Service Award
Recognition of Bolton & Menk Scholarship Winners
Retiring ADs
Dinner
State Award of Merit
"A" & "AA" AD of the Year
Hall of Fame
- 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Social Happiness Event
Poolside, Kelly Inn
Sponsored by SUPERSET Tile & Spartan Surfaces

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2024

- 7:30AM - 8:45AM Breakfast Buffet
Poolside, Kelly Inn
- 8:00AM - 8:45MA Roundtable Review & Recommendations
BIPOC - Kelly Inn Grand Ballroom
Female - University A
New AD Cohort - University B
- 9:00AM - 10:15AM 4th GENERAL SESSION
Room: Grand Ballroom, Kelly Inn
Speaker - Mr. Steve Throne (Nebraska) President-elect, NIAAA
Millard (NE) South High School
Annual Meeting
Legislative Report
MNIAAA Financial Report
MNIAAA Service Awards
Election of At-Large
Recognition of Past-President
Recognition of Outgoing President
Door Prize Drawings - Must be present to win
Silent Auction
Conference Evaluation
- 10:30am - 12:30pm MSHSL Head Coaches Course - Required for ADs!
Charlie Campbell, MSHSL
Kelly Inn Grand Ballroom
- 10:30AM Executive Committee Meeting
Short/Quan
Husky Suite, Kelly Inn





VP CANDIDATE PROFILE

Casey Indra, Winona

I am drawn to this opportunity because I believe in the mission of the MNIAAA and the hardworking individuals it represents. Athletic directors often serve as the backbone of their schools, balancing complex responsibilities while ensuring students have opportunities to thrive. Serving on the MNIAAA board would allow me to work hard on behalf of this incredible group — ensuring their voices are heard, their efforts are supported, and their challenges are met with meaningful solutions.

Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of working in various roles that give me a broad perspective on the challenges and opportunities faced by ADs. I have been a MSHSL Board Member since 2022, and I have served on the Region 1AA Executive Committee, including a term as the committee chair. I have also held leadership roles in the Big 9 Conference, for section competitions, and I have served as the board president of our local youth softball organization.

I want to serve my community, but I also want to serve my colleagues. I know how hard they work, and they deserve someone who will work even harder on their behalf. I look forward to embracing the challenges that await and celebrating the progress we can make together.

Education

- BA English Education, Winona State University
- MA Athletic Management, Winona State University

Education Career Summary

- English Teacher, Houston H.S. 2001-2014
- Head Varsity Baseball Coach, Houston H.S. 2001-2010
- Volleyball Coach grades 7th and 8th grade, Houston H.S. 2005-2008
- Grades 7th-12th grade Activities Director, Houston H.S. 2008-2014
- Region 1A Executive Committee Member, 2013-14
- 7th-12th grade Activities Director, Winona Senior High School, 2014-current
- District Transportation Director, Winona Area Public Schools, 2020-current

- Region 1AA Executive Committee Member, 2014-2017, 2019-2022
- Region 1AA Executive Committee Chairperson, 2020-2022
- Region 1AA Finance Committee 2020-2022, 2024-current
- MSHSL Ad Hoc Committee Member, Eligibility bylaws (110-111), 2021-2022
- MSHSL Board Member 2022-current (Term is over in 2025)
- Big 9 Conference Representative for boys and girls basketball, 2014-current
- Section 1AAA Girls Golf Tournament Manager 2022-current
- Section 1AAA and 1AAAA Softball Tournament Manager, 2022-current
- Section 1A Dance Tournament Manager, 2020-2022
- Winstars Softball Board President, 2022-current

Hobbies

- Being a fan of my kids in their activities
- Auto racing, hunting and fishing

Personal

- Married 19 years to my wife Amanda
- Children-Malia and Lauren
- 2 Dogs-Mollie and Lucie



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VP CANDIDATE PROFILE

Todd Waterbury, Mankato East

I have thoroughly enjoyed working as an Activities Director over the last 28 years. Through this experience, I have had the wonderful opportunity to impact the lives of young people. My growth as a leader in our school and community has been developed from many different places, people and experiences. Much of my growth can be attributed to my colleagues on a specific daily basis, as a group, be it the section or conference and at the MSHSL level, as a member of the Board of Directors. My desire is to have the opportunity to continue to grow as a teammate and leader in yet another direction as a member of the MnIAAA Board of Directors. I have truly enjoyed being a part of this family that is the MnIAAA and would relish the privilege to serve on the MnIAAA board as we all continue to adapt to a changing world and cultivate opportunities to make a difference in the lives of our students into the future. Thank you for your consideration.

