

The Storm Report

OAKES TORNADOES UPDATES

February 27, 2026



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MORE THAN A RECORD: GIRLS BASKETBALL SEASON RE-CAP

By: Kalyn Haafke

A 6 to 13 record does not tell the whole story.

For the Oakes Tornadoes girls basketball team, this season was about growth. The kind of growth that does not always show up on the scoreboard.

After graduating more than 90 percent of last year's offense, the Tornadoes came into the season with very little varsity experience. Only one player had significant varsity minutes. Everyone else had to adjust quickly, take on new roles, and figure things out together.



Head coach Shaun Kourajian said he was proud of how the team responded. "We had a next man up mentality all season," Kourajian said. "No matter who was missing, they continued to play hard until the final buzzer."

Early on, the inexperience showed. But so did the effort. Sophomore Jillian Miller said that lack of experience actually motivated the team. "We really wanted to push ourselves and get better individually and as a team," she said.

As the season went on, confidence slowly started to grow. Practices became louder. Energy picked up. Players began to believe in themselves more. Junior Swaye Jackson noticed the change. "We became more aggressive on both sides of the ball," she said.

The team also battled injuries throughout the season. Senior I. Friedt fought through a shoulder injury. Jackson and Miller both dealt with injuries of their own. Coming back from those setbacks was not just physical, it was mental.

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For senior Emily Rosendahl, growth meant stepping into leadership, even when it felt uncomfortable. “I’m not very vocal,” she said. “But I wanted everyone to feel confident and comfortable in the gym.” That confidence became one of the biggest lessons of the year.

Aliyah Friedt, who earned All District honors, embraced a new role and learned something important about herself along the way. “I learned I’m not just a stat or number in a book,” she said.

By the end of the season, the team felt different. The inside jokes came easier. Practices were competitive but encouraging. Teammates pushed each other and then picked each other up after mistakes.

What started as a rebuilding year became a foundation year. The seniors leave behind more than wins. They leave a standard of hard work, support, and effort. And the younger players are already looking ahead.

Six wins. Thirteen losses.

And a team that built something stronger than a record.

WINS	LOSSES
6	13

TEAM STATS

39 Points per Game

30% Field Goal

25% 3-Point

54% Free Throw

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DIET DR PEPPER: THE REAL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

By: Mass Media class

Scientists estimate that the average human body is made up of approximately 50- 60% water. Water regulates temperature, fuels the brain, and sustains life. For most people, hydration is a biological necessity.

But Mr. Dobitz is not most people.

Our OPS elementary principal appears to operate on a different formula entirely.

While the average person may be primarily water, Mr. Dobitz has been observed functioning at a consistent 93% Diet Dr Pepper, with the remaining 7% believed to consist of intimidation, his love for hugs, and what teachers say his “aggressively helpful demeanor.”



We decided to follow him for one full school day to better understand the science behind the fizz. Here is a look at the average day of Mr. Dobitz and his consumption of Diet Dr. Pepper.

5:34 A.M. Wake Up Time

As soon as Mr. Dobitz wakes up in the morning, he rolls out of bed and cracks open a cold, crisp Diet Dr Pepper. Most people start their mornings with a cup of coffee... not Mr. Dobitz.

6:42 A.M. Breakfast

Breakfast is an important meal and should fuel most people, Mr. Dobitz thinks otherwise. All he needs is a granola bar and a Diet Dr Pepper to fuel his system.

7:46 A.M. Work Time

By the time students start showing up for school, Mr. Dobitz has finished his morning Diet Dr Pepper. Most people would only drink one caffeinated beverage a day but.... not Mr. Dobitz. So, he pops open another Diet Dr Pepper to drink until recess.

10:27 A.M. Recess Duty

At the beginning of recess, you can spot Dobitz cracking open a quick can of Diet Dr Pepper before watching over Diet Dr Pepperless children. He then has to quickly warm himself up with a Diet Dr Pepper, so he calls the kids inside.

