

MANKATO EAST
COUGARS
HALL OF FAME



CLASS OF 2017

CRAIG DAHL

RON KIBBLE

MEGAN (LUNDGREN) WEBER

JAMIE STEFFENSMEIER

KIM (WESTENDORF) BAZATA

TOM YESS

CRAIG DAHL - ATHLETE



Without question the most accomplished athlete that Mankato East has had the pleasure of calling its own is Craig Dahl. Craig not only had a remarkable three sport career in high school but he also finished with a 33-11 record during his four years at NDSU and played at the highest level with a nine year career in the NFL winning a Super Bowl in his first season.

While at East, Craig played three sports at a very high level and when you saw him perform, he played with a tenacity that looked like each sport was his best and would be in his future. In basketball, Craig finished 28th all-time in scoring with 412 career points, was captain and starter of the 2002-03 section championship team, was a two year letter winner, was voted as the Cougar Award winner and the Best Defender on the team. He also earned Academic All-State honors in his final year.

In track and field Craig, who holds the school record in the long jump (22'7.25"), was an eight time state qualifier, six time All-State performer, and along with Jon Boyd, was responsible for Mankato East's 2003 MSHSL Team State Championship, where he placed top 5 in all four events in which he competed!

In the fall, while playing football, he earned All-State honors his junior year, Academic All-State honors his senior year, and was All-Conference and All-City in both 2001 and '02. He ended his high school football career with 3399 career rushing yards (School Record), 1769 passing yards, and 63 career TD's both rushing (School Record - 44) and passing (19). Craig also holds school records in six other game, season and career categories. The Cougars finished runner-up in the 2001 MSHSL Prep Bowl Championship Game behind his great offensive day. Craig was a National Honor Society member and finished high

school with a 3.75 GPA.

In college, Craig took to the other side of the ball and became a defensive back for the Bison where he amassed 229 tackles (132 solo, 97 assists), 2 sacks, 4 interceptions, 5 recovered fumbles, and 3 blocked kicks. In '04 he had personal best 82 tackles and in '05 he had 49 solo tackles for a career high in that category. His '06 season saw the Bison finish the year with a 10-1 record. Twice he was first team GWC (Great West Conference) and once 2nd team. While at NDSU Craig worked towards his Mechanical Engineering degree which he picked up during recovery from his 2nd torn ACL in his 2nd campaign in the NFL.

After college, Craig earned a spot on the New York Giants as a free-agent defensive back and special teams guru. He started two games that season and went on to record 19 tackles and was a part of the Giants' Super Bowl team that won Super Bowl XLII. In 2009, Craig signed with the St. Louis Rams where he played in 14 games, starting 8 of them at safety. He finished with 65 tackles and 2 sacks. In 2010, Craig signed a three year deal and enjoyed his finest statistical season while starting 13 games. He had 98 tackles, 1 sack, 2 interceptions, and 1 forced fumble. In 2011 he recorded 61 tackles and had 1 pick, and in his last season ('12) with the Rams he started all 16 games and recorded 78 tackles with 1 interception. His four year grand total with the St. Louis club was 40 game starts and 302 total tackles, 3 sacks, and 4 picks. He signed a three year deal with the San Francisco 49ers in 2013 and played two seasons with them, recording 70 tackles and 1 interception. His last season in the NFL was with the New York Giants in 2015. Craig finished his NFL career with 406 tackles, 4 sacks, 4 forced fumbles, 3 fumble recoveries, 17 pass deflections, and 5 interceptions.

Craig and his lovely wife, Breelyn, who started and operates a medical device company in Dallas live there with their 9 month old son Brecken.

MEGAN (LUNDGREN) WEBER - ATHLETE



Megan (Lundgren) Weber is a 2007 graduate and the daughter of Scott and Barb Lundgren, both East graduates, as well. Megan was an accomplished and highly decorated three sport athlete in cross country, basketball, and track & field.

In the fall, Megan was a six year letter winner and school record scoring leader for the cross country team. She was a three year team captain, earned All-Big 9 status five times, and twice won the Big 9 Conference CC meet. As the first female runner to participate in the state meet, Megan accomplished the task five times finishing as high as 11th. She was awarded All-State honors three times during her illustrious career and has gone down as arguably the most accomplished female CC runner in Mankato East High School history.

Megan also contributed heavily on the hardwoods in the winter where she lettered three times and was a captain her senior year. She was honorable mention All-Conference in 2006 and 2007 and led the Cougars in minutes played during her three year stint.

In the Spring, Megan took her cross country prowess to track & field where again she lettered six times and ended her career with the school record for career scoring. A two time team captain and multiple time Big 9 Conference meet winner in multiple events, she thrived and was instrumental in the success of the girls program during her era of participation. She was Big 9 All-Conference five times and earned All-State status all six years she competed. Megan was part of the 4x400 meter relay team that won a state championship in 2007 and competed in the following events: (200, 400, 800, 1600, 3200, 4x200, 4x400, 4x800,

and the long jump) An extremely impressive resume of events!

