



NEWSLETTERS ARE BACK

Sorry for such a long gap in between newsletters...the last one I sent out was December 2nd and obviously a lot has happened since then, so this one got a bit long!

ANOTHER SEASON OF PROGRESS

I thought this season was another huge step in the right direction. We talked with our seniors about "Leaving their jersey in a better place than when they got it", and they have done that. Just a few quick bullet points about our season:

- Finished 7-21, second year in a row that our win total increased. We obviously want to win more games, but it is all part of the building process.
- Beat a 19-win Hibbing team, 21-win Pine City, and a 17-win Cloquet team.
- Won our first playoff game since the 2013-14 season! As the #7 seed we upset the #2 seed (Hibbing) in their gym.
- Swept Chisago Lakes, beating them by 1 at their place and by 7 at home.
- Moved up 75 spots in the overall state rankings since last year and 131 total spots in the last two years. We are moving in the right direction.
- Moved up 10 spots in the Class 3AAA rankings since last year, and 14 total spots in the last two years.
- Finished with a 3.26 team GPA, including 10 (out of 14) players with a 3.2 or higher and 6 with a 3.5 or higher!
- We had 13 players cook meals for the families that are staying at the Ronald McDonald House. One of the highlights of this season for sure!

AWARD WINNERS

- We had 3 Academic All-Conference players this year: Ben Roettjer, Colby Knutson, and Austin Grovender!
- Jonah Marcussen was named All-Conference Honorable Mention!
- Zach Gazda was named All-Conference!

6 SENIORS WILL BE MISSED

We had an amazing group of seniors this year that are going to be missed by our program and by me personally. I love and care about each one of them and am excited to see what is next for them. This senior class combined for:

- 2,078 points
- 916 rebounds
- 460 assists
- 346 games played
- Over 5,000 minutes played!

BRANDON TOLLBERG: Ended his career 3rd in career three-point shooting percentage in North Branch history at 45.2%. He plans on attending Anoka Ramsey before transferring to Mankato State to study Sports Management.

BEN ROETTJER: Was a captain for us this year because of his great attitude and work ethic. Ben plans on attending UW-Stout to study Dietetics.

BRADY BRODIN: Brady ended his career 10th in North Branch history with 99 career three pointers made. He plans on attending Minnesota-Duluth to study Mechanical Engineering and possibly play baseball.

DYLAN RAMBERG: Two-year captain for us, finished as the ONLY player in North Branch history to have 600 points, 300 rebounds, 200 assists, 80 steals, and 40 blocks. Very good all-around player for us ranking in the top 25 in 7 different categories in North Branch history. Dylan plans on attending Northwestern (St. Paul) to study engineering and play basketball for the Eagles.

JONAH MARCUSSEN: Was a captain for us this season and really came on strong the second half of the season, earning All-Conference Honorable Mention. Finished his career 18th in blocks and rebounds and 6th in career free throw percentage. He will be attending Bethany Lutheran to study Sports Medicine and play basketball for North Branch alum Matt Fletcher.

CAM IRVIN: Cam was the strongest and most physical player that we had on our team. He will be attending Southwest State Minnesota to study Sports Medicine and play football for the Mustangs.

2018-19 CAPTAINS



ZACH GAZDA

Zach will be entering his third year as a captain this coming season. He is coming off a very strong junior season, earning All-Conference honors. He works extremely hard throughout the offseason and sets high standards for himself and his teammates.



CARTER WHITMAN

Carter took over the starting point guard position towards the end of the season last year, due in part to his energy and enthusiasm. He is a natural leader that his teammates enjoy being around. He brings a contagious energy to the game. Like Zach, Carter works extremely hard throughout the offseason.

These two will be great leaders for our program but they will have plenty of help from a very good returning group. **Colby Knutson, Conner Hartmann, Drew VanEerden, and Austin Grovender** will all provide leadership throughout the offseason and into next year.

Zach Gazda set the North Branch all-time career record in blocks last year as a junior!

THE SEASON IS OVER.... NOW WHAT?

What happens to our program when the season ends, and we start looking forward to the next season?

We Get to Work!

The offseason is the time for our players and coaches to improve, and we put a great deal of work into organizing them. Our captains have done a fantastic job putting together workouts throughout the spring, including:

- Two days/week open gyms
- Mornings in the weight room for some....
- Others lift after school
- 4 players are playing on AAU teams: Zach Gazda, Conner Hartmann, Carter Whitman, and Carson Klein.
- Numerous players go to the YMCA regularly to get shots up
- Etc.....