12:01 P.M. Early Afternoon Snack

A snack for Mr. Dobitz does not happen. He thinks he is hungry, however he just wants to crack another Diet Dr Pepper. Most people would have just ate a snack. But not Mr. Dobitz.

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DIET DR PEPPER: THE REAL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL CONTINUED...

1:17 P.M. Lunchtime

While most people in the conference room are eating their lunch, Mr. Dobitz is already holding his Diet Dr Pepper like it is his personal guest. Everyone else may have different food each day, but his drink never changes. It seems like the Diet Dr Pepper has a reserved seat at the table.

3:30 P.M. Bus Duty/ Crossing Guard

While standing at the cross walk helping kids cross the road. Mr. Dobitz is silently wishing that he could cross the street. Knowing that a Diet Dr Pepper is sitting there waiting for him to buy it.

5:03 P.M. Pit Stop (Fuel up T-Stop before home)

One last trip before home – time to fuel up at T-Stop. While most people avoid having to get out of their car in the cold, Mr. Dobitz takes this opportunity to also fuel up. If you see him leaving T-Stop, you'll see him with a Diet Dr Pepper (or 2) in hand.

8:49 P.M. Bedtime Routine

At the end of a long day of chasing kids around all Mr. Dobitz wants to do is go home and throw on his pajamas, read a book, and enjoy a cup of Ice cold, fizzy, Diet Dr Pepper. Most people avoid caffeine at night ... but not Mr. Dobitz.

At the end of the day, scientists would argue that hydration is essential for human survival. After all, our bodies depend on water to function properly.

Elementary principal, Greg Dobitz, continues to defy science. Through recess duty, bus lines, staff meetings, and snackless afternoons, he has demonstrated that leadership may not be measured in ounces of water after all. Instead, it is fueled by artificial sweetener, carbonation, and a dose of caffeine.

Researchers are still studying the long-term effects of Diet Dr Pepper based leadership. Early findings suggest increased hallway efficiency, the best hugs, and “aggressively helpful demeanors” are results of a diet consisted of Diet Dr Pepper.

The school runs smoothly, the crosswalks stay safe, and cans never seem to run empty. OPS students can rest assured that Mr. Dobitz is always fueled up and ready to take on anything that comes his way.

And tomorrow morning at 5:34 A.M. the cycle will begin again.



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FFA

By Ava Thompson

LITTLE I (FARGO) & KINDRED CONTEST



Students from the local FFA Chapter at the Kindred and Little I (Fargo) contest. A total of 9 students participated and did very well. They showed hard work, teamwork, and dedication.

Here are some things you should know while reading this article.

SAC- Small Animal Care

ENR- Environmental Natural Resources

Marley try's new things

Marley competed at both Kindred and Little I and tried ENR for the first time i kindred. It was a great experience; she said it taught her how to think quickly under pressure. At Little I her team placed first and she earned silver in both SAC and ENR at Kindred. Her favorite part of the trip was Chick-Fil-A. She ate their three times. Some of her recommendations are just giving FFA a try. "it's my first year in FFA as a junior and you shouldn't be scared of trying something new; you might end up loving it, she stated.

Mia's Experience

Mia competed in AG sales where she had to present and "sell" a product as well as take a test. She scored really high in both contests. She said the judges have her helpful feedback so she can improve at future events. Her favorite part was spending time with her teammates like talking with her friends and door dashing icecream. Her advice to upcoming FFA members is that it takes time, but it's worth it because you get to experience fun things and meet new people.

Becca's Success

Becca competed in SAC and Ag sales. She placed 2nd and 3rd in SAC and was really proud of herself. She said all of her studying paid off. Her favorite part wasn't just competing; it was hanging out with friends at the hotel, especially her seniors Ava and Shayle. Since it was their last year doing Little I and the Kindred contest, it was a little said, she said. Some advice she has for new and upcoming FFA members to study Quizlet's and don't study right before the contest. She also said to talk to advisors as they will help you reach your full potential.

