

# Legends of their Time

## Brandon Valley Athletic HALL OF FAME

### 2020 & 2021 Inductees

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## ‘The Game Honors Toughness’ Deckert leads BV boys’ hoops for 21 seasons

Growing up in small town Henning, Minn., Brent Deckert simply wanted to play basketball. Years later, he realized that he not only wanted to play basketball, but he also wanted to coach the sport that was his father Herman’s favorite game, a game he never had the opportunity to play as a teen growing up on the farm in the 1940s.

“He always talked about basketball and we always went to basketball games,” recalls Deckert, who wrapped up a 21-year career at the helm of the Lynx boys this month at the 2021 Class AA state tournament. “I kind of remember a turning point when I was in fifth, sixth, seventh grade ... My dad owned a small grocery store and I had to go to work every weekend and sometimes before school to help him at the store. Well, I remember one time that he got me up early and I went outside and just started shooting hoops, and he drove away and went to work without me.”

Puzzled by his father’s actions, the young Deckert made the short hike to the store to ask why he was left behind.

“My dad said, ‘Oh, I thought you were shooting,’” he remembers. “I mean I’m not real smart but I was smart enough to realize that if he’s going to let me shoot and not go to work, then I’m going to shoot every morning. So, literally, that’s kind of how it started.”

As a teen, Deckert honed his basketball skills in the basement of the local Baptist Church, which happened to have a small gym, and as small towns go, the doors to



Jill Meier/BV Journal

Coach Brent Deckert poses for a photo with the 2021 seniors at last week’s Class AA state tournament. Pictured are, from left, row one: Coach Deckert and student manager Kellen Tull; standing: Wes DeWitt, Jackson Hilton, Aydin Lloyd, Jaksen Deckert, Jay Jurgens, Payton Tietjen, Joe Kolbeck, Dawson Johnson and Carter Van Heel.

the church were never locked.

“We were in there all of the time ... and you literally had to pull us out of there,” he

reflects. “My mom and dad would come down there routinely and yell at me to get out of there, and I would overhear them

later sometimes being mad at me, but then my dad would always come back and go,

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‘He’s at a church shooting hoops.’ I kind of think that they knew who I was hanging out with, they knew where I was and they knew what I was doing. So, for them, I think the alternative was, ‘OK, maybe he’s not putting in the time at the grocery store we’d like him to. Maybe he doesn’t work as hard as what we’d like him to, but we know he’s hanging around some OK kids, he’s not in trouble, we know where he’s at.’”

His time shooting hoops in the church basement transformed him into a pretty good ball handler, although he says he didn’t view himself as “a great shooter,” adding that he played with 3,000-point shooters.

“Basketball is a very important thing in Henning; it always has been,” he reflects. “They won the state tournament a couple years ago (2019) when we won it and I got to experience that at Williams Arena, and that was really cool. I’ll bet there were between 5,000 and 8,000 people from Henning that were there, and there’s only 800 people in that town. There was thousands and thousands of orange shirts in that gym watching them play.”

The passion that Deckert and his dad shared for the game in Henning, is the same passion that he brought to Brandon Valley in 2000. Deckert’s path to BV came on the suggestion of Jim Heinitz, a BV school board member and head football coach at Augustana, where Deckert was an assistant hoops coach.

“It was probably in February or so ...and he pulled me into his office and sat me down. I felt like I was in the principal’s office and thinking, ‘How much trouble am I in here?’ But what he did is he shared what was going on in Brandon at the time, what was going on with Brad Thorson and that he was hired as assistant principal and there would be an opening. Perry Ford, who was the head coach at the time had told Jim over and over again how good of a head coach he thought I would be. I told him that I was very interested in getting back to coaching in high school, Jim encouraged me to apply and the rest is history,” Deckert remembers.

Heinitz said he saw head-coach potential in Deckert.

“I was impressed with what he’d done and how he handled himself and handled the kids, so not that I completely influenced the rest of the board, but I pretty much told them what to do,” Heinitz said. “I think all coaches go through ups and downs, but he has stayed the course. Winning a state championship sometimes makes it look like a validation, but there’s always a lot more to coaching than just winning a state championship. He’s done well with how he’s handled kids and made sure his priorities have always stayed the way they should be for high school sports. He made sure kids are learning and growing and maturing.”

Tim Sylliaasen has been at Deckert’s side for all 21 years at BV.

“We moved to Brandon the same year,” Sylliaasen said. He served as a volunteer coach for three seasons before being added to the program’s payroll. He describes his colleague as “dedicated.”

“Everything is about Brandon Valley and Brandon Val-



Submitted photo

Coach Deckert and his sons, Caden and Jaksen, in his first year of coaching.

ley basketball. I have never seen more passion toward basketball and the kids learning basketball and being better people. Winning games is a great thing, but to him, he makes sure these kids are going to be better men,” Sylliaasen said. “And that’s the same thing that goes for Coach Garrow. They both have the same philosophy, and I think you can see that when we walk on the court or we walk on the field or we walk off it. I think we get respect because we have great head coaches who teach the kids how to play the game, how to respect the game and how to respect their opponents. That’s one thing that’s amazing about those two.”

### Wins and losses

Deckert is quick to say that he doesn’t care about the number of wins and losses he’s accumulated in 21 seasons at BV.

“I know post-season games are more important for the kids and the community, but it’s not that much more special for me than anything else; we’re just trying to prepare to win the next game. I don’t care if it’s won in January, I don’t care if it’s won in March. We’re just trying to do the right thing, and I think that what we’ve been able to do in Brandon is a basketball movement,” he said. “It’s been so fun to be able to take the things that I think we lack every year, work on them and make them even better, and that goes with our open gyms, our workouts, our Team Brandon stuff. I think that all the things we’ve been able to add and offer to kids here has been unbelievably supportive.”

It wasn’t until his 19th season at BV that the Lynx won a AA title under his guidance, but believes too much emphasis has been placed on high school athletics winning state championships.

“It’s so hard and you have to get so lucky, there are so many things that have to go your way,” he said. “You could play out state tournaments numerous times and the same team is rarely going to win. I know that some people

will say it is the end all, but the people that are in coaching, in it for the right reasons and in it for the long-term, they’re not in it to count trophies. They’re in it because they love kids, because they love getting an opportunity to share a gym with those type of kids every single year. Just being able to take a group of guys and make a team a team, and then have the opportunity to do it every single year, there’s nothing I’d rather do, there’s absolutely nothing I’d rather do.”