MSHSL Experiences

- Served on the Board of Directors 2017-2021
- MSHSL Executive Committee (2 Years)
- MSHSL Marketing and Communications Chair (2 Years)
- AD Advisory Member (3 Terms)
- Rep Assembly Member (2 Terms)
- Cooperative Agreement Bylaw Ad-Hoc Committee Member
- State Football and Basketball Quarterfinal Site Manager (Multiple Years)
- State Softball Tournament Manager
- Site Coordinator for various officials' clinics
- LEAD Liaison

Region Level Experiences

- Section 2AAAA Football Coordinator/Manager
- Section 2AAA Softball Tournament Coordinator/Manager
- Member of the Region 2AA Tournament Committee
- Section 2AA Visual Arts Competition Coordinator
- Hosted multiple Large Group Instrumental and Choral Competitions
- Site Manager for a variety of Section Tournaments
- Site Manager/Host Section and Sub-Section Tournaments for Region 2A
- Sub-Section Speech Tournament Host

MNIAAA Experiences

- Section Rep
- Finance Committee Member
- State Conference Presenter
- State Conference Moderator
- National Conference Attendee (Multiple Years)
- 2017 and 2022 Section 2AA AD of the Year

Coaching Experiences

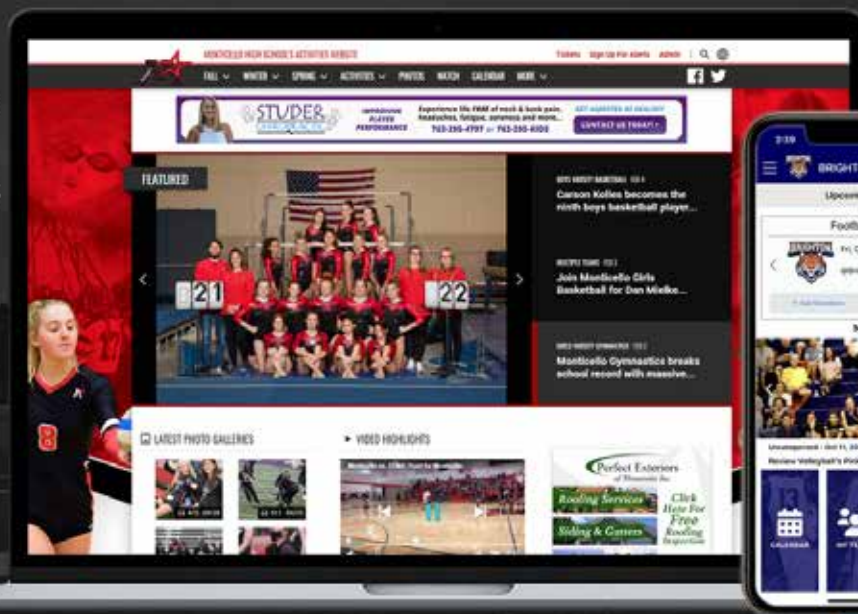
- Head Varsity Softball Coach
- Assistant Varsity Volleyball Coach
- Middle School Wrestling and Girls Basketball Coach
- Middle School Activities Director (6 Years)

Conference Experiences

- Assistant Executive Director of the Big 9 Conference
- Host/Coordinator for the Big Nine Conference Music Festival
- Gymnastics/Swim and Dive/Track and Field Conference Meet Coordinator
- Softball, Gymnastics and Alpine Ski Liaison



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CERTIFICATION & IMPROVEMENT

By Ken Hubert, Associate Treasurer & Newsletter Editor

NIAAA AND IMPROVING AS AN AD

What do your coaches expect of their athletes? What do you expect of your coaches? If either group stays stagnant, and is not always trying to get better, then you know that improvement is probably not going to happen. I spent most of my years as a coach attending my sports annual coach's clinic. One thing I observed over the years was that another coach, who won many state titles and coached for over 60 years, was also always in attendance, sitting in the front row scribbling in his notebook as he listened to whatever the invited speaker was saying. Success and longevity came because of his commitment to always improving.