Once June and July get here, the coaching staff can get back to working with the players and we will be in the gym improving. We will also participate in upwards of 20-25 summer tournament games/scrimmages.

We have a goal this year that everyone in our program works to get 1% better every day. For players that could be doing any of the things listed above or it could be playing another sport which improves overall athleticism. For coaches it could be watching videos, reading books, talking with other coaches, going to clinics, etc....We are all in this together!

That 1% will add up over the next 7 months!

How About the Future

We are always working hard as a staff to give our youth programs opportunities throughout the year. This is what we have planned so far....



Youth Camp: Above is a picture of the youth (1-8th grade) that participated in our recent youth camp. We had over 65 players attend the 3-day camp and I thought it went extremely well. The future is bright!

UPCOMING

May 17-19th Community Ed Boys Basketball Camp

Available to all K-8th grade boys within North Branch. We will focus on developing fundamentals. Cost is \$25, and you can register directly through Community Ed.

June 2nd--2nd Annual Basketball Day in North Branch

A fun day in Central Park that is put on by the North Branch Court Club. We play games, give out prizes, have food and drinks, and spend time together the first Saturday out of school. Everything is free, so please come join us.

June 11-13th Noah Dahlman Basketball Camp

Noah played high school basketball at Braham before going to Division 1 Wofford (where he is in the Hall of Fame). He is currently playing professionally overseas and comes back in the summers and runs camps in 15 different states. He works on mental side of the game, and it is a "tough" camp, but I was there last year and thought it was great. Cost is \$100, and you can register at noahdahlman42.com. Available to 4-12th grade.

We will be consistently adding more opportunities, but I wanted to get those three out there since they are coming up over the next couple of months!

Traveling Basketball Information

Most traveling seasons just recently ended but I wanted to make sure to get information out to anybody that is interested in playing traveling but aren't sure what all it entails. Here are some answers to FAQs:

Is traveling worth it? If you have a son that wants to play high school basketball in the future, then YES...it is absolutely worth it. Almost every varsity player in our program has played traveling growing up. There really is no substitute for it.

How much does it cost? For our 4th grade (and 3rd grade if we have one) cost is \$180...for 5th-8th grade the cost is \$220. This cost includes each players first jersey (must pay for any additional jerseys throughout the years), practice time, insurance, and tournaments.

How far do we have to travel? Most tournaments are within about an hour and a half drive.

What grade traveling teams do the boys offer? We were fortunate to have a traveling team at every level last year from 4th-8th grade. We currently need to put together a 4th grade team for next year and I would be open to having a 3rd grade team if there is interest. We had one 2 years ago and I heard great things about it.

What do I have to do to play traveling? Contact me and I will get you into contact with the appropriate people.

When is the season? Typically, the first practices are in October and it goes through February (approximate as each team varies).

If you are interested in coaching a 3rd or 4th grade traveling team, please contact me and I will work with you to get things set up.

kuhlmanalex@yahoo.com

COACH DREISSIG IS RETIRING

Coach “D” has spent 45 years on the bench, 35 as the head coach in Rush City and the last 10 as an assistant to Coach Baumann, Coach Anderson, and myself. His experience will be impossible to replace.

I have mixed emotions about Coach Dreissig retiring, I am no doubt sad to lose him from my staff but at the same time I am happy for him to be able spend more time with his wife (Paulette) and his kids/grandkids.

I am so thankful to have known Coach for the past 30 years of my life and I will continue to strive to make him proud just like I always have. Coach “D” has taught me that coaching is more than just teaching the game of basketball, it is about building relationships and teaching life through the game.

Thank you for everything you have done for me, for the Rush City program, the North Branch program, and the game of basketball.

Paulette will probably be begging to have you come back to the bench by early December!

BOND-FACILITIES UPDATE

I am so thankful to Dr. Henton, Mr. McDonough, Mr. Lattimore, the school board, and everyone else that worked so hard for so long to get the bond passed. It will help the day to day school experience for every kid within the North Branch School District.

Focusing on the basketball side of things, we will be getting two new courts, a new weight room, a team meeting room, larger training room, additional storage, and I am sure I am missing some other things.

Long term, this is a program changer that will give us the facilities that it takes to compete with the schools in our conference and section. Short term....be patient (I am sure that some in the school are telling me to be the same). This summer will be a challenge as construction gets under way. I will do my best to get our program as much time as I can but understand that this summer will be a short-term pain for the long term good!