While it was the 2019 team that notched the title, there were others over the past two decades that certainly had the talent to do the same. He recognizes BV’s 2003 team, a group he felt “was tough enough and good enough to do

it.”

“We lost the championship game that year and it was a 5- or 6-point game, but that was a year when a lot of people didn’t expect us to be there, but we knew that we had it in us,” he said.

The same could be said for the ’04 and ’05 teams, too.

“We thought we had some good enough teams that year, too, but we had guys injured, had some bad things happen to our teams along the way, and that’s something you can’t control as a coach,” he said. “Every coach—no matter who you are—you can work your horses so long and then eventually talent is going to just take over, and between ’05 and ’07, we certainly were talented enough to be right there at the end. That one year we won 23 games in a row and were upset by O’Gorman in the semi-finals, and that was an absolute killer. The year before I felt like we were almost as talented and were upset by Pierre, who lost to O’G in the championship the next night. Again, we’re playing some unbelievable teams. It wasn’t like we were getting beat by teams that should never beat you. We’re talking about guys like (Pierre’s) Michael Twedt and Sam Willard—both guys who made over a million dollars playing basketball overseas.”

Deckert said every season presented an “upper echelon of talent.”

“All we’re trying to do every single year is to be one of those teams but it’s high school basketball, and if you’re going to measure coaches by winning their last game, I just think you’re wrong. ... There’s so many bigger things out there.”

### Tournament time

Tournament time has long been the coach’s favorite part of the season.

“It’s like Christmas. It’s like closure. It’s the end of the year and it’s a chance to take what you think you had and

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make them better than possibly what they ever thought they could do. Or, to take a group that knows that they’re good enough to finish strong at the end and make them believe that they can,” he said. “I just think that being able to get something accomplished at the end of the year is what makes it so much fun.”

Post-game locker room talks at state tourney time also rank high in his memories.

“Probably the one thing I miss most about winning a state title is that you’re not in the locker room with them ever again. If you lose, you can take them back in the locker room and tell them you love them again and things are going to be OK, because nobody feels worse than those guys,” he said.

T.G.H.T.

T.G.H.T.—The Game Honors Toughness—has been Deckert’s signature over the course of career at BV.

“I took that from one of Coach (Don) Meyer’s clinics,” he informs. And Coach Meyer, well he nabbed it from Paul Patterson, who was a small college coach in Indiana and a former Army guy.

“He put it on all of his stuff and I thought, ‘Here’s something that is much bigger than just winning.’ The ultimate for him was just developing as many servant leaders as he could on his team. ... I don’t remember the exact year that I first heard it, but I was like, this seems like it’s more me. I was never the best basketball player on my team and if there’s two people in the room, I’m probably not the smartest person in the room, but the whole toughness thing is something that I can grasp onto. So, to me that’s what we’ve tried to build our teams on. If we can’t out-score you every game, we’re going to at least let you know that you were in a basketball game and then when the talent comes, we’re going to be really, really good. That’s what I’ve always tried to stress to all our teams and players as much as possible, is we may not win every game, but we’re going to figure out a way to win a game.”

21 years of memories

Deckert laughs when the question is posed.

“I don’t know if there’s ever just one. I mean, it’s a lot of bus rides around South Dakota, but I would say that the memorable ones are probably our first region victory in ’03 in Watertown. We shot like 76 percent on the night against a really good Watertown team and people from the crowd were throwing stuff at us. There were 4,000 people there telling us how much they hated us. It was those types of games and what today’s crowds are like now and the standards they are held to is so much different,” he said.

He also recalls a time when he walked into the Lincoln gym to scout a game.

“The Lincoln crowd saw me and chanted, ‘We want Brandon!’ Those kids were very smart. To me, those are some things that you never forget because those are students who think this is a really big deal, you know?”

He also relishes in memories of playing games in the old gym.

“You walk in the gym and it smells different, it looks different, it’s a little cracker box that’s not even 84-feet long, and we didn’t lose in there very often,” he said. “That gym was a big deal.”

Coaching his boys

While Deckert refers to all of his teams as “my boys,” his job allowed him to coach his two sons, Caden and Jaksen.

“It’s been very, very enjoyable, but it hasn’t been easy,” he says. “It’s hard not to look at them as a dad and as a coach, but I think that I probably took more of the coach role instead of the dad role. I don’t know if that’s right or wrong.”

Although he missed several of his son’s games over the year, he’s adamant to be in the gym cheering on his daughter, Kennedy.

A supportive spouse

Words spill out of his mouth when he talks of the support his wife, Jill—whom he met at a basketball camp—has provided him.

“It’s sort of fitting that this is how things worked out, and we’ve talked about it a ton—

The Deckert File

**Growing up:** Coach Deckert is a native of Henning, Minn.

**Education:** Graduate of Minnesota State University-Moorhead with master’s degree in technology from the University of Sioux Falls.

**Career:** Physical education teacher at Brandon Valley Middle School

**Family:** Jill, wife, and kids, Caden, Jaksen and Kennedy

**Coaching assignments:** Before BV, he was an assistant coach at MSU-Moorhead, assistant coach for eight years at Sioux Falls Washington, assistant coach for one year at Augustana University

**Accolades:** 2007–All Star Coach, SD Basketball Coaches Association; 2019–SDHS Coaches Association, SD Coach of the Year

**Win/Loss Record at BVHS:** 254-224. Coached in 12 high school tournaments

**Team Titles:** Two ESD Conference titles, 2019 Class AA State Champions

it’s all her fault because she called me back,” he shares. “But she’s definitely someone who’s all in and some of our biggest arguments are about basketball, and that probably wouldn’t surprise anybody. That’s just who she is. She’s a very passionate person when it comes to that. She grew up that way, she was raised that way by her mom and dad and I think us finding each other was probably the best for each other.”

He’s thankful for her behind-the-scenes work she’s done for Brandon Valley basketball.

“To say that she hasn’t been involved and hasn’t been a big part of this ... she takes a lot off of my mind. She’s literally like a Booster rep that I’m married to,” he said. “We’ve had so much good help and she’s obviously the one that has been there the longest for 23 years.”

Induction into Hall of Fame

Deckert, who was diagnosed with Stage 4 lunch cancer in August, feels his induction is “unwarranted” at this time.