The same goes for ADs in their role. Sometimes it may feel like finding the time to attend a conference or take a class is just impossible. Too many irons in the fire! However, the things that you learn and the relationships that you build while focusing on your improvement may be just what you need to help you make better decisions and come to solutions more efficiently. Think about it.

In 1996, the NIAAA first began offering courses in the Leadership Training

Program to help ADs get better as athletic administrators. Although certification began in 1988, the LTI program helped to standardize the educational process. Through this, ADs across the country have invested time and effort to become better leaders for their schools and communities. As levels of certification have been added, there are now several options:

- RAA – Registered Athletic Administrator
- RMSAA – Registered Middle School Athletic Administrator
- CAA – Certified Athletic Administrator
- CMAA – Certified Master Athletic Administrator

Requirements for each are as follows:

RAA – Bachelor's Degree

- LTC 501, 502, 503
- \$75 for NIAAA members to apply

RMSAA – Bachelor's Degree

- LTC 501, 502, 503, 504, 700, 701
- Employed as an AD or Middle School AD
- \$100 for NIAAA members to apply

CAA – Bachelor's Degree

- LTC 501, 502, 503, 504, 506
- 2+ years experience employed as an AD
- Pass the CAA Exam (given at the National Conference and/or the MNIAAA conference)
- \$175 for NIAAA members to apply

CMAA – Bachelor’s Degree

- LTC 501, 502, 503, 504, 506, 508, 510
- 1 course at the 600 level
- 1 course at the 700 level
- 3 Elective courses
- Complete a qualified project
- \$200 for NIAAA members to apply

You’ll hear reference to both LTI and LTC. LTI stands for Leadership Training Institute and refers to the overall program and all the courses involved. LTC stands for Leadership Training Course and is used with each individual course...LTC 501, LTC 502, etc.

All LTI courses are offered at the National Conference each year in four different sessions. Plus, all courses needed for RAA or CAA certification along with many others

are available online through the NIAAA. Over a three-year period, the courses needed for CAA will be offered at the MNIAAA state conference along with a few others. And, even if you do not plan to apply for certification, the opportunity to improve yourself through these courses can’t be overstated. You will learn and you will be better at what you do.

FYI, I put this article in the newsletter two years ago and I am probably going to keep on adding it every other year. We receive questions regarding this all the time and we also have enough turnover on an annual basis that it doesn’t hurt to keep putting this in front of you.



LEADING CHOICE IN MINNESOTA

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NADC HIGHLIGHTS

By Rob Nielsen, Detroit Lakes

From December 13-17, Austin, Texas, played host to the annual National Athletic Directors Conference (NADC), a premier event for professionals dedicated to shaping the future of athletics and activities in schools nationwide. This year's conference brought together over 3,000 athletic directors, activities coordinators, and industry leaders for a blend of professional development, networking, and inspiration.

The conference offered attendees a rich lineup of workshops, keynote speakers, and certification opportunities as well as 300+ vendors.

Attendees had access to 48 workshops tailored to current challenges and opportunities in athletics administration. Topics ranged from: "Encouraging Female Involvement in Athletics" to "Leveraging AI in Athletic Department Operations." Keynote speakers were Kenyon Solo and Stephen Mackey. I wasn't able to see the Kenyon Solo session but Stephen Mackey's session on Character Development was excellent. I would suggest checking him

out. <https://mackeyspeaks.com/>

The NADC also featured the NIAAA's Leadership Training Institute (LTI), where participants pursued professional certifications such as the Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) and Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA). These programs provided in-depth knowledge and skills, elevating professional standards in the field.