Shayle's Big Wins

Shayle, a senior, competed in Ag sales, ENR and SAC. She did very well receiving first in SAC and ENR along with team getting first in small Animal care. She was very proud. Shayle is known for working hard, and it shows her results. She said she will miss competing with her teammate Ava. Her advice is not to wait until the last minute to study.

Overall, the contests were all big successes. The students did great, learned a lot, made new friends and memories.

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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

By: Kalyn Haafke

High school has been a journey of growth, resilience, and self-discovery for this senior.

Her favorite subject is Math with Mr. Schneider because when she is struggling, he takes the time to help her truly understand the material. She appreciates teachers who are patient and willing to support their students and recognizes how much that encouragement matters.

One of the biggest influences in her life has been Mrs. Paulette Hoyt, a former teacher at Midkota. Mrs. Hoyt taught her that not everything in life has to be perfect and that it is okay to focus on yourself and your own goals. She helped her realize that caring about her future is not selfish. “She made me feel better when I made mistakes,” she shares, a lesson that helped her stop believing negative thoughts and start believing in herself.

If she could describe her high school experience in one word, it would be hard. She moved here nearly three months into her freshman year and did not know anyone. For her first two years, she mostly kept to herself. Communication was one of her biggest challenges, but by junior year she began stepping out of her comfort zone. Making friends that year became her favorite high school memory. “Having friends made school worth coming to,” she says.

Being a senior feels different to her because she has already been on her own for quite some time. While many of her classmates are just beginning to experience independence, she has already learned how to take care of herself and make her own decisions. That independence has shaped who she is and given her strength beyond her years.

Outside of school, she enjoys going to the gym because it makes her feel proud and strong. She is especially proud of being the first person in her family to graduate high school and attend college. There was a time when she doubted she would even make it past junior year. Now, she plans to attend college and pursue a master’s degree in social work focused on child welfare. She hopes to make children feel safe, loved, and important.

The biggest lesson she will carry with her is to keep going, even when life feels overwhelming. There were times she felt alone, but pushing through showed her how strong she truly is. Being a senior is not just about finishing school for her. It is about surviving everything that led to this moment and being proud that she made it.



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HOW MUSIC AFFECTS EVERYDAY LIFE.

By: Jyles Meier

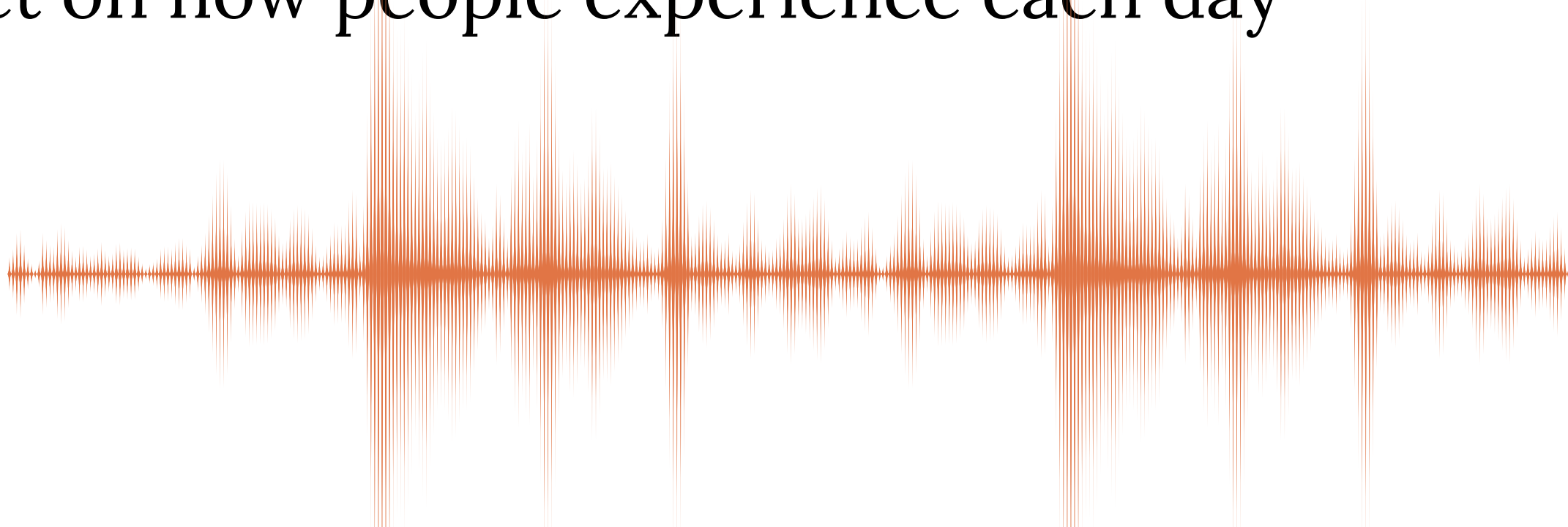
Music is a part of almost everyone's daily routine. From the moment people wake up and turn on their favorite playlist, to the songs that play in the car or at practice. Music is always around us. Even when we don't realize it music has a powerful effect on our thoughts, emotions, and actions.