“I don’t feel like I’m ready to be done, but I just feel like I should be done,” he said. “This is so much so fast, so to say that I’m not ready for it, that’s as simple as I can put it. I don’t feel that I deserve to be there yet, I just don’t. ... I know there’s going to be numbers on the plaque and it’s going to say ‘you’ve won this many games.’ Whatever. If it was about numbers—and it’s not—it’s about people. It’s about relationships. Those are the things I’m going to miss. I’ll miss the coaching staff stuff and I just wish I had the energy to keep doing it.”



# Faith, family and football

## Garrow's love for game evident in BV's reign of success

Chad Garrow is Brandon Valley's most winningest coach. Since 2005—his first year as the head coach of the Lynx football program—Garrow has guided his teams to 131 wins and a mere 47 losses.

Under his guide, his teams accumulated 12 Eastern South Dakota Conference titles, were state runners-up in three of his 16 seasons, and snagged state titles in 2018 and 2020.

Those are just a few of the impressive numbers that Garrow has put up in his head coaching role at Brandon Valley, and are just a few of the reasons behind the coach's 2021 induction into the Brandon Valley Athletics Hall of Fame.

"I don't think there's anybody that deserves it more," says Jack Van Leur, who was the starting quarterback when Garrow took charge. "He built this program up to where it is today where they are a state contender. But it's not about wins and losses with them; they build young men. It's about molding these kids and teaching them to be responsible and respectful and how to work hard for the things you truly want. The things that he, and Matt Christiansen and Jason Bisbee and those guys that have been there for such a long time—have really done something special with that program, and now you see it on the field. The results are there every single week."

As most know, Garrow has never been a man of many words, unless of course, he's talking football. In recent months, a brain tumor has taken away the Brandon Valley football and track and field coach's voice, but has not silenced his love for molding boys into men on the grid iron and turning talented sprinters into state champions.

"I don't think I ever saw the guy stop working or thinking about football," said Van Leur. "It was truly special to see a guy that you could just tell loves it and wants to have success at that high level, and he achieved it. It wasn't there right from the get-go; he had to work at it, but he built that program to what it is



Submitted photo

Coach Chad Garrow is all smiles in this photo. As the most winningest coach in Brandon Valley football program history, he is being inducted into BV Athletic Hall of Fame this year.

today, and he's the biggest reason for that."

Assistant coach Tim Sylliaasen joined Garrow on the sidelines in 2005. He said two of the most important aspects of coaching he learned from the head coach is "patience" and "you have to change with the kids."

"We've been together all these years, and kids are different now and what I've learned with him is you have to treat the kids different, you have to change with them and be patient. They're 14- to 17-year-old kids; they've got their minds on other things, so just being patient, just be a teacher, which he's a very good teacher," Sylliaasen said.

During the season, Sylliaasen said it's not uncommon for the coaches to spend

60 hours or more together each week.

"We get home after a football game or on Saturday, we're calling each other ... 'Did you see this play?', 'Did you see this?' And Sunday, we meet for eight hours and then we'll go home and Coach (Mike) Zerr or (Mark) Stadem, we're always texting each other—it never stops. It's 365 days a year for him and it's 365 days for all of us. We don't know any better. It's something in our blood and it's the kids. Everything revolves around the kids," Sylliaasen said.

Although Van Leur—who ventured to Creighton University on a full-ride baseball scholarship for his left-handed pitching abilities—never coached football, he said he learned a lot from Garrow in his baseball coaching roles.

"Anybody that gets into coaching is just a product of their environment. They take what they believe were the good things from everybody that they've been around. The biggest thing I took from Coach Garrow was his work ethic because, like I said, the guy never stopped wanting to help his team, and he would put everything he had into it. Even in the hallway, I would be walking by him, and he would mention something that he saw in the Watertown game two weeks ago. It's just little things like that that you know the guy is always engaged in some way," he said. "The other big thing I took from him is just his willingness to learn. He knew that there were other people who had expertise, so he was always willing to learn from other people and how to get better because of it."

Mike Zerr is an offensive coordinator on Garrow's staff and said the coach allows his assistant "to feel like we're doing everything, but at the same time, we're not doing anything. He has a presence about him to make sure that all of us coaches feel as invested as we possibly can—we all have ownership of that individual program, and I think that's a great gift that he has. At the end of the day, we know who runs the show, and our kids know that, too," Zerr said. "That ability he has to get everybody involved is probably the biggest thing I've taken from him."

Zerr said the coach has a great feel for kids, more specifically, "what they need."

"He's not a screamer, not a yeller, but the standard of excellence that he holds himself, and the rest of us to is evident every day," he said. "There's nobody that knows more than him about what we do and why we do it and that's from a tireless work ethic. I can't tell you how many hours we have spent in silence, backs to one another, in the coaches' office watching film."

Football is family for Garrow, his wife

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Melissa and their three children, AJ, Savannah and Alicia.

“Faith, family and football—when you put those three together and live your life the way he does, that example is set for everybody in the program,” Zerr said. “No matter how busy we are, he makes sure we have time with our families and friends. Those things aren’t lost on us either.”

### Coaching his son

Zerr said his colleague was extremely proud to coach his son, AJ, but says there were likely some tough moments with that.

“I’ve been able to watch a couple of our coaches coach their sons, and it’s the greatest memory for all of them. It’s a really cool thing to see how their brains match up. And, even AJ would throw out little things to him or Chad will bring up that they’d been talking at home about watching a game and seeing this or that,” he said. “AJ had a great career, but I think the bonds that they’ve had—and continue to have—through football are really unique.”

### Memorable victories

BV’s 2018 state title was probably the most memorable of Garrow’s 131 wins he’s guided the Lynx to. In a 2019 story, Garrow points to a loss that he coins “a special” moment: the team’s 35-20 loss to Sioux Falls Washington in the 2012 11AAA championship game. Not only was it his first trip to the DakotaDome, but more importantly, he was able to coach his son, A.J., in that game.

When he took over the most winningest coach record in 2019, Garrow quoted the moment as “overwhelming.”

“I guess if you thought it was toward the end of your career, maybe it would be a little more emotional. But I’ve got some miles left,” he said.

“I think the championships represent the standards of excellence that have been set for everyone else,” Zerr said. “The things that everybody remembers about coaching are stupid Sunday meetings where you sat around and talked football for eight hours or the work that goes into building a team.”



Jill Meier/BV Journal

Coach Chad Garrow gives an inspired post-game talk to his team following the program’s 119th victory under his helm, which elevated him to the program’s most winningest coach at BrandonValley.