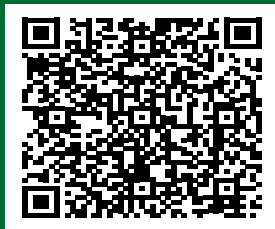
The conference wasn't all work—attendees enjoyed networking receptions, roundtable discussions, and the bustling exhibit hall. Beyond the convention center, participants embraced the unique charm of Austin. From live music to Texas BBQ, the "Live Music Capital of the World" offered plenty of opportunities to unwind and connect in a relaxed setting.

If you have not attended a NADC Conference yet or it has been a few years, NADC 2025 will take place in Tampa, FL from Dec 12-16. Start making plans now to attend.

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NIAAA LIASON NOTES

By Matt Percival, Eastview

As athletic administrators, we are constantly striving to enhance our skills, improve the athletic experiences we provide for our students, and lead our schools with integrity and innovation. The National High School Athletic Directors Conference (NHSADC) in Austin, Texas, offered an exceptional opportunity for just that. This year's conference was a powerful reminder of the incredible growth and development that comes from connecting with colleagues across the country, engaging in professional learning, and contributing to the ongoing work of our profession. For me, it was my first conference in several years and I was definitely not disappointed!

At the heart of the NHSADC are its sessions and courses, designed to support both the personal and professional growth of athletic directors at all stages of their careers. From leadership development to emerging trends in how to make our jobs easier through technology, the conference provided a wealth of knowledge and insights that can be directly applied to our work back in Minnesota.

The range of topics covered was extensive, with sessions led by colleagues from across

the country along with experts in particular fields who offered practical tools and strategies to help us excel in the ever-evolving field of high school athletics. Whether you attended a workshop on improving communication with coaches, managing budgets more effectively, or advancing student-athlete wellness initiatives, there was something for everyone. In addition, the LTI Course offerings offered a more in-depth look at a particular topic. I know both courses I took were excellent opportunities to spend four hours doing a "deep dive" into a single, practical topic that I have already implemented in my day to day routines.

These sessions not only provided valuable knowledge but also served as a reminder of the importance of continual learning. Whether you have been in this profession for one year or multiple decades, this year's conference reaffirmed the commitment to excellence that is central to sustainability in our profession.

One of the most rewarding aspects of attending the NHSADC is the opportunity to network with athletic directors from across the country as well as to spend more quality time with AD's from Minnesota. These

connections foster a sense of camaraderie and collaboration, creating a support system that extends beyond the conference itself. We shared challenges, exchanged best practices, and of course had some fun away from the day to day grind.

The relationships we build through these interactions are invaluable. Many of us returned to our schools not only with new ideas but also with a renewed sense of purpose, knowing that we are part of a larger network of leaders committed to improving the high school athletic experience.

As we reflect on the many opportunities the NHSADC provides, we encourage all athletic directors to mark their calendars for the 2025-26 conference in Tampa, Florida. This upcoming conference promises to be another incredible experience, filled with inspiring sessions, valuable networking opportunities,

and continued opportunities for professional growth.

We are confident that the 2025-26 conference will build on the success of this year’s event and offer even more opportunities to connect, learn, and grow. Whether you’re a seasoned athletic director or new to the field, this conference is one you won’t want to miss. Make sure to include it in your budget and plan to attend—you won’t regret it!

In closing, the National High School Athletic Directors Conference is more than just a gathering of ADs—it’s an opportunity to invest in yourself, your career, and the future of high school athletics. We leave each conference not only with new skills and insights but also with a renewed commitment to making a difference in the lives of our students. We hope to see you in Tampa in 2025-26!



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MENTORING AND THE MNIAAA

By Andy Ourada, Redwood Area Schools

This month, I am writing about the conference I belong to - the Big South Conference. The Big South Conference is the only conference I have been associated with in my work as an activities administrator.

The Big South Conference was established in the 2014-15 school year, following the merger of the Southwest Conference and the South Central Conference. One of the key reasons for the formation was to address scheduling issues related to football, as we had schools from multiple classes involved. The original member schools were Luverne, Pipestone, Worthington, Marshall, Windom, Jackson County Central, Redwood Valley, St. James, Blue Earth Area, Fairmont, Waseca, New Ulm, and St. Peter. The conference remained at 13 schools until the 2024-25 school year, when Tri-City United and Belle Plaine joined.