Her exceptional distance running skills were also proven at the next level when she competed for four years while attending Gustavus Adolphus College. Running as a Gustie, Megan also accomplished some wonderful feats and certainly earned her share of awards while competing on both the cross country and the track & field teams. In 2007 she was named Top Newcomer on the CC team. She was also a four year letter winner, earning honorable mention status her senior year when she was a captain of the team.

In the spring she again lettered four years and was named All-Conference in the 880 meter run, 4x400 meter relay, and the 4x800 meter relay. She was also All-Conference in the indoor 1000 meter race and was the 2011 MIAC Indoor Conference Champion in the 800 meter run, where she holds the GAC school record and was also a part of the 4x800 relay team that set a school outdoor record.

Currently, Megan is working at Thrivent Federal Credit Union (Thrivent Financial) as a Digital Marketing Specialist in Minneapolis and living with her husband, Jeff Weber, a Mankato East graduate, and their dalmatian, Panda. Still running and have completed three full marathons along with countless other road races, Megan has not stopped running since it all began when she was a 7th grader!

RON KIBBLE - COMMUNITY MEMBER



Ron Kibble is one of the wonderful community members who helped transform Mankato East into a competitive athletic school from its early stages. His generosity and willing involvement helped Mankato East thrive in multiple areas.

Ron is a 1960 Yankton, SD, graduate who excelled in football and track; after graduation he went to University of South Dakota in Vermillion where he played both ways on the football team as a linebacker and offensive lineman. He was a team captain, earning team MVP twice, and was named to USD's all 60's football team noting his play from 1960-64 campaigns. After graduating as a Coyote, Ron entered the Marine Corp where he was on the boxing team and served a 15 month tour of duty in Vietnam, being promoted to Captain and serving as Company Commander. He also played semi-pro football with the Pensacola Goshawks before returning north.

Ron and his wife Frances, who he married in 1964, moved to Mankato, where he started working at John Deere Company for seven years, prior to buying John Deere Implement in 1974. After a few years of running a business, he began his work helping to develop athletic programming in the Mankato community, which directly affected and enhanced the growth of East athletics. As a founding member of MNMYF football, which is celebrating their 40th year of existence, Ron helped purchase 250 helmets and other equipment, storing it at his dealership for many of the early years, along with providing all of the time and dedication needed to insure a quality program for all of the Mankato youth. Furthermore in his spare time, Ron served on the board of Mankato Area Baseball in the 70's, 80's and 90's.

He also helped to fundraise for the lights on the East stadium field, which would make the field home finally for all of the East football games as well as donating money to the weight room in exchange for athletes volunteering weekends washing and polishing combines and tractors.

Ron and his family have donated both time and money over the years for signage on the baseball field and in the gymnasium as well as to the booster club. His generosity and support as a Cougar have endeared him to many coaches and players who are aware of the influence he brought during a time where high school sports needed help at Mankato East. Ron and his wife Fran are wonderful promoters of Mankato East athletics as well as of Mankato East High School, for being a great school to obtain an excellent education.

In retirement, Ron has been helping with a hospice program in Mankato the past 12 years and lives with his lovely wife Fran, for whom he works as a "Garden Boy", which he states is a non-volunteer job. Both of their children, Kris and Steve, were student-athletes at East. In addition they have five grand-children.

JAMIE STEFFENSMEIER - ATHLETE



Jamie Steffensmeier, a 2002 graduate, has had quite a career, not only as an athlete in high school, excelling at football and track and field, but also in college and in his service for our country in the Navy following graduation. The soft-spoken leader is a truly terrific role model for our younger generation.

While at East, Jamie made quite a mark on the gridiron as a three time letter-winner, and in track and field where he lettered a total of four times. In football, Jamie earned All-City and All-Conference honors three times each and was also a three time Defensive Player of the Year for the Cougars. He was voted Most Promising Player his sophomore year, which proved to be very prophetic. Twice he was voted All-State and was recognized as The Best Defensive Player in the Big 9 Conference his senior year. Jamie set several team tackling records, rarely missing one when given a chance. He played in the post-season Minnesota Coaches All-Star football game his senior year and as a captain, helped lead the Cougars to their highest finish at state, when they were runner-up to Detroit Lakes in the 2001 MSHSL Prep Bowl Championship. Jamie also excelled in track and field as a captain, he earned All Big 9 Conference status three times and finished in 5th place in the State Meet as part of the 4x100 meter relay in 2002.

At St. John's in Collegeville, MN, Jamie picked up right where he left off in high school. Over his career at St. John's, Jamie was a three time All-Conference performer, a three time All-West Region player, and an impressive three time All-American. He started as a true freshman on the Johnnies' 2003 DIII National Championship team and was a team captain his junior and senior year. Jamie was equally as impressive in the classroom, earning Academic All-American

status twice.