Following the 2019 season, Garrow credited athletic director Randy Marso and his coaching staff—which in large part has stayed intact during his entire career with the Lynx—for escalating the Lynx football program to new heights.

“I feel like we’ve built one of the top football programs in the state. Traditionally, Brandon Valley has been a football town. Mike (Klinedinst) built that tradition and we kind of carried it forward,” he said in 2019. As we’ve gone up into AAA, we’ve built it into a top-four program, I believe.”

Defensive coordinator since 2006 Matt Christensen said Garrow taught him how to study film in a hurry.

“We buried ourselves on Sunday and

poured over more film than anybody. He sets the standard for the program. It takes a lot of sacrifice, a lot of time, and a lot of love for the kids. They know that guy studies the game for their benefit,” Christensen said.

Just as his players have for so many years, Sylliaasen said he’s long looked up to Garrow as “another father to me.”

“He’s a person I’ve always felt I can talk to for advice or anything like that. We’re very close friends, but he’s mentored me, talking so much football and he’s a person that I just look up to,” Sylliaasen said.

In October 2019, Garrow became BV’s most winningest coach when the Lynx notched a win against Harrisburg.

The record was previously held by Mike Klinedinst (118 wins), who coached the Lynx from 1982-1998.

Klinedinst, also a Hall of Fame inductee, is memorialized on a plaque which hangs outside the Lynx gymnasium. It caught Garrow’s eye one day and soon became a point of inspiration as he walked by it daily on his way to practice.

“About halfway through my coaching career I decided that would be something that I would like to accomplish,” Garrow said.

### Track & Field Coach

While football is Garrow’s “claim to fame,” he’s also passionate about coach-

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**GARROW** cont. from page 5B



Jill Meier/BV Journal

The Lynx football coaching staff pose for a photo with the 2020 Class AAA state championship hardware following the Welcome Home celebration for the team.

ing sprinters and relay teams for the Lynx track and field program. He’s been part of a combined 11 ESD boys and girls’ titles and four Metro girls’ titles. His athletes have contributed significantly to the Lynx earning a combined five runner-up state titles and the program’s first-ever girls’ title in 2018. Sprinters and relay teams under his guide hold almost every school record, have several ESD and Metro records, and hold individual and relay all-time state records.

“It’s never about him. It’s about the kids and their experience,” Zerr said.

**Hall of Fame Induction**

Sylliaasen predicts Garrow will accept his induction into BV’s Hall of Fame humbly.

“He doesn’t want anything taken away from the kids. He doesn’t want it about him, and he’s always been that way; it’s not about him,” Sylliaasen said. “But I think he’s going to love it. The biggest thing for something like this for him, is him being able to see all of his former players and coaches that have worked with him, it’s those moments, those things that he’s going to cherish.”



Coach Garrow delivers an emotional speech at the welcome home celebration for Brandon Valley’s 2020 Class AAA state championship football team.



# 'Relative talent' lands Mike Meyers in BV sports history books

Mike Meyers' two feet and sheer determination elevated him to great success as a Brandon Valley Lynx—and beyond.

The 1982 BVHS graduate established himself as one of South Dakota's premier prep student-athletes in cross country and track and field, and garnered post-season accolades in basketball, too. He went on to fly fighter planes as a U.S. Navy man and South Dakota Air Guard member.

All of this and more are the reasons behind Meyers' 2020 induction into the BV Athletic Hall of Fame.

"I really enjoyed the opportunity it (athletics) provided," says Meyers. "I received a great education from passionate teachers and coaches, which allowed endless career options. The social side was very fun also."

Competing for the Lynx in a trio of sports, Meyers collected a total of nine varsity letters: four in track and field, three in cross country and two in basketball.

The latter was his first love, followed by baseball and track.

"The first two were more team sports with greater finesse, technique and whole team training involved," he said.

Meyers was a staple as a frontrunner of BV's cross-country program, being rewarded for his efforts with back-to-back Top 25 awards for his performances at the state meet.

Under the guide of Coach Lyle Claussen for both cross country and track and field, Meyers said his biggest running inspiration was "relative talent."

"Lyle Claussen always had us in peak form by the end of the season and my times made me competitive," he said. "I was a regular runner until a few years ago when my knee started complaining." To keep in shape, he now substitutes with stationary bikes and ellipticals.

Meyers was a fierce competitor on the track as well, ruling the middle-distance competitions, both individually and in relays. For 32 years, he possessed the 800-meter school record and was a member of the record-setting BV Middle School medley relay that held until 2012.

It was as if the "stars aligned" to set the long-standing 800-meter school record.

"Lyle Claussen had me prepared and we had good weather days with great competition to run some hot times," he reflects.

As for the medley relay record, Meyers said it meant even more because he was able to share in that success with his broth-

er, Mark, and teammates Shane Metcalf and Mark Smith.

"I don't think breaking any records was on any of our minds, but once again, Lyle had us set up right at the Howard Wood Relays with great competition," he said.

Along with establishing a school record, Meyers made his mark at the state meet, claiming 800-meter champion honors while establishing a state meet record in that same event.

"Middle distance track, at least for me, is a bittersweet sport," Meyers said. "You can't just show up, so there are a lot of exhaustive workouts required to get there. Just before the race isn't fun either with general nervousness and knowing you will hit an aerobic respiration, hopefully right at the end. It all came together that day and of course, it felt great."

While team and individual victories are relished yet to this day, Meyers said he most enjoyed the "off the court" time he had with his teammates. Memories of bus ride shenanigans, talk at track camps and humor and comradery he had hanging out with friends still swirl through his mind.

One moment that stands out yet today to Meyers took place in the early '80s. As he tells, BV was considered a "small school" among its region counterparts that included Sioux Falls, Washington, Lincoln and O'Gorman. At that time, regional meets were the stepping stone to qualifying for state.

"My junior year we had an exceptional day in the distance events," he reflects. "We won the 4x800, Scott Peterson won the 3200, I won the 800 and we went 1-2 in the 1600 with Scott again winning. I think we surprised legendary coach Rich Greeno from powerhouse Lincoln that day."

He fondly remembers the head coaches who guided him through the seasons: Claussen in track and cross country; Lyle Pearson on the basketball court; and Ron Archer, who was a volunteer coach for BV's American Legion Baseball program.