The conference's Board of Directors is composed of superintendents from each school. They meet formally twice a year. Athletic Directors (ADs) gather monthly, rotating meetings between Windom and St. James. In April of each year, we host a gathering of all Head Coaches to discuss any potential changes to the conference constitution, as well as to enjoy a social event.

The Big South Conference offers 21 athletic activities, as well as fine arts opportunities through our One Act Play Festival, Choral Festival, and Speech Meet. In

the fall, we offer Volleyball, Girls' Tennis, Boys' and Girls' Cross Country, Boys' and Girls' Soccer, and Football. In the winter, we offer Gymnastics, Dance, Boys' and Girls' Hockey, Boys' and Girls' Wrestling, and Boys' and Girls' Basketball. In the spring, we offer Boys' Tennis, Baseball, Softball, Boys' and Girls' Track and Field, and Boys' and Girls' Golf. Each fall, we hold a Leadership Conference, where each school can bring 12 students for a day of leadership activities and fellowship with the other 15 conference schools.

We organize our activities into divisions for any with more than eight participants. Recently, we shifted our focus from geographically-based divisions to enrollment-based divisions. The conference now has two divisions: Black (for our larger schools) and Gold (for the smaller schools). Almost all of our activities feature a conference championship game or tournament.

I am fortunate to serve as the Big South Conference's second Executive Secretary, following Bruce Remme, who helped lead many initiatives in the conference, paving the way for its continued growth.

Like many conferences in the state, the Big South has fostered some of my greatest professional relationships. The first Wednesday of each month is always a highlight for me—and I would guess for many of my colleagues—when we come together to conduct business, enjoy each other's company, and support one another through the challenges we face.



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GET TO KNOW

Jaime Banks, Butterfield-Odin United

1. What is your educational background?

I graduated from Minnesota State University- Mankato with a B.S. in Life Science Education. I received my M.S. in Education Leadership from Southwest Minnesota State, Marshall and got my principal's license from Minnesota State University- Moorhead.

2. In what sports or activities were you active in high school and/or college?

In high school I played volleyball, was a cheerleader, and was involved in track and softball.

3. What schools have you served as a teacher, coach, director, or administrator? How many years at each?

I began teaching at Jackson County Central as a Biology teacher and was there for 3 years. While there I coached cheer for 2 years. After that, I was hired as a science teacher at Mountain Lake Public School. I taught there for a total of 20 years. While I was there, I coached volleyball for about 10 years, cheerleading for a year and was the throwing coach for track and field for a total of about 10 years. I am currently the Athletic Director and Assistant Principal at Butterfield-Odin Public School. I am in the middle of my second year.

5. Who are some of the role models/ current colleagues who have made a positive impact on your work?

I have had the privilege of being able to bounce ideas off of many great coaches and ADs. Some of the most influential people who have really made an impact along the way include Brenda Feil, who was a longtime volleyball coach (and also my high school coach!) in Mountain Lake. I was fortunate enough to be able to work alongside John Weir who was a great coach and excellent athletic director for many years. Tim Kirk and Shawn Naas have also been influential on how I see the role as coach and athletic director. These individuals have had very successful careers and I have been so fortunate to have them as colleagues. I really pull a lot from the track coaches I have worked with.

6. Please provide a little info about your school...size, location, conference, region, are you a consolidation of various communities, etc.

Butterfield-Odin is a very small school district in Southwest Minnesota. We are a K-12 school and have 216 total students, just over 100 being 7-12. That means we have a very small pool of students for athletics. Of that 100, at least 50 are in sports. We are part of Region 2A.

7. What has been your most memorable moment in interscholastic activities? What made it memorable?

While in Butterfield-Odin, I would say playing our first Section Tournament Game in soccer. These kids have worked very hard to be competitive, and with our small numbers, it is impressive that we are able to participate at the level we do. It was a really proud moment for all of us.

8. How would you describe the athletic climate in your community?

The Butterfield-Odin community is so very supportive of our athletic programs. We have such a dedicated amount of people show up to games both home and away. The booster club puts signs on lockers and makes food for games that are far away. The community pitches in when there is work to be done to improve facilities and to coach. I could not be more proud to be part of such a great community.

