



Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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Golden Groundhog Trophy enhances Woodstock crosstown athletics competition

Woodstock and Woodstock North high schools have battled each other on athletic courts and fields for 18 years, but a new trophy competition has raised the stakes.

With the debut of the Golden Groundhog Trophy, the Blue Streaks and Thunder are now playing for more than just individual game wins — they are competing for total athletic bragging rights over the entire school year.

Chris Hurckes, a community member and Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 parent, launched the Golden Groundhog competition for the 2025-2026 school year after speaking with both high school athletic directors.

“We thought this would be a fun addition to the existing athletic rivalry between the two schools and give athletes, coaches, and the schools another reason to compete throughout the year,” Hurckes said.

For several years, the winner of the boys' Crosstown Challenge football game has earned The Brick trophy, but there hasn't been anything for other crosstown sports overall. Hurckes said he thought it would be fun to include all boys' and girls' athletic teams in all three seasons.

Hurckes and his firm, Clarity Group Midwest financial planners, are sponsoring the Golden Groundhog Trophy.

The competition uses a point system based on head-to-head results. Sports with two annual meetings, such as basketball and baseball, award one point per game. Sports with only one matchup, like football, award two points. For sports decided by conference or tournament standings, such as track and field, the school that finishes higher earns two points. Scores are updated at the conclusion of