"I was extremely fortunate to have these head coaches and their many assistants along the way," he said. "They knew their sports and the character developments they provided reinforced the same values I received from my parents. They left an impression of hard work, confidence, fairness and responsibility I've tried to emulate through the years."

He also acknowledges BV faculty that

were influential in his success, citing Gary Stensaas and Jean Peterson.

"I took many classes from both and they provided an academic equivalent to what I gained from athletics."

One teammate also garners recognition: Scott Peterson.

"We played basketball, baseball and ran similar events and had many tough workouts together," he said. "He was a top athlete and helped me perform at my best."

Meyers' senior season of basketball landed him Big Eight All-Conference and All-State honors.

He went on to attend Augustana College (now University), where he continued to make his mark in cross country and track and field for four years. He ran a leg of Augustana's elite 1985 All-American 4x400-meter relay, and well remembers the glory.

"Although we didn't have a big track team at Augie, we did have Jeff Gross," he tells. "He was from Canton and could absolutely fly, especially on a running start of a relay hand-off (sub 45 second splits). 'Bust your guy and just get the baton to Gross' was our saying. Again, everything came together with the coaches and the competition for us to pop a hot time. South Dakota State University and the University of South Dakota had exceptional relay teams as well, but Jeff Gross buried them on the anchor."

Following Augustana, Meyers went on to serve his country, dedicating 14 years to the U.S. Navy and an additional 11 years with the South Dakota Air National Guard.

He viewed the military "as an opportunity rather than service."

"If anyone served in that situation, it was my wife, Betsy. I deeply appreciate her effort and endurance in handling the kids and essentially all things around the house during the lengthy deployments."

Growing up, Meyers said he often con-



Mike Meyers

sidered flying military jets as "the coolest thing out there." He was inspired to enlist by fellow BVHS graduates, Hank Quantalone and Craig Anderson, both who became Naval aviators.

"With their stories and my dreams, I knew that if I didn't pursue, I'd be a sad man down the road," he explains. "My time in the Navy and South Dakota Air National Guard gave me ultimate career satisfaction. It also allowed me to work alongside outstanding individuals similar to my athletic teammates through the years."

Often asked if he misses flying fighter planes, Meyers is quick to respond: "You can't play high school basketball forever."

"Sports absolutely prepared me by having the attitude of work hard, compete and go for it," he said. "I really enjoyed the opportunity it (athletics) provided me, and I received a great education from passionate teachers and coaches, which allowed endless career options."

Meyers, who works for Delta Airlines, and his wife Betsy, are parents to four: Abby, 28, Luke, 26, Nickel, 24, and Jack, 21. They reside in Sioux Falls.

# ‘Together’ the 2011 Lady Lynx hoops team win BV’s first state title



Submitted photo

The 2011 Lady Lynx won the Class AA title for the very first time in Brandon Valley girls' basketball history. The team was led by Coach Mark Stadem, who retired from the position following the team's 2019 state title win.

**M**ark Stadem is a man of his words. When he took over in 1986-87 season as the head coach of the Lady Lynx basketball program, Stadem made a recurring deal with his players at the start of every season: He pledged to tattoo, “Together” on his leg when a Brandon Valley girls team brought home the program’s very first state title.

“Together” was Stadem’s signature theme for the 22 seasons he was at the helm of the Lynx basketball program, and 2011 was the year that the coach’s leg was inked for life.

Going into the tournament, Stadem told the team that “anybody can do it, you just have to be the ‘hot’ team at the tournament.”

And BV was that “hot team” on the hardwood of South Dakota State’s Frost Arena that year.

Jess (Peterson) Kriech was a senior member of the BV’s 2011 team. On the heels of learning the 2011 Lady Lynx would be inducted last year, she hauled out the tapes from the state tourney to relive the glory.

“To me, it was pretty incredible,” Kriech reflects. “I felt like the Brookings arena was such a cool place to play and we had such a huge crowd.”

Stadem said his team played “really, really good defense and got clicking on offense” to achieve the program’s very first title.

The Lady Lynx, Kriech recalls, were not expected to claim the crown that year.

“I hate to use the word ‘mediocre,’” Kriech says, “but we played better than we thought we would.”

While South Dakota’s 2011 AA state champions may have started the season as state title contenders, the Lynx faced a few early- and late-season bumps on the road to glory.

“I remember a group of girls who bought into what we wanted them to do,” Stadem said. “They were a really, really good defensive team, and that’s what kept us in every game.”

Kriech credits the coaching staff, listing Stadem at the top.

“I have to give a lot of credit to Stadem. He was a coach that would let you play other sports, and that’s what made it fun for us, is we looked forward to basketball when it came around,” she said.

He also made sure to define every players’ role.

“We all got along so well,” Kriech said, “and he had a role for everyone. Some of the girls that didn’t play as much, they were the ‘encourager’ or were the defensive players before the game in warm-ups. Everybody had a role.”

The Lady Lynx opened their 2011 campaign with back-to-back losses and then went on a five-game win streak before losing 67-60 to Watertown, who had a late-game surge en route to the victory. BV reeled off four more wins until Yankton snagged a 54-53 win. The team closed out the regular season with a 3-3 record, and then lost in the first round of districts.

“I’ll never forget that,” Kriech said. “We were talking with Stadem in the locker room and he challenged us to win the next five games and he would get that tattoo.”

Stadem remembers the team faltering in their offense in February, but had the uncanny ability to turn the tides in the district elimination game against Sioux Falls Lincoln. In that game, Kriech stepped up to swish seven, 3-pointers, advancing the Lady Lynx to regions while also setting a new school record.

“Once we got that confidence, this team couldn’t be stopped,” Stadem said.

BV’s next hurdle was getting past Roosevelt in the regions. And once again, the team played like champions.

“Going over to Roosevelt and playing the way that we did over there (that year), that was as good as a win as we’ve ever had,” Stadem recalls.

BV convincingly defeated the Rough Riders 62-48, and the victory was largely fueled by Heidi (Hoff) Hausmann’s 30 points.

BV handed Mitchell a 64-49 setback in the state tourney quarterfinals and followed up with a 57-40 trouncing of Rapid City Central in the semifinals. Once again, (Hoff) Hausmann led the pack, delivering 34 points, which tied for a first-round AA state tourney record. She got added support from (Peterson) Kriech and Allie (Koehn) Guthmiller, who both dropped in 13 points. In the semifinals, Hausmann and Peterson clicked for 25 and 13 points, respectively, and the team forced the Cobblers into 24 turnovers.