WHERE IS SPRING!?!

I am feeling terrible for players and coaches that are part of spring sports. I know we have several basketball players that also play baseball, tennis, golf and run track and what a tough start to the year.

Hopefully things can start warming up, so everyone can get out and enjoy their seasons. I am sure everyone is tired of running sprints in the hallway and pitching/hitting in a gym. My fingers are crossed for you guys.

WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFO ABOUT OUR PROGRAM?

I try to communicate as well as possible and do my best to get the information out as best I can. There are a few things that you can do to make sure you know what is going on:

1. Read the newsletters...I am going to try to do them more consistently during the offseason.
2. Basketball families...check your email. Most of my communication goes out through email.
3. Visit our boys’ basketball website. There is information about youth, varsity, upcoming events, school records, etc....

northbranchboysbasketball.com

4. Follow me on twitter, **@Coach_Kuhlman**



Thank you seniors! Cam Irvin, Jonah Marcussen, Ben Roettjer, Brady Brodin, Dylan Ramberg, Brandon Tollberg

GET TO KNOW #2 CARTER WHITMAN JR PG

Favorite Color: Red

Favorite basketball memory on the court: Beating Hibbing in the first round of playoffs this year.

Favorite basketball memory off the court: Going to the Ronald McDonald House and making food for the families there.

Favorite NBA Team: Timberwolves

Favorite TV Show: The Office

College Plans/Future Goals: If possible, it would be cool to play basketball at the next level, and for education I would like to stay connected to sports no matter where I go.

Nickname: Gunshow (HUGE biceps on Carter....)

If you could meet anyone, who would it be? Kobe Bryant

Favorite Move: Step Brothers

Chocolate or Vanilla: Vanilla

What off the court traits do you think basketball and high school sports in general have taught you: Basketball has taught me how to be mentally strong and how to work hard to achieve your goals.

Favorite gym (other than NB) to play in: All Iowa Attack Field House in Ames, Iowa

If you could attend any sporting even in person what would it be? Final Four Championship Game

Favorite Teacher: Mr. Maloney

Favorite Video Game: Fortnite

Coaches Take: Carter has earned everything he has gotten so far in our program. Going into last season we thought he would be one year away from helping the varsity, but his energy, enthusiasm, and work ethic made it impossible to not give him more minutes. He is a great intangibles guy and next year we will be looking for more scoring from him. He is currently playing on the top Minnesota Crossfire AAU team, which will probably be a top ten team in the state at 16u. Because of that work ethic and team-first attitude, Carter was named a captain for the 2018-19 team.

****To see past "Get to Know" athletes, visit northbranchboysbasketball.com and they are under "VARSITY"****

Where are they now.....Brad Baumann Class of 2001

This is a new section that I will try to add in each newsletter, catching up with an alumnus and seeing what they are up to. I chose Brad for the first one because I knew him a little bit from our high school days. North Branch and Rush City (where I am from) used to practice together in the summers a couple of times a week and Brad would often be there along with the rest of that great 2001 team. Hopefully you enjoy this section.

Hall of Fame Induction Year: 2014

Favorite Basketball Memory at North Branch: Winning the Section Championship and walking into Williams Arena after the game to watch our girls team play in the State Semi-Finals...as well as being able to play with my fellow classmates/teammates for all those years.

How has playing/coaching athletics helped you in the "real world"? Just like sports, the real world is always presenting different challenges. Sports have taught me that things are not always going to go the way you want or how you planned, being able to work with others to get through those challenges is extremely important, and the real world is no different.

City Currently Living In: Sartell, MN

Married? If yes, what is her name? Married to Tyra since 2008

Children? Brad and Tyra have a daughter named Beckett, who is 7 years old

Current Occupation: High School Social Studies Teach, Head Girls Basketball Coach and Varsity Assistant Baseball Coach at Royalton High School.

Hobbies: Coaching, playing, and watching all kinds of sports as well as reading, and running.

Message to Current Players: You can't always control the final outcome of the game, but you can always control the effort you put into it, don't give others the chance to say that you could've player harder or gave more effort. Remember, you only get 1 chance to play high school basketball, don't take it for granted because once it's done, you'll never come close to having that kind of experience again in your lifetime and you don't want to look back and say, "I wish I would've done more."

Brad just finished his first year as the Royalton Girls Head Coach and they finished with a record of 20-9 and won the Prairie Conference Championship for the first time in about 20 years!