One of the biggest ways music affects everyday life is Through mood. A fast, upbeat song can make someone feel energized and ready to take on the day. Slower songs can help people relax after a long day of school or work. Many students use music as a way to deal with stress, anxiety, or even boredom. Listening to the right song at the right time can completely change how someone feels.

Music also affects focus and motivation. A Stanford studies shows students concentrate better while listening to music while doing homework because it blocks out distractions. Athletes often listen to hype music before a game to feel more confident and prepared. Many professional athletes like LeBron James have talked about listening to music before games to get in the right mindset. Music can help people mentally prepare for important moments in their lives.

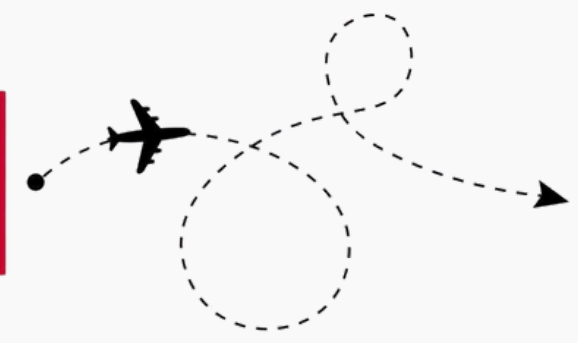
Another way music impacts everyday life is through identity and connection. The type of music someone listens to can reflect their personality. Apps like Spotify allow people to share playlists and discover new artists. Which helps create communities around similar music tastes. Music can bring people together at concerts school dances, and even online through social media trends.

Overall, music plays a bigger role than some may know. It influences emotions, focus, motivation and even relationships. Whether it's helping someone calm down, get hyped up, or feel understood, music plays a powerful role in everyday life. It is something simple, yet it has a huge impact on how people experience each day



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FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENT



By: Nadysen McKay

A foreign exchange student is a student who travels to another country to live with a host family and attend school, experiencing a new culture, language, and way of life firsthand. This opportunity allows students to step outside their comfort zones, develop independence, and build connections with people from different backgrounds. By sharing traditions, values, and perspectives, exchange students not only learn about the host country but also teach others about their own culture. Overall, foreign exchange programs promote global understanding, personal growth, and lifelong memories for both the students and the communities that welcome them.

Foreign exchange programs became popular after World War II as countries wanted to promote peace through cultural understanding instead of conflict. Organizations like AFS Intercultural Programs and Rotary International helped create opportunities for students to study abroad and live with host families. In 1946, the U.S. also introduced the Fulbright Program to encourage educational exchanges between countries. Since then, foreign exchange programs have grown around the world, allowing students to learn about new cultures while building international friendships.