The Lynx faced the always formidable O’Gorman Knights in the title game, and once again, Hoff’s heroics

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## 2011 LADY LYNX cont. from page 8B

were enough to help BV make history. She delivered 19 points, nine rebounds and had four blocked shots. But the 2011 Lynx weren't just a "one-woman" show, as Koehn and Peterson supplied 13 and nine points, respectively.

Coaches and players both say their fans played an instrumental role at the state tournament.

"I've always loved Brookings for a 'AA' girls state tournament. Frost Arena is a great venue. It's hard to hear, the fans are right on top of you, especially the students that were right behind our bench. I told the girls, 'This is a 'home game' for us; we have more fans here than everyone else ... and the girls fed off of that,'" Stadem said.

The school history-making moment remains a cherished memory for Hausmann.

"To bring home the first-ever state title – especially since we were not necessarily expected to win it all – in BV history is something I will forever cherish," she said. "The best part is years later still reminiscing with old teammates about the memories. Every state title is special, but there was just something extra special about it being the first."

On occasion, Coach Stadem finds himself taking a glance at the 2011 state championship banner and others hanging in the Lynx gym.

"I love them," says an emotional coach reflecting on this team of champions. "Because they make me think of the girls on the team, what their personalities were like, and you love each one of them. There's just not much else you can say. You invest so much in each other and when you look up at those banners, they say, 'That's what we did.' Every year, the ultimate goal is to win a state title, but that ends up being a secondary goal; it's how you come together as a team."

Stadem looks forward to uniting once again at this special reunion.

"I hope at some point we can get together and spend some time together," he said. "Even though we're a 'big' school with a bunch of small communities, you still get to know them and the families, and this is a great place to make that connection."

### 2011 State Championship Girls Basketball Team

**Head Coach:** Mark Stadem

**Assistant Coaches:** Jill Austin-Flint, Jeff Lockner, Mark Schlekeway

**Athletic Trainer:** Chad Urban

**Lady Lynx roster:** Kelsi Bailey, Rebecca Dykstra, Elyssa Ellis, Charissa Etrheim, Andrea Hanson, Heidi Hoff, Allison Koehn, Abby Moschell, Val Peltier, Jessi Peterson, Kristin Pollema, Kasey Presler, Briana Roegiers, Miranda Schroeder

**Team Managers:** Marissa Nelson, Amanda Peterson, Sydney Prewitt

**Season Record:** 17-9

**Post Season:**

District: Brandon Valley 38, Yankton 51

District: Brandon Valley 45, Sioux Falls Lincoln 32

Region: Brandon Valley 62, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 48

Quarterfinal: Brandon Valley 64, Mitchell 49

Semifinal: Brandon Valley 57, Rapid City Central 40

Final: Brandon Valley 49, O'Gorman 45



Submitted photo

Lynx student fans get the team fired up.



Submitted photo

The 2011 version of the Lady Lynx won three straight games in Brookings to claim the program's first-ever state title. (Below) Jess Peterson and Kasey Presler celebrate the victory.





# Neighborhood games of football, hoops groomed Dan Hanson for athletic success

Dan Hanson grew up in a simpler time, a time when kids played outdoors from sun up to sun down and cooled off with a drink of water from the same garden hose. With only a handful of TV channels to tune into and no video games to speak of, Hanson and his neighborhood buddies played hours and hours of football in vacant lots and games of hoops on neighborhood drive-ways. And it was that simple lifestyle that groomed him for success on the playing fields as a Brandon Valley Lynx and induction into BV's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2020.

"When I was growing up it was different than it is for the kids in the 8- to 12-year-old age group today. Nowadays, there are organized leagues for kids to play football, basketball and other sports. When I was in that age group, our parents just sent us outside to entertain ourselves and said to be home for supper and before it got too dark," reflects the 1976 BVHS alumnus. "We didn't have any organized sports (besides softball and baseball). I can think of multiple vacant lots where we would get as many kids together to play football and two or three driveways we played basketball on with as few as two people to as many as we could fit on the driveway. That's what we did for fun."

Hanson, who continues to reside in Brandon, was a multi-sport athlete at BVHS, competing in football, basketball and track and field. Basketball, he confesses, was his first love, yet it was football that garnered attention from the University of South Dakota. While Hanson pursued a degree in chemistry there, he waived the football scholarship to put his education first.

Hanson said the decision was a relatively easy one to make.

"I was really more interested in playing basketball in college, but that didn't work out," he tells. "I was always interested in science, so school was my priority."

He didn't quit competing, though, playing an abundance of intramural basketball and football at USD.

"The only thing I regret is having to pay my way through college," says Hanson, who's dedicated 44 years to his career as a chemistry manager for American Engineering Testing, Inc., in Sioux Falls.

Hanson's introduction to sports at the high school level was a positive one, acknowledging the student-athletes who came before him.

"When I got to high school, there were upperclassmen that were great role models for us to follow and there was a great winning tradition," he said.

Suiting up for the Lynx football team, Hanson earned three varsity letters by filling a trio of roles on the field: starting receiver/tight end, defensive back and kick/punt returner. It was his junior season when the Lynx were at their best, rolling to a 9-0 undefeated season and third-place state ranking.

"That was a great defensive team," he reflects, "I think only two or three teams scored against us."

Hanson landed All-Conference and All-State accolades following his senior season, and rightly so, as he led the team in both return and receiving yards.

One of his shining moments on the turf took place in a 1974 game that featured No. 3 BV (Class A) and No. 1 Garretson (Class B). The Lynx escaped the tightly-contested meeting with a 7-6 victory, thanks to Hanson's quick actions. As history tells it, late in the game, he tackled the Garretson ball carrier at the 1-yard line to preserve the one-point victory.

"That was a great defensive game for both teams," Hanson remembers. "As I recall, we scored first, and late in the game Garretson scored on us. I don't recall if it was a fake field goal or a mishandled extra point, but I remember Jerome Garry coming around the end with the ball and I was playing defensive back. I was fortunate enough to tackle him at the 1-yard line with an assist from Jon Bly."

His love for basketball in high school was fueled by a successful sophomore season, where the squad went undefeated at 18-0.

As a junior, the Lynx boys earned a trip to the state tournament behind their 19-4 record, and once again, Hanson's late-game heroics at the free throw line helped to advance BV to the state show.

