



1048 E King Road  
Tomahawk, WI 54487  
Fax: 715-453-6736

Wendell Quesinberry  
District Administrator  
(715) 453-5555

## November 2024 - Activities Director Board Report

### Tomahawk High School:

Like the leaves falling from the trees, and all but done, so is the 2024 Fall Sports Season at Tomahawk High School.

The Girls' Cross Country team was able to defend their GNC Title from the previous year and again finish 1st at the meet. The Girls then proceeded to avenge their lapse at Sectionals last year, and win the Colby Sectional by 1 point over Shawano to gather their 18th Sectional Title and 25th appearance at the WIAA State Cross Country Meet in Wisconsin Rapids. This was a special year for the WIAA State meet, as it was the 50th running of the girls championships. The very first WIAA State Championship was won by Susie Houston individually in 1975. She followed up her effort by repeating as the WIAA Individual State Champion in 1976, while also helping Tomahawk High School to their first ever WIAA State Championship in any sport, and would begin the tradition that is Tomahawk Cross Country. The girls ultimately finished 15th at state, but the valuable experience gained by the young team for the future cannot be measured. The girls battled some adversity throughout the year, but under the guidance of Coach Connor Ahrens, got healthy, and mentally strong for when it mattered down the stretch to return to the state tournament. Gathering 1st Team All-Conference Honors was Alli Palmer. The strength of the team can be seen in the remaining teams, as Lydia Shaney, Ellie Micke, Abbie Rosenmeier, and Elise Gibeault, returning from injury, were recognized as 2nd Team All-Conference. The future is very bright for the Girls, as they return almost every runner who competed at the WIAA state tournament, while gaining some strong middle school runners in the coming years. Congratulations to Coach Ahrens and the girls on their outstanding season and representation of the Tomahawk Community.

The Boys' Cross Country team made progress this season. The Coaching staff on multiple occasions expressed the overall growth of the group and the excitement for years to come also with this team. They noted if the boys decide to put in the necessary miles over the summer months, we will again return to the top of the conference and to the WIAA state tournament. The boys finished 3rd in conference again behind Lakeland and Rhinelander. Rhinelander also qualified for the WIAA state meet as a team the next weekend in Colby along with our girls. All-Conference honors went to 1st Team, Sam Zastrow and Dominic Boos. Also gathering All-Conference honors were Joe Zastrow, Jeremiah Johnson, and Beau Stromberg. At the Sectional Meet, the boys finished 7th as a team, and Dominic Boos missed qualifying for state individually by one spot to finish out his career in Cross Country. Similar to their co-ed counterparts, Coach Ahrens and staff have a strong program growing. At the state send-off for the Girls, Coach Ahrens while addressing the student body said it the best, "anyone in this building can be in this position, you need to decide what you want to do, and commit to the weight room, the offseason training, and the believe in yourself, and anyone in this High School can find the same success as anyone else."

The Hatchet Football team finished the season at 3-6 overall, and 2-5 in the GNC. The record does not indicate the job done by Coach Dewey Reilly and his staff this season. Tomahawk was in every game they played this year and battled until the end through injuries, and scheme changes. The team was applauded numerous times by officials, and opposing communities on their sportsmanship and respect for the game. We were recognized in the fall WIAA newsletter for sportsmanship along with Medford Area Senior High during our Homecoming game on October 4. I received an email from Merrill High School parents applauding the team for their respect of Merrill playing their Alma Mater song at the

John Sample  
SPED Pupil Services  
715-453-2106

Mark Schommer  
Teaching and Learning  
715-453-2126

Ryan Huseby  
THS Principal  
715-453-2106

Stacy Bolder  
TMS Principal  
715-453-5371

Sheri Woodall  
TES Principal  
715-453-2126

Ryan Flynn  
Activities/Pool  
715-453-2106

Arland Wingate  
Building and Grounds  
715-453-2106

end of the game, and it was the first time they ever saw an opposing team quit celebrating, remove their helmets and respect their tradition in such a manner. Lastly, after a heavily contested winner gets in the playoff game, against our rivals up 51, the officiating crew after the game told me how respectful our sidelines, coaching staff, and players were throughout the game, and they look forward to officiating at Tomahawk again in the future. The season showed that yes success is nice, and it is what we are striving for, but doing things the right way makes a bigger impact in the long run of these students' lives. Similar to the Cross Country program, the Football program is in a great position for future success. Getting healthy, a good offseason, the hopeful return of some individuals to the program, and growing numbers in the program, do not be surprised to see the Hatchets competing in the GNC next year. Individually, Brayden Larson was named 1st Team All-Conference at both RB/DB. Walter Horabik was again named 1st Team Kicker in the GNC. Others receiving all-conference honors were Ethan Gibeault (2nd Team OL/DL), Rex Reilly (2nd Team LB), Nathan Norman (HM OL), and Jack Amelse (HM DL).