9. What part of your job might be unique compared to other ADs around the state?

We are so small. The only sports we can compete in at the varsity level are soccer and trap. We also pair with Martin County West for Cross Country and Track and Field, so we are able to compete at the varsity level in those also. It's hard to schedule games with area schools for basketball since we usually play junior high and c-squads for the most part. I can't say enough about the awesome athletic directors around us, though. They are very willing to try to work with us on making a schedule that works. Soccer scheduling is also tough since we are not in a conference, even though we hope to be. Most conferences don't have a lot of extra days to play non-conference teams so it has been a challenge. We will keep working toward that goal.

10. What is your favorite Minnesota sports venue whether high school, college, or pro? Why?

There is something magical about William's Arena. Whether it's volleyball, or basketball, there is just something so exciting about it.

11. What are some of your spare time interests?

I really like traveling with my family, reading, and spending time with my friends and family.

12. Married? Children? If so, how are they involved because of your role as an administrator?

I am married and have three boys. My husband Matt is very encouraging and understands the importance of time away spent at games. My oldest, Ryan, is 30 and has a family of his own, so he's not really involved in my role here. My 19-year-old son, Peyton, who attends Bethany Lutheran College comes to Butterfield to ref basketball for me. He's really stepped in to help and I appreciate that. My youngest, Jackson, is in 9th grade, so he is busy being involved in sports and all sorts of other activities. Unfortunately, he is in a different district, so it gets to be challenging to attend his games, but he understands that it's part of this job.



GET TO KNOW

Kristen McRae, Bemidji Lumberjacks

1. What is your educational background?

I went to high school in Wayzata, swam at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and swam on their team for all 4 years, received my Masters in Education from Bemidji State University.

2. In what sports or activities were you active in high school and/or college?

I was a swimmer. I swam because I had no coordination for any ball sports. I LOVE swimming. I swam for the Huskers all four years and went into coaching when I got my teaching job at Bemidji High School.

3. What schools have you served as a teacher, coach, director, or administrator? How many years at each?

I have been at Bemidji High School since the fall of 1992. I taught up until I took over as activities director in 2022.

4. Who were some of the role models who have influenced your career as a coach, director, or athletic administrator?

I have had numerous coaches who have positively impacted my life: Mike McManus, Jon Yeager, Tim Daly, Ray Huppert, Kelly Long-Nordell. Also, former ADs Troy Hendricks and Anne Campbell have been tremendous role models for me in my current position.

5. Who are current colleagues who have made a positive impact on your work?

My administrative assistant Linda Newby (who is really a co-activities director) makes work fun. I look forward to working with my best friend every day. Also, all the coaches at BHS are phenomenal. I learn from them daily and I am thankful for their friendship and their expertise in their area.

6. Please provide a little info about your school...size, location, conference, region, are you a consolidation of various communities, etc.

Bemidji High School is about 3.5 hours north of the metro area. We are not in a conference but work together with the CLC in establishing competitive games. Our high school population is nearly 1500 students in grades 9-12.

7. What has been your most memorable moment in interscholastic activities? What made it memorable?

I love watching the kids do what they love. Teaching was awesome, but working as an activities director has provided me the opportunity to see kids shine in their activities. Every student/athlete has something to give to their team. I enjoy watching them grow in their competitive sport and be successful in their academics and athletics.

8. How would you describe the athletic climate in your community?

Athletic events are a popular pastime for our Bemidji residents. We have numerous alumni who are always at our events, cheering in the stands and supporting our kids. Of course we would like to see the numbers of fans grow, and we are working on that. Our kids are pretty amazing and it is fun to share their accomplishments with the community.

9. What part of your job might be unique compared to other ADs around the state?

Scheduling. We are not in a conference so sometimes it is a huge challenge to schedule games that are relatively close (2 hours is close) and finding schools that are comparable to our size is difficult. I rely heavily on relationships with ADs in the CLC and Section 8 for building our schedule.

10. What is your favorite Minnesota sports venue whether high school, college, or pro? Why?

I love sports and watch all sorts of MN sports teams...but I am a HUSKER. GO BIG RED!