Reports are that Hanson swished 6-of-6 free throws in the win against O'Gorman, sinking 4-of-5 in the crucial final minutes of the game, all the while fending off nerves playing before an estimated 5,000 fans.

"I'd like to say it was because I was handling the ball because I was the best free throw shooter, but that was not the case," Hanson tells. "Someone from O'Gorman must have read the scouting report. I was percentage-wise probably on the lower side

of the five on the court at the end of the game. I don't recall exactly how it felt, but I'm sure happy the free throws went in."

He does, however, well remember a photo that showed up in print in the following day's Argus Leader.

"It had a picture of me on the line with the ball in the air and the score and time all in the same picture. They labeled it, 'The shot.'"

Hanson collected a trio of varsity letters for basketball, where he was the starting guard both his junior and senior seasons. Along with the team's 19-4 record in his junior year, the Lynx also won the Big Eight Conference and the Section III championships, and went on to finish fourth at state.

"Basketball, when you were on the court as a player you were always involved in the action," he said. "It tested your quickness, jumping ability and endurance."

Post high-school, Hanson continued to play the game via multiple basketball leagues and independent tournaments with friends he gained in college.

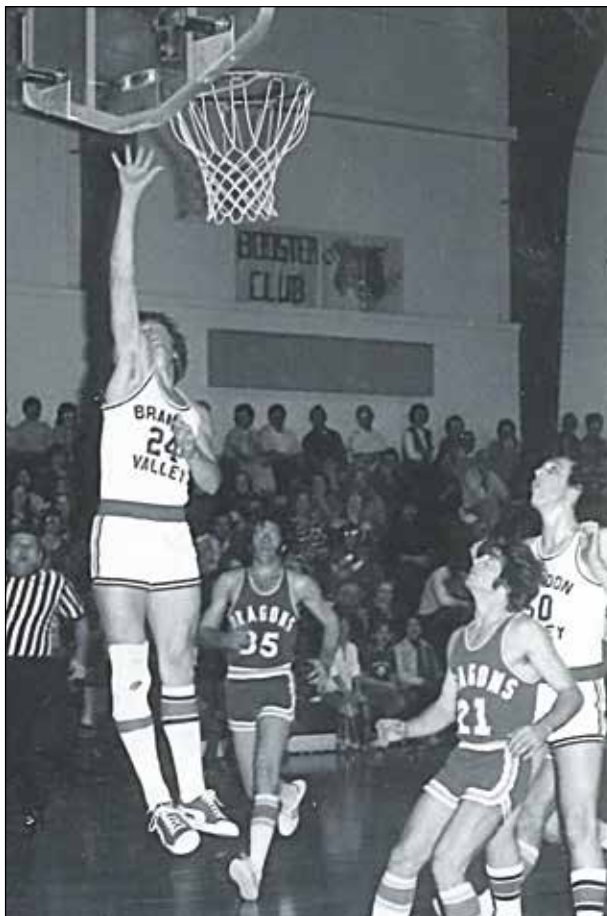
"I finally gave it up in my early 40s," he said. "It was much more fun being one of the young guys making the old guys look silly instead of becoming one of the old guys whose mind knew what to do, but the body could not keep up anymore. After that, I started running and when my knees could not take that anymore, I settled on golf."

On the track, Hanson collected four varsity letters as a 220- and 440-yard specialist in both individual and relay events. He had a presence at the state meet all four years of his prep career. His senior season was especially magical, as Hanson claimed Big Eight Conference titles in both and ran a leg for a pair of second-place relay teams. At the Region 8 and state meets, he brought home hardware in both individual events.

"Track was more of an individual sport except for the relays," Hanson said. "(We spent) a lot of time waiting and then a couple of minutes competing."

While medals and trophies were obvious rewards for his accomplishments, Hanson said the biggest reward were the friendships that he developed with the kids he

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Submitted photo

Dan Hanson puts up a shot during his prep career at Brandon Valley.



**HANSON** cont. from page 10B

grew up with in Brandon.

"I played football, basketball and ran track with the same group of guys most of my high school career," he said. "It doesn't matter how often we see each other, we still have a bond from our high school days in sports. Some of them I see all of the time and they are my best friends to this day. A group of us still gets together for birthday lunches, and when we were younger we would talk about the old days in high school. Now we talk about what part of our body hurts the most."

He gives credit to a long list of coaches that guided him through his prep career, listing Glenn Sellevold and Denny Halseth (football); Wayne Allen, Gerry Leischner and Gary Stensaas (basketball); and Lyle Claussen (track and field).

"I enjoyed playing for all of my coaches," he shares. "They each helped me develop in their own way."

Coach Sellvold, he explains, "was kind of intimidating when you came in as an un-

derclassman." Yet, the veteran coach taught his players how to work as a team and to never give up.

"He helped me to gain confidence in my abilities by allowing me to start on offense and defense as a junior," he said. "And I remember the famous words when you made a mistake in practice, 'Take a lap.'"

Coach Allen also had his respect because he allowed athletes "to play the game to our strengths."



Submitted photo

Dan Halson also left his paw print on the Lynx track and field program.

"We liked to play an up-tempo game with lots of fast breaks, and he made the game fun," he said.

He also gives credit to the guys he grew up alongside, playing sports together and pushing one another to be the best they could be.

"So, who to credit, I would say the coaches, the people I played with and some natural ability," he said.

He includes an older brother in that same mix.

"I always joke with people that I

learned how to run and jump because I had an older brother who I would irritate sometimes," he said. "I learned how to jump by clearing the chain link fence in the backyard and by being quick enough that if he didn't catch me in the first 10 yards, I wouldn't get 'pounded.'"

Hanson is honored and humbled by his nod into the Hall of Fame.

"When I got the call, I started thinking about how long it had been since I entered high school," he said. "I entered high school 50 years ago and graduated 46 years ago. I can't tell you a lot about what happened last year, but the interesting thing is I can remember the little incidents from games and meets from all three sports."

Hanson and his wife, LaDell, are parents to two grown children, Sara Onnen, and Cory (wife, Erin) Hanson, and grandparents to five, Caitlyn, Ben and Ashley Onnen, and Esther and Emma Hanson.

## BV's Hoff made lasting impact on Lynx sports scene

As Heidi (Hoff) Hausmann takes a moment to reflect on her high school sports career, she's realized that shooting hoops, spiking volleyballs, kicking soccer balls, smacking doubles and triples, and running were simply preparing her for her future.