At Oakes Public School we had a foreign exchange student at the beginning of 2nd semester. He speaks 4 languages English, Russian, Romanian and French. He says the biggest difference between school here and Moldova is that in America he can choose his classes, while in Moldova his schedule was the same every day. The hardest thing for him to adjust to has been speaking english all the time and learning in english, especially since there isnt anyone he can talk in russian to.

In conclusion, foreign exchange programs help students grow by experiencing new cultures, languages, and ways of life. Although foreign exchange students may face challenges adjusting to a new school and speaking English every day, these experiences build confidence and independence. At the same time, communities learn from the exchange students' cultures and perspectives. Overall, these programs create understanding and connections between people around the world.



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TOP 5 WAYS TO HAVE A BETTER DAY

By: Isaac Bjornstad

Have you ever been laying in your bed thinking to yourself “Man... The world is being broken before my eyes and I’m helpless to stop it.” Well firstly, you can do much more than you think, and secondly, I can help you with that! Behold, for I shall be presenting 5 wonderful ways to improve your day, so you can lie to yourself that everything is OK. Don’t touch that dial folks, because what better source to help you lie to yourself than the news?

First, we can try going on a walk. Walking is a basic, but good way to improve your serotonin and dopamine aka the part of your brain that makes you go yippee. It can also increase blood flow to the body and brain. It can also improve your attentiveness and humor. and even then walking is just beneficial for your health in general, so it won’t hurt to go on a quick walk once and a while.

Second, an easy thing you can do is resting. Simply taking a break has been proven to lower stress, help get better sleep, and help us think more clearly. It can also help you concentrate and boost your mood. everyone needs a break, and you aren’t an exception, so take a rest, you need it.

Third, would be participating in hobbies. I don’t have to tell you that doing what you like will make you feel happier, but luckily my hobby is bugging you about everything. It can help to relieve stress, boost self-esteem, relax and calm you, promote creativity, give you a sense of accomplishment and more!

Fourth, would be trying new things. Now that may seem counterintuitive but just hear me out for a second. New experiences help stimulate our brain to release dopamine. It can also boost your bravery and self worth.

Fifth, we have spending time with friends. While this as an ending seems corny, the benefits of friendship may be more real than you think. It’s been found that your body releases endorphins while talking with a friend, which boosts your happiness and lowers stress.

And with that, or list is done. In conclusion, there’s so much more you can do. So go outside, touch some dead grass, have a snowball fight, sled, just have fun. The only way it can hurt you is by not trying.

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UGGS ARE NOT THE SAME AS SLIPPERS



By: Addie Umbreit



Calling Uggs slippers is like calling a bike a car – it's not correct and it doesn't make sense. There's controversy surrounding these popular shoes about comfort vs. aesthetics, love vs. hate. Uggs are more than just slippers and here's why.

We've seen how popular Uggs have become and despite the opinions that surround them, they've been trending for several decades. Some people don't even classify Uggs as real shoes. However, Uggs and slippers are not the same, for multiple reasons. Slippers don't offer support, they have little protection, thin soles, and have soft bottoms. These are typically only worn inside while walking or lounging around the house. Uggs can be worn outside even in the warm, dry conditions. These comfortable shoes are thick and durable in comparison to slippers. They have a sheepskin lining, keeps you warm during the winter, and some are even water-resistant.

The main reason people call them slippers is because you can slip them on quickly. Although this is true, you can also slip on some types of tennis shoes, sandals, or even boots, and those shoes don't even compare to slippers, so why should these?

Moreover, these comfortable, practical shoes are trending around the world and even seen around our own school, and for good reason. Uggs are so great because of how versatile they are. They go with any outfit: jeans, sweatpants, you can even dress them up or down. These high-quality shoes don't resemble the flimsiness of a slipper and are easily the best-looking version of the so-called 'grandpa shoe.'

Overall, if you're looking for a shoe that's great for the unpredictable, winter weather, Uggs are the way to go. So no, Uggs aren't slippers, they're comfortable, durable footwear that deserves more credit than people give them.

