



Northwest High School Hall of Fame Announces Class

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The Northwest High School Athletic Hall of Fame is pleased to announce its fifth class that will be honored during separate fall sporting events over the next few weeks.

The Northwest Hall of Fame committee was formed in the summer of 2020 with the goal of developing a permanent hall of fame to recognize past Northwest teams, students and coaches who displayed excellence during their time at Northwest. Additionally, the committee will recognize community members who had a lasting impact on Northwest athletics.

“Our committee is honored to induct this class that continues to have an impact on Northwest High School,” committee President Mike Saddler said. “We can’t wait welcome them home and to our hall of fame.”

The new class includes four athletes, one coach, a state championship team, as well as a special contributor to Northwest. Inductees will be recognized at two Northwest athletic events during the fall semester. On Tuesday, September 23 the Vikings honor two volleyball athletes and the 2003 state championship team prior to the Vikings game against Aurora. Then on Homecoming night against York on October 10th, two football athletes will be honored.

Michaela (Schimmer) Perry: A rare four-year volleyball letterwinner for Northwest, Michaela Schimmer was a two-time Class B all-state selection for coach Diane Rouzee and the Vikings. During her senior season she was also named to the all-state, all-class third team by the Omaha World-Herald. She was also a three-time selection to the Grand Island Independent All-Heartland team. During her career the Vikings played in the Class B state championship game each season and finished with a four-year record of 133-20. After high school, Schimmer was a standout for Nebraska-Omaha as they made the move from Division II to the Division I Summit League. A two-year starter for the Mavericks, she was named Summit League Player-of-the-Week multiple times and was on the 2015 conference championship team.

Katie Placke (2014): A multi-sport athlete and one of the most decorated volleyball players in Northwest history, Katie Placke led the Vikings to a state volleyball, basketball double championship season as a junior and a second state basketball title during her senior year in 2014. As a senior, she was a first-team all-state volleyball selection by the Lincoln Journal-Star and the Omaha World-Herald while also being named all-conference and to the All-Heartland team by the Grand Island Independent. The Vikings had a 65-match win streak during her junior and senior seasons, when they finished third at the Class B state tournament. Placke was even better when she left the Northwest halls and led Hastings College to the 2016 NAIA national championship while earning first-team All-American honors as a junior and senior.

David Burke (1973): One of the earliest standouts in Northwest football history, Burke was an all-state selection and two-way standout for the Vikings earning Mid-Nebraska All-Conference honors on both sides of the ball. While also participating in wrestling and track, as a senior he was awarded the prestigious KRG Sportscasters Club “Athlete of the Year” Award. Burke had a hall of fame career at Kearney State College as well where he is still fifth on all-time career rushing yards list and one of just 13 Lopers to have a 1,000-yard rushing season. He was a two-time honorable mention All-American and the *Omaha World-Herald* small college player of the year in 1976 that preceded a tryout with the St. Louis Cardinals in the NFL.

Steve Eriksen (1986, special contributions): A standout lineman on the Vikings 1985 state championship football team, Eriksen was selected to play in the 1986 Shrine Bowl after being named a Class B All-State selection in the offensive line as a senior. He also played for two years at Concordia. A long-time supporter of Northwest athletics, Eriksen and his wife, Kelli, have been long-time supporters of their alma mater. His children Alexa and Wyatt are both Northwest graduates and Wyatt was a lineman on four Viking

playoff teams where Steve had the best seat in the house serving on the chain gang. He had a position at each Friday home at Viking Field from 1995 until last season when he retired after an estimated 140 games of service to Viking athletics.

Barb Huls (coach, special contributor): Barb Huls was a business and computer teacher at Northwest from 1982 to 2012. During that time, she helped coach volleyball and track and officiated volleyball for the majority of those years. She was a freshman coach for one year before assuming the head coach position from 1983 to 1987, leading Northwest to their first-ever Class B state championship match in 1986. After officiating for several years Barb got back into coaching at the freshman and JV levels, Barb also helped form the first GI Vikes club volleyball team in 1998. Barb retired from coaching in 2010 and continued doing scorebook, line judging and officiating until 2020.

TEAM – 2003 Volleyball: Northwest volleyball's state record of 22 consecutive state tournament appearances started in the fall of 2001 when the group of 2003 seniors were sophomores. After losing at state in the first round in 2001 and 2002, the Vikings left little to chance in capturing the second state title in school history in 2003. Ranked No. 1 in Class B from week two, Coach Diane Rouzee's troops finished the season 29-2 while winning the Beatrice Invitational, as well as the Central Conference regular season and tournament championships. They would be the first Northwest team to be ranked in the Omaha World-Herald all-class, top-10 during the season as well. At state they defeated conference mate Aurora, defending champion Elkhorn and then Beatrice in the championship match 15-13, 15-10. Seniors Julia Rhodes and Lindie Schreiner were selected to play in the 2004 NCA Coaches All-State Game and when junior Lacey Gee recorded a kill late in the finals match it was the last recorded sideout in Nebraska prep volleyball history as the 2004 season would be the first in rally scoring. With a combined JV, Reserve and Freshman record of 44-2 the same year, this team set a foundation for future Northwest volleyball success.