The Hatchet Volleyball team had an up and down season this year. There were moments throughout the season where the Girls looked like they had it figured out, and then an injury or outside circumstance would reset the team. Coach Keith Hanse adjusted well throughout the season adjusting to the strengths of the individuals playing, and got the team playing their best volleyball down the stretch. As I have mentioned before, I want us as a district to embrace being the small school in the GNC, compete against our larger counterparts, and when the WIAA tournament begins and we go down into our division, we make a playoff run. That was the recipe for this group, after finishing a disappointing 5th in the GNC, the girls proceeded to reach the Regional Finals and lose a five set thriller to Oconto High School for the regional title. Individually, Siannah Calkins was recognized as a 1st Team All-Conference Selection, Claire Albert 2nd Team, and Shelby Borowski as an HM Selection. Similar to the previous sports, minimal graduations for the Volleyball program has us in position with a good offseason of getting back up towards the top of the GNC.

Lastly, our final Fall Sport is Girls' Swimming who will be competing in the WIAA Sectional this Saturday in Menomonie as their season has not yet finished under first year coach, Ava Magee. The swim program was not sheltered from the injury bug that hit us this fall either, as they were missing one of their most important members of the team for the entire season due to injury. In addition, the girls battled through little knicks and bruises throughout the season at times while also having low numbers. The youth swim numbers look to be growing, as it was an Olympic Year, and the coverage of the sport of swimming is really highlighted for a week on National News which helps promote the sport. There were no All-Conference selections this season, as Rhinelander High School's strength in the swimming pool was again on full display this season as they look to defend their WIAA State Title from a year ago in the coming weeks.

The Activities scene was very abundant at the beginning of the school year also.

The One-Act Play is competing in the Sectionals today (Nov. 6) in Oconto Falls with a goal of returning to the State Performance the week of November 18th, for the 9th year in a row. Best of luck to those students today, I will have an update at the Board Meeting in regards to their accomplishments.

E-Sports has had a very successful season. Elliot O'Connor did qualify for the state 1v1 tournament. The team was ranked number one for most of the season, and was even streamed on the state esports network for a couple of their regular season competitions this season. The group was also able to attend an in person competition this season in Mosinee which was a new experience for the group. Last night, unfortunately their season came to an end, and they were unable to advance as a team in SmashBros. Overall, the groups numbers have been great, the students really enjoy the ability to compete and be a part of this club, and it gives students another outlet to be involved at the school.

As noted in previous board reports, the Student Council did an excellent job setting up the Homecoming activities and promotion of school pride throughout the fall.

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The National Honor Society aided the student council in some aspects of the Homecoming activities, while also providing a community service this year with their members. The members wanted to be more involved in the community and offered leave raking throughout the fall. As with anything new, there were some hiccups, that will be addressed for next year, but again, as the Activities Director I am really proud when our students want to provide community outreach services.

SkillsUSA will have their regional competition coming up, along with partnering with FBLA for the upcoming Venison Feed. The students have been working on items to promote the Community event.

FBLA is working towards their first big event of the year, and helping out at the upcoming Venison Feed. In addition, Connor Ahrens along with Jerett Flynn have been meeting with Ryan Huseby in regards to a fully functioning school store for the public. This is a great partnership that actually brings the classroom work across into the clubs and visa-versa. They have solidified a clothing company, identified products the students can make, and we are hoping in the coming weeks to have the soft opening of this product available to the community.

FCCLA has their community blood drive coming up in the next couple weeks. Along with their own involvement in the upcoming Venison Feed downtown for the start of the traditional Deer Season in Wisconsin.

The Band and Choir Students will also be participating in the GNC Music Festival this weekend at Medford Area Senior High. The students that were selected for this honor include: Dominic Boos, Alena Cerkas, JC Fuszard, Greta Kurth, Ayla Lewison, Elliot O'Connor, LJ Plantenberg, Damian Ramirez-Gonzales, Sadie Ruder, and Galen Schmidt.

Lastly, it does not get recognized enough, but the work of the Varsity Club running concessions all fall, and our winter sports season, does not go unnoticed by the community.

Looking ahead to the Winter Sports Season. We are seeing some changes in initial participation numbers. Hockey is poised to have a strong season, and will also provide an almost full JV Hockey schedule for the first time since the late 2000's. Girls Basketball numbers are stable, but on the low end. Boys Basketball numbers have decreased from previous years. Boys Swimming numbers have increased. Wrestling with the addition of Girls Wrestling has the strongest numbers out of the winter sports. We currently have over 20 boys signed up this season, along with almost 30 girls in the program. The Winter Parent Meeting follows Parent-Teacher Conferences this Thursday. We will be able to evaluate where we are at going into the winter sports season as Hockey and Girls Basketball begin Monday November 11, then Boys Swimming, Wrestling, and Boys Basketball follow the next week on November 18.

As you can see, our students are constantly thriving within our district and our community. I cannot stress it enough on how proud I am to be a Hatchet when I am fortunate enough to see our students doing so much and having pride in everything they are involved in.

