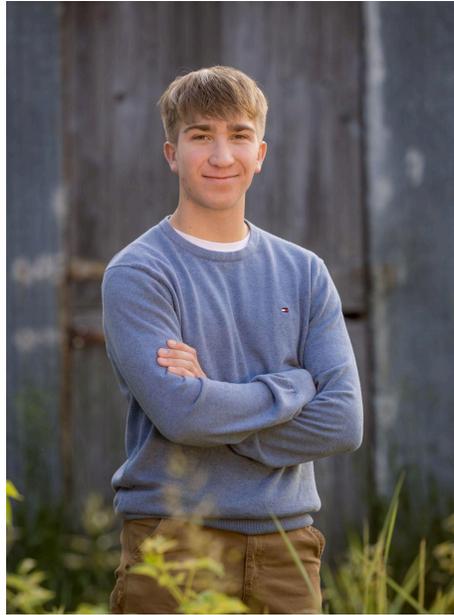


2024 WBCA Scholarship Winners



Luke Fischer (Alma Center)

Head Baseball Coach: Don Forsting

A three-sport student-athlete, Luke earned all-conference in football, basketball, and baseball. He was team captain in baseball in both his junior and senior years and was co-MVP his junior year; hitting .354 that year. Luke also excelled in the classroom, earning a 4.09 G.P.A. and completing his high school career number one in his class at Alma Center. Luke has the work ethic to be successful in any future endeavor. In his application, he wrote that *"I always did my best to outwork everyone in the weight room, in the gym, or on the field."* Alma Center coach Don Forsting writes, *"I have always found Luke to be a very coachable athlete and a respectable young man . . .and will be a great asset to any community when he completes his college education."*

*Heading to the UW-Madison
to study Civil Engineering*



Tanner Hraby (Medford)

Head Baseball Coach: Justin Hraby

"I hope to make a difference in the community I am in" is what Tanner wrote about his dreams of a future chiropractor and youth coach. Based on his high school career, I wouldn't bet against him. On the baseball field, Tanner set Medford career records in hits, RBIs, and run scored. In 2024 alone, he scored 42 runs, hit .443 and was 8 - 1 on the mound with a miniscule 0.99 ERA. Tanner earned all-conference all four years, all-state recognition as a junior and senior, and was voted district co-player of the year as a senior; wrapping things up by playing with the West team in the WBCA All Star Classic. Tanner graduated with a 4.0 G.P.A., was National Honor Society president, and very active in his community as well. Tanner's coach (and father) Justin says, *"as his coach, I am most proud of his selflessness and compassion he has towards his team and teammates."*

Heading to UW-River Falls to study Chiropractic



Elijah Knutson (Pecatonica)

Head Baseball Coach: Jim Strommen

The following are Elijah's batting averages in his four years of varsity baseball: .426, .414, .457. and .436. It's no wonder he earned First Team all-conference all four years, including as a *pitcher* his freshman year. As a catcher, he earned all-district honors his junior and senior years. WBCA Hall of Fame coach Jim Strommen says of Elijah, "*he sets the example to his teammates on how to approach the game by his demeanor and work ethic.*" His work ethic was also evident in the classroom with his academic honors and the foresight to take challenging classes in preparation for his college studies. Elijah recognizes the value athletics can provide to future habits, as he wrote "*Team sports taught me dedication, responsibility, commitment, teamwork, sportsmanship, communication, problem solving, patience, and how to recover from disappointment.*"

*Heading to Wisconsin Lutheran College
to study Criminal Justice and Biology*



Blake Bargender (Abbottsford-Colby)

Head Baseball Coach: Ryan Bargender

Leadership appears to be at a core value for Blake. He was captain in both baseball and basketball, president of the National Honor Society, and led drills at youth baseball and basketball camps. Another valuable activity for Blake is community service, as he has put in a ton of hours volunteering throughout Abbottsford area. *"I love to see the impact I can make on others' lives," he writes.* Those commitments to excellence translated on the baseball field as well. Blake earned all-conference honors his last three years, accumulating 91 hits and hitting over .390 during that period. Blake's coach and father, Ryan says of the 2024 class valedictorian, *"Blake's drive is unmatched, compared to others I have coached . . . You would be hard pressed to find someone who spends more time working on individual hitting and defensive skills on their own than Blake."*

Heading to UW-River Falls to study Civil Engineering



Braden Roemhild (Boyceville)

Head Baseball Coach: Michael Roemhild

The 2024 class president and valedictorian graduates with an incredible resume of accomplishments in the classroom and in co-curriculars. A four-year letterwinner in three sports, Braden was team captain, received all-conference recognition, and numerous individual awards in all three sports. His baseball highlights included starting on the State Championship team his freshman year and setting the school record in stolen bases. Head coach Michael Roemhild says of his nephew, *"He is the type of person that any coach would be honored to have on their team. His leadership, drive, and compassion are unmatched by any other student that I have ever taught, coached, or watched play."* Braden's own commitment to teaching and coaching are evident when he wrote, *"The kids and this community motivate me to be a better person. I want to be that role model for them."*

Heading to UW-River Falls to study Education



Grant Vandervest (Algoma)

Head Baseball Coach: Jeff DeMeuse

Grant was a four year starter, three time all-conference, three time team captain, three time team MVP at Algoma. Coach DeMeuse says, *"Grant is the kind of leader that every coach wishes he had on his team . . . the type of leader I hope my kids will emulate."* He has also been involved in his community, volunteering to officiate youth games and working for the city of Algoma Youth Club. The 2024 class valedictorian, Grant seems to have a great approach to what will keep him successful in the future; *"learned when I completely commit myself to a goal I can progressively get better at something, even though this progress can be slow."*

Heading to UW-Platteville to study Engineering

On behalf of the WBCA, congratulations and best wishes to each of the 2024 WBCA Scholarship Winners.

- Bob Gawlitta -