11. What are some of your spare time interests?

I love to spend time with my girls, run, work out, and travel.

12. Married? Children? If so, how are they involved because of your role as an administrator?

I have 2 girls who live far away. They were BHS grads and participated in activities. I am a widow who has a dog and lives next door to her dad. The position of activities director is crazy demanding with weird hours, weekend events, and always changing schedules. I'm thankful for the support that my family gives me so I am able to do my job.





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GET TO KNOW

De Hanuman, International School of Minnesota Huskies

1. What is your educational background?

Bachelor of Science Degree: Physical Education. K-12 Teaching Licensure. Administrative Leadership Certification

2. In what sports or activities were you active in high school and/or college?

High School - Football, Basketball, and Track and Field. Played college football at Southwest Minnesota State University and Augsburg University.

3. What schools have you served as a teacher, coach, director, or administrator? How many years at each?

Yinghua Academy 2008-2013 - Behavior Specialist, Athletic Coordinator, School Board Member and PE Instructor. Seven Hills Prep Academy 2013-2022 - Behavior Specialist, Athletic Coordinator, and PE/Health Instructor. International School of Minnesota 2022-present - Director of Activities and Athletics . During my 20-year tenure as a coach/mentor at the high school and college level, I was fortunate enough to serve for the following programs:

Jefferson High School, Kennedy High School, Osseo High School, Augsburg College (University), and Eagan High School.

4. Who were some of the role models who have influenced your career as a coach, director, or athletic administrator?

Role Models who have really inspired me as a mentor in my career as a coach administrator are - Jeff Evens, Matt Vollum, Matt Hanson, Ted Schultz, and Jimmy Williams.

5. Who are current colleagues who have made a positive impact on your work?

Current colleagues who have made a positive impact on my work consist of Jeff Mitchell (Director of Admission - Chesterton), Kris Babler (AD - Eagle Ridge), and the MSHSL Region 4A committee members.

6. Please provide a little info about your school...size, location, conference, region, are you a consolidation of various communities, etc.

ISM has 52 high school students and 201 students overall (preschool-grade 12) and is located in Eden Prairie. We are an independent organization that participates in co-op sports, mainly with Chesterton Academy. Together, we have been able to provide consistent offerings for our student bodies that fit their needs and vision for success. ISM is the MSHSL host and physical host for most of our co-op sports and we continue to find ways to show our families the value of co-curricular activities and athletics.

7. What has been your most memorable moment in interscholastic activities? What made it memorable?

There have been many memorable moments that I have been blessed with, but one that sticks out to me is when I was the Head Sophomore Football Coach at Kennedy and we beat Woodbury under the lights in the crossover championship game. The players snuck up behind me and dumped the Gatorade jug on me, it was frigid.

8. How would you describe the athletic climate in your community?

I would call our athletic department determined and opportunistic. A large goal of mine was to provide students and families with opportunities to participate in. The next chapter was to challenge them to become better humans through commitment, adversity and personal growth. We are doing that daily.

9. What part of your job might be unique compared to other ADs around the state?

If you hear the phrase "wearing multiple hats" then you can get an idea of where ISM athletics and activities are. My role consists of preschool-grade 12 operations for all activities and athletics. All hiring and outreach is just a small percentage of my role. I organize and facilitate rentals, transportation, scheduling, official assignments, co-op partnerships with all stakeholders, setting up and taking down for games/matches, hiring and providing supervision for all home events, lead scoreboard table assignments and all admissions for games, and operate the concessions department. The list would continue on with my role in school leadership and our pillar leadership teams. It's fun, and I accept the scope of this position.

10. What is your favorite Minnesota sports venue whether high school, college, or pro? Why?

I love the Vikings stadium, but there is something very authentic about coaching at St Johns University's stadium. The feeling is magical there when it snows.

11. What are some of your spare time interests?

I love hanging out with my family and supporting their dreams. I enjoy playing softball, basketball, and any sports with my kids.