The 2012 Brandon Valley High School alumna is one of three former Lynx standout prep athletes selected for induction into the BV Athletic Hall of Fame in 2020. Her Friday, March 26 induction, however, was postponed a year for COVID-19 reasons.

"Now more than ever I realize how much sports have prepared me for this chapter of life," says the four-sport student-athlete. "The traits you develop as an athlete prepare you for every aspect of life: As a wife, knowing how to work together, communicate, compromise and appreciate each other; as a mother, being supportive, leading by example, encouraging and being active. I'm so grateful for all that sports have taught me."

Hausmann and her husband, Cooper, are parents to Nash, 2 ½. They live in Norfolk, Neb., where she is the executive director for Norfolk Family Coalition, a non-profit that provides resources to children and families.

While Hausmann was a standout on the basketball court, she also committed her talents to volleyball, softball and soccer.

"I loved them all!" she shares. "If I could give any advice to younger generations, it would be to play as



Submitted photo

Basketball was a fixture for the Hoff family, and the youngest of the Hoff sisters—Heidi—was a standout player for the Lynx.

many sports as long as you can."

Suiting up for the varsity basketball team, as a freshman, Hausmann achieved the first of her many goals

of the game.

"I was grateful to get to play alongside five talented

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## HOFF cont. from page 11B

seniors. They were all wonderful leaders and I learned so much from them that year that made an impact on the rest of my career at BV,” she said.

The Lynx captured second at state that season, a moment Hausmann defines as “heart-breaking.”

“But overall, it was an ideal freshman year and I learned a lot in that first season,” she said.

She crossed off a second goal as a junior in 2011 when the team captured the program’s first-ever AA state title.

“Winning a state title was always a dream of mine. So, to bring home the first-ever state title—especially since we were not necessarily expected to win it all—in BV history was something I will forever cherish,” she said. “The best part is years later still reminiscing with old teammates about the memories. Every state title is special, but there was just something extra special about it being the first.”

Hausmann is the youngest of four Hoff sisters to play girls’ hoops at Brandon Valley. Although she was “last in line,” she said she never felt any extra pressure to push past their success.

“I always looked up to them as role models,” she said. “Basketball was never something I felt I ‘had’ to do, it was just something I always ‘wanted’ to do.”

And she “wanted” to do it from an early age on.

“One of my favorite memories as a little girl was waiting for my dad to get home so we could play ‘one-on-one’; he never turned me down,” she recalled.

After having watched elder sisters Angie and Rachel be teammates, she, too, wanted that same experience.



Submitted photo

Heidi Hoff puts up a shot in the 2011 state tournament, helping her team to win the title.

And, she achieved it when she and sister, Kelli, played alongside one another.

“It was fun being the ‘Hoff sisters’ instead of just ‘Kelli and Heidi,’” she said.

As a five-sport athlete, Hausmann collected 11 varsity letters. She played varsity soccer for two seasons before transferring to volleyball, where she contributed in big ways. Her senior season, she was named team captain and was an All-ESD Conference honorable mention.

She was also gifted in softball (two seasons) and track and field (one season).

But basketball is where Hausmann really shined. She earned four varsity letters and helped the Lady Lynx to win ESD Conference titles in 2009 and 2012, along with enjoying a run of three state tournament appearances. The Lynx claimed runner-up honors in 2009, finished fourth in 2012 and brought home the hardware in 2011.

She also racked up a multitude of individual accolades during her prep career, establishing 11 school records in points, rebounds, assists, and steals in individual games, seasons or career. Hausmann earned all-conference honors three times and was All-Tournament and All-State twice.

Along with the records came a wealth of honors: Spirit of Su, South Dakota Basketball Coaches Association and Argus Leader Player of the Year, South Dakota Miss Basketball and South Dakota Gatorade Player of the Year.

Yet, she remains humble.

“There were many deserving players of each of those awards that year, so they were all an honor,” she said. “Being a good teammate, leader, remaining humble, and displaying good character were important values to me. The awards that were based on these values and not ‘just being a good basketball player’ meant the most to me.”

The game of basketball afforded Hausmann a college education at the University of South Dakota. The Coyotes also had success, winning the National Invitational Tournament championship.

“I am so grateful I had the opportunity to play at the college level and for the experiences gained in those four years,” she said. “Again, the relationships I created with my teammates is the part I cherish the most. The experiences I had at the college level were full of ups and downs. From winning the WNIT tournament to the lows of a season-ending injury. My time as a basketball player at the college level taught me many valuable life lessons that although sometimes tough in the moment, I am grateful for now.”

While bringing home BV’s first state title is an obvious standout moment, Hausmann said she was always proud to represent her community and her school.

“We always had tremendous support and it was so

much fun getting to play for something bigger than yourself,” she said.

Behind the scenes, she notes playing varsity ball with her sister, Kelli, and all of the “off” the court bonding

times that “may have” included “dancing in the locker room before games, bus rides and team get-togethers.”

Hausmann isn’t taking her induction into BV’s Hall of Fame lightly.

“It’s a tremendous honor,” she shares. “There are many deserving alumni of this honor. I am especially excited and honored to be inducted with the entire 2011 state championship (girls’ basketball) team. Getting to catch up with all of them and reminisce on the memories will make for a special event.”

While it was Hausmann, herself, who put in the hard work, she’s grateful for those who helped her along the way.

Her parents, Doug and Lois, top the list.

“My parents were always supportive of all my sisters and I and they never missed a game. Somehow, they always made sure at least one of them were at each of our events,” she said.

She also gives a nod to her sisters, who, she says, “never took it easy on me and always made sure I remembered I was the ‘little’ sister.”

“My sisters were extremely supportive and never missed my games if they had the choice. They are to credit for keeping me motivated and humbled,” she said.

A long list of coaches, starting with her dad, Doug, who was her first coach as a second grader. Matt Christensen and Suzanne Carroll guided her through her seventh and eighth grade seasons. When she ventured into high school, Mark Stadem, Mark Schlekeway, Jeff Lockner and Jill Austin took over the role.

“I was again blessed with an incredible team of coaches. They were all amazing coaches, but even better people that taught so much more than basketball,” she said. “Coach Stadem was especially influential in my high school years, turning me into the player I aspired to become. He truly cared about his each of us as a person and taught us about much more in life than basketball. In addition, all the coaches I had playing softball, soccer, and volleyball were also instrumental in helping me excel in sports,” she said.