### **Upcoming Dates - High School Activities (Home Events):**

Wed. November 6 - One-Act Play @ Oconto Falls - Sectional Performance

Thurs. November 7 - Winter Sports Parent Meeting - 7:00 PM (Auditorium)

Sat. November 9 - GNC Music Festival @ Medford - 9:00 AM - Concert @ 5:00 PM

Sat. November 9 - Varsity Girls Swimming @ WIAA Sectional @ Menomonie High School - 1:00 PM

Mon. November 11 - Girls' Basketball and Hockey Start

Thurs. November 14 - FCCLA Blood Drive

Mon. November 18 - Boys' Basketball, Wrestling, and Boys' Swimming Start

Tuesday November 19 - One-Act Play Public Performance - 7:00 PM (Auditorium)

TBD - Wed. November 20 - Fri. November 22 - One - Act Play @ State Competition

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Friday November 22 - SkillsUSA, FBLA, FCCLA @ Venison Feed (Downtown Tomahawk)  
Tues. December 3 - Varsity Boys' Swimming v. Antigo - 5:30 PM (TSD Swimming Pool)  
Tues. December 3 - JV/Varsity Girls' Basketball v. Antigo - 5:45 PM / 7:15 PM (TSD Fieldhouse)  
Thurs. December 5 - JV/V Hockey v. Waupaca - 4:45 PM / 7:00 PM (Sara Park Activity Center)  
Thurs. December 5 - Varsity Boys' Swimming v. Medford - 5:30 PM (TSD Swimming Pool)  
Fri. December 6 - JV2/JV/V Boys' Basketball v. Northland Pines - 5:45 PM / 7:15 PM (HS Gym / TSD Fieldhouse)

## **Tomahawk Middle School:**

When I look back at the Middle School Sports seasons this fall, I really look at them as a success for the district. Across all three sports we had very pleasant coaching staffs that genuinely cared about the students and I believe gave them a good experience to keep them involved in their respective sports and growth for the future for our programs. Football for both 7th and 8th grade finished the year at .500 or above. The numbers for both grade levels were solid, and should provide some stability for the future of the high school program. The Cross Country numbers were up this fall in comparison to last year, which again will help the continued success of the high school program. The students were always smiling through the sport of running which is a great sign that the kids are enjoying the challenge. Lastly, Volleyball was able to get a ton of court time this season for the players. We were at weird numbers, so instead of splitting the grades, we kept them together to keep the students together, and they played both the A and B games together all fall. The community youth program had an increase in students participating in their fall programming, which again looks to improve our numbers at the high school level in the foreseeable future.

Boys' Basketball has begun for their 6 week season. The inclusion of 6th Grade Athletes has helped the numbers. We unfortunately faced a really weird number for all the grade levels and decided to keep two teams with about 11-12 players on each squad. If we did not have the 6th Graders, we would have struggled to keep the 7th Graders down together. Overall, the inclusion has increased the numbers which is what we want to see.

We started sign-ups for middle school wrestling and girls' basketball this week. Their seasons will officially begin when we return from Winter Break on January 2. Right now there is a concern on the numbers for Girls' Basketball at the Middle School level even with the addition of the 6th Graders. We are hoping to get 7+ girls so we are able to schedule 10-12 games for the season. If numbers are too low to provide Middle School Girls Basketball, we are looking at options of maybe the development of an intramural league during those 6 weeks to help promote girls into the basketball program and use the gym space.

Overall, I believe the approach of increasing opportunities, and providing students the ability to join and try differing athletics at the middle school level has been beneficial. I know the Coaching Staffs have done a really good job in providing ample playing time for students and making sure everyone is a part of the growth of the sports. I am hoping in the future that we continue on this trajectory as with a declining enrollment, our strength will be high participation numbers to continue to provide the amount of athletics that we do at the high school level.

## **Upcoming Dates - Middle School Activities (Home Events):**

Fri. November 15 - 7th / 8th Grade Boys' Basketball v. Mosinee - 4:00 PM / 5:00 PM (HS Gym)  
Thurs. November 21 - 7th / 8th Grade Boys' Basketball v. Horace Mann - 4:00 PM / 5:00 PM (HS Gym)  
Mon. December 2 - 7th / 8th Grade Boys' Basketball v. Rhinelander - 4:00 PM / 5:00 PM (HS Gym)

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## **Activities Director Notes:**

The Great Northern Conference is working on coordinating a Sportsmanship Summit for the affiliate schools to work on putting together Standard Guidelines and Bylaws for Fan Conduct at Games. We will be looking at bringing 1 Male and 1 Female from the Senior - Sophomore Classes to the summit, to work with their conference counterparts on what we would like to develop in regards to this.

Once this is over, I have began exploring the idea of a High School Club involving these students, while allowing others to join to work on building a School Community approach on how we can support our students in athletics in a positive manner, and ultimately give the students a voice on improvements they want to see being a part of athletics in our school district.

There are not a lot of details yet for this, as the tentative date is Wednesday December 4, but I am really looking forward to being a part of this, and am currently taking recommendations from the Coaching Staffs on individuals that will represent us with pride at this event.

As always, if you have any questions or need additional information, feel free to contact me at any time!

GO HATCHETS!

Report Respectfully Submitted by:

Ryan Flynn

Activities, Recreation, and Pool Director

Tomahawk School District

Work Phone: (715) 453 - 7112

Cell Phone: (715) 966 - 3953

Email: [flynnr@myhatchets.org](mailto:flynnr@myhatchets.org)

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