THE MILAN OLYMPICS 2026

By Dylan Quandt

The Olympic Games are the worlds best multi-sport event. The games are once every two years, flipping between winter and summer sports. Every country is allowed to compete in Milan this year. Except, Russia and Belarus who've been banned since the evasion of Ukraine. Athletes from these countries can still compete just not under their country's flag.

This year it's the winter games. Alpine skiing, bobsled, curling, figure skating, and speed skating are some of the events this year. There is one new event called ski mountaineering. The ski mountaineering athletes have to climb uphill then they have to ride a very technical down slope. This sport is very demanding physically. Athletes in this event have extraordinary stamina.

I wanted to get some cool fact most people wouldn't know. So, I emailed Mr. Awender. He said "Before the Winter Olympics were created in 1924, Ice Hockey was actually played in the Olympics for the first time during the 1920 Summer Olympics!" I also asked him if he could try to place in any event, what would it be? He said "If I could choose any event to participate in with intent to place, I would definitely choose Snowboarding. I wouldn't be able to do all of the fancy jumps and flips, but I would give it my best effort. I'm really new to snowboarding, as I just picked it up as a hobby this winter! I would take plenty of falls during competition, so I don't anticipate I would be able to place!". Now lets see how everyone did in this years Olympics.

MOST MEDALS MOST GOLD MEDALS

Norway(41)	Norway(18)
USA(33)	USA(12)
Italy(30)	Netherlands(10)
Germany(26)	Italy(10)
Japan(24)	Germany(8)



U.S. HOCKEY TEAM WON FIRST GOLD SINCE 1980

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HANDS-ON FUTURES: HOW JOB SHADOWING PREPARES STUDENTS

By: Breann Young



Many high school students are unsure about what they want to do after graduation. Instead of just guessing, students at Oakes High School have the opportunity to find out through job shadowing in the Workplace and Internship Readiness class. This class allows students to go into real workplaces and observe professionals in careers they are interested in. After interviewing several students and the teacher who runs the program, it is clear that job shadowing is helping students better understand their future.

McKenna, a student in the program, has job shadowed at both a salon and a kindergarten classroom. She said she was nervous when she first started at the salon, but this semester she felt excited to work in the kindergarten classroom. McKenna explained that job shadowing helped her figure out what career she wants to pursue after high school. She said that without this experience, she would probably still be unsure about her future. She believes job shadowing is important because students get hands-on experience before making career decisions.

Emily chose to job shadow at a dental office because she has been interested in becoming a dental hygienist. She said she felt both nervous and excited at first, especially because she didn't know anyone there. However, the experience helped her see what the job is really like in a real setting. Emily said job shadowing didn't change her career choice, but it made her more confident in her decision. She would recommend job shadowing to other students so they can explore careers they are interested in.

Elexis job shadowed at a finance and accounting workplace because that is the career field she wants to go into. She said she felt very nervous at first and was worried about making a bad impression, but she was also excited for the opportunity. After spending time there, she said the experience helped confirm that she is choosing the right career path. She believes job shadowing is important because it helps students understand if a career is the right fit for them before committing to it.

Mrs. Haafke, the teacher who runs the Workplace and Internship Readiness class, plays a significant role in helping students find these opportunities. She meets with students to discuss their interests and helps connect them with local businesses and workplaces. She said the goal of job shadowing is to give students real-world experience and help them make informed decisions about their future. Students also complete reflections and assignments to help them track what they learn during their experience.

Overall, job shadowing gives students valuable experience outside of the classroom. It allows them to explore different careers, gain confidence, and prepare for life after high school. Based on the interviews, job shadowing is a helpful opportunity for students who want to learn more about their future and make better career decisions.



Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or more commonly known as the winter blues, is a temporary dip in mood, energy, and motivation. Symptoms are generally experienced during colder and darker months, often due to the reduce of sunlight. I talked to OHS councilor, Mr. Wentworth, and asked how we can help with or avoid the winter blues.