12. Married? Children? If so, how are they involved because of your role as an administrator?

I'm married to Angela, an awesome person inside and out. She supports my vision and my passion for athletics and activities and helps me stay grounded on my purpose. We have 3 children - Tenley (12), Ryker (9), and Brooklyn (2).



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GET TO KNOW

Brett Schmit, Hawley Golden Nuggets

1. What is your educational background?

UM-Morris, BA: Anthropology & History; SCSU - MS: Sports Management; NDSU - MS: Educational Leadership

2. In what sports or activities were you active in high school and/or college?

I golfed, played hockey and competed in track & field at Minot High School (ND). I played fastpitch softball for 4 years at UM - Morris (ND didn't have women's softball when I was in HS).

3. What schools have you served as a teacher, coach, director, or administrator? How many years at each?

Minot High School - 3 yrs, Teacher & Coach; Crosby-Ironton - 2 yrs, AD & Teacher; West Fargo Sheyenne - 7 yrs; Teacher & Coach; Hawley - 5 years - AD & Transportation Director

4. Who were some of the role models who have influenced your career as a coach, director, or athletic administrator?

My Mother has always been my role model in work and life. She was a 30+year teacher and coach. Her tireless work as a coach wanted me to be an Administrator who could support and promote great coaches and the work they do to build lasting relationships with student-athletes. Having the opportunity to grow up around female athletes and coaches in the locker room, on the bus and at meets made a profound impact on my belief that women can do anything they set their mind to. I love having the opportunity to continue modeling this to young girls/women, including my own.

5. Who are current colleagues who have made a positive impact on your work?

I have had the benefit of working with a tremendous principal who has prior experience as an AD. Her focus is always students first and being able to work with her as a sounding-board is immeasurably helpful. Further the HOL Conference has great camaraderie, and I appreciate that we can reach out to discuss common issues with ease.

6. Please provide a little info about your school...size, location, conference, region, are you a consolidation of various communities, etc.

Hawley sits about 30 minutes East of the Fargo-Moorhead area on Hwy 10. We are a growing community anticipating the completion of a new Middle School in 2026. Our city has seen great growth as families look to continue working in the metro but move to the smaller school setting (9-12 ~250 students). We have a strong academic foundation and as a member of the Heart O'Lakes Conference are able to offer many athletic and academic opportunities for our students. I'm proud to say the Hawley Golden Nuggets have a strong Art, Theatre, Music, and Athletic tradition!

7. What has been your most memorable moment in interscholastic activities? What made it memorable?

2024 saw the Hawley Nugget Volleyball team win the State Championship for AA. Our Head Volleyball coach came in the same year as me and having had the opportunity to see our seniors play their whole HS careers made this group extra special for me. The community of Hawley was in great turnout down in St. Paul and most special, I had my own kids with to watch and experience what hard work and teamwork can help you accomplish.

8. How would you describe the athletic climate in your community?

We have fantastic support from our community! We have a strong all-sport Booster Club and the stands get filled with our oldest and youngest community members which is really something special.

9. What part of your job might be unique compared to other ADs around the state?

I think like many schools of our size, the AD wears many hats throughout the day. As AD and Transportation Director one unique piece is that you may also see me driving the bus :)

10. What is your favorite Minnesota sports venue whether high school, college, or pro? Why?

Baseball stadiums were the summer trips of my family growing up and so they will always hold a special place in my heart. I had the joy of attending the first Opening Day at Target Field and it will remain my favorite, a great outdoor venue, and my favorite sport to scorekeep/watch!

11. What are some of your spare time interests?

Our family is avid gardeners and we enjoy spending our summer evenings and weekends in and around that family space. Beyond that, we enjoy spending family time outdoors in all seasons, skiing, fishing, hiking, being on the water and geocaching!

12. Married? Children? If so, how are they involved because of your role as an administrator?

My husband Kyle and I have two children Odessa (5) and Walt (1). "It takes a village," and it is so special to me to see our kids at a sporting event getting high-fives from coaches, coloring pictures for "favorite players," running an errand for the concession stand, setting up the clock, and talking with the ticket takers.

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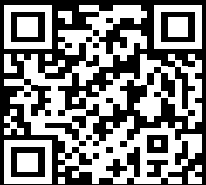


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