After completing his college career, Jamie joined the Navy and eventually earned the ranking of a Lieutenant Commander. He was deployed to Afghanistan in 2012-13 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, followed by a second deployment to the Middle East in 2015 in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. Jamie had numerous other deployments aboard Fast Attack Submarines (USS Columbia SSN-771) and Aircraft Carriers (USS Theodore Roosevelt CVN-71). He has earned the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal four times, the Army Achievement Medal, and the Joint Achievement Medal along with multiple others. All totaled, Jamie has visited 31 different countries in his Naval career.

Jamie played with his best friend, twin brother Tony, while in high school at Mankato East and at St. John's in college. He is currently attending the University of North Carolina in their MBA program on a fully loaded Department of Defense Scholarship. He has been married for 5 years to his lovely wife Christa; they have two sons, Jackson (3 yr's old) and Cameron (6 mo. old).

KIM (WESTENDORF) BAZATA - ATHLETE



Kim (Westendorf) Bazata, a 2004 graduate, had an illustrious career both in high school and college and embodied what a student-athlete is all about throughout her career at Mankato East. She was a five year letterwinner in swimming and a four year letterwinner in fastpitch softball while at East.

In the pool, Kim competed in a variety of events including the 50 yard freestyle and the 100 yard freestyle. She earned All-Conference Honorable Mention honors her junior and senior years in 2002 and 2003. As a captain her junior and senior year she also garnered All-City accolades and was a two time state meet participant in the 50 free, 100 free, and the 400 free relay. Tim Johnson, her former swim coach at East, claims that all of her shoulder work in the pool helped strengthen her as an elite pitcher on the softball diamond.

The spring season is where Kim's athletic passion was fully present. Kim's first varsity work came when she was a freshman and was part of a "perfect game" with two other pitchers. Her overall record of 56-10 attests to how successful she was for the Cougars. She was a four year letter winner, Big 9 All-Conference in '02, '03, and '04 and earned All-Section honors her junior and senior years. Kim was also a two time coaches' All-State selection in '03 and '04, and made the Pioneer Press All-State softball team those same two years. She played in the Coaches All-Star game and concluded her softball career at East with 620 K's in 482 innings. Kim led the Cougars to two state tournaments, finishing as Consolation Champions in the 2004. Kim was also a National Honor Society member and earned an Academic All-State award recipient her senior year.

After high school, she enrolled at South Dakota State, where she continued to shine as a student-athlete in fastpitch softball. She faced numerous big time programs as a Division I pitcher while leading the Jackrabbits in innings pitched her junior year. Kim transferred her senior year to pitch at NDSU and was named to the Division I All-Independent Team. She also earned Division I Academic All-State for the second year in a row in 2009. Kim pitched on ESPN in the Super-Regional against college powerhouse Arizona State. She was 10-5 with a 2.05 ERA in her final year.

Kim graduated with honors from NDSU in 2009 with a degree in chemistry. She then later earned her master's of Science Education from the University of MN. She has taught for eight years, one at Fridley High School in MN, where she was also the head softball coach and three years as head coach at Washington HS in Sioux Falls, SD, where she is still currently teaching. She has also stayed busy as the Augustana pitching coach since 2016. Kim has been married to her husband Steve Bazata for the past five years and they were blessed with a baby boy, Cael, this past May.

TOM YESS - COACH



"T-Y"! Maybe no one has coached and been around athletes at Mankato East who is more known or popular than the two-letter man.

Coach Yess was a 1978 Mankato East graduate who lettered in football, basketball, and baseball two years each. He was part of some very good athletic teams that didn't get the same type of recognition or hype that teams do today. Although not the star of those teams, T-Y was a terrific role player and excellent teammate who was all about team first.

Tom began teaching in ISD 77 thirty years ago and started his coaching tenure thirty eight years ago! As a freshman in college, he was already Coach Yess to many on the East side. He coached baseball at Mankato East from 1979-81 at both the C and B-squad levels. He was the B-squad football coach from 1980-1983, the B-squad girls' basketball coach from 1987-1996, the girls' fastpitch softball coach from 1985-present, and the boys' soccer JV coach from 2007-present.

Coach Yess has helped an abundance of students over his 38 years of coaching and has left a positive and undeniable impact on all of the student athletes that he helped develop. Coach Madson once said of Coach Yess, "I had the pleasure of playing for him and knowing how much he cared for us to do well when I was a freshman and sophomore in high school. He treated us maturely and was easy to play for. This is why when I took over the softball program in 1994, it was so easy to have him now coaching with me." T-Y is an excellent example of someone who has a knack for getting

student-athletes to perform on an everyday basis without all the rah-rah and hype. He is calm, level headed, and a terrific game manager. Very few discouraging words have been uttered from Coach Yess, who focuses on a positive approach, developing a can do mindset. He is simply a favorite for many who have played for him.

T-Y received his undergraduate degree in 1983 from MSU-Mankato and later earned his Masters' degree from the same university in 2001. He has been married for 28 years to his lovely wife Karen and has two sons, Jordan, a 2010 East graduate and Nick, a 2013 East graduate. Both Jordan and Nick played soccer for Dad while attending East and Jordan also later coached with Tom. Coach Yess's parents, Pinky and Val, are legendary Mankato East fans and have probably seen more East sporting events than any couple in the history of the school.