1. **Find time for your favorite hobby.** You should find activities that you enjoy for yourself. It's about having something that gets you up, going and something to look forward to.
2. **Exercise.** Its great to get into the routine of exercise because it helps flow oxygen to your cells. Anything from a walk to a full workout helps.
3. **Hydrate and get enough sleep.** Many times when our bodies don't get enough water or sleep, our bodies feel like they are slowing down.
4. **Stop waiting to be motivated.** Telling yourself to get started is one small step, remember to give yourself a small celebration of victory to keep yourself going.
5. **Take time to self reflect.** Using a rating scale 0-10 on how you are feeling helps you think of actions to take to make you feel even .5 better.

In conclusion, there are many things to help with the winter blues. There's no "silver bullet answers" to getting rid of them, but taking time to truly understand the person you are will help you make small changes to keep the winter blues away. Thank you to Mr. Wentworth for helping educate us on how to keep the winter blues away this season.



The Storm Report



WRESTLING

By: Lila Iverson



The wrestling season is full of ups, downs, and reversals. On the 13th and 14th, the wrestling teams went to individual regional wrestling in Valley City. Ten boys qualified for state along with our first-ever girl. The boys included Carter, Trygg, Sutton, Jaren, Owen, Mathias, Jacob, Ben, Zade, and Max. Alize is the first-ever girl in Oakes' history to make it to state. That is an amazing accomplishment!

The top eight wrestlers from each region qualify for state, and they did just that. Competing in the state tournament is a big deal. Here is what it means to four of our wrestlers. Ladies first, Alize said, "It feels amazing because I have had a long pre-season. I wanted to quit so many times. I knew if I quit, I would be letting my teammates down." Qualifying for state for the first time, Owen said, "It shows that even when I'm tired and physically drained that I can find it mentally and compete and thrive to make it to state." Returning state champion Mathias says, "It means a lot to me because it allows me to show how hard I have worked in the offseason and in practice." Senior wrestler Max said, "It means that my hard work and efforts of the previous tournaments and practices were worth it."

Qualifying and going to state takes a lot of hard work and dedication. Throughout the wrestling season, wrestlers showed great physical training, mental strength, and a lot of preparation. Wrestling is an individual sport, but it also relies on teamwork and support. Everyone has their weaknesses, and here is what our wrestlers overcame. Alize's obstacle was "completing my work," but with help from her team, she pulled through. Owen's was "the mental and physical challenges when wanting to quit," but getting better results helped push him along. Mathias's was "dealing with my hamstring injury," fighting through the pain and showing his determination. The hardest part for Max was "around December when I got influenza and had to sit out for a week or so."

Even with time off the mat, he came ready to go. When things get tough, you cannot give up. Motivation is one of the greatest things you can have, and it comes in several ways. Mathias's motivation comes from "just believing in myself that I can do anything." "When times get hard, it is success — ending on the podium after having to wrestle back after a loss is the best feeling," said Owen. Alize said when "people started saying they see potential in me," it helped her stay focused. "During the hard times, knowing all my friends around me are doing it with me," said Max.

With all the pressure and preparation, all 11 of the state qualifiers, eight stats, and seven coaches traveled to Fargo on Wednesday February 18th. The wrestlers tried their hardest and pushed through their matches. Some had to reface earlier opponents. They pushed along, but some matches did not go as planned. There were matches that had you on your toes, wondering what would happen or who would win. In the end, Carter got seventh at 107, Ben placed second at 121, Trygg placed second at 127, Jaren placed fifth at 133, Mathias placed sixth at 152, Jacob got fourth at 189, and Max placed eighth at 215, ending this year in a good position.

This year has finally ended. There were many good matches, hard-fought practices, and many lessons learned. In all, they deserve some time off with some well-earned junk food. In the 2027 wrestling season, Ben, Max, Zade, and Karsen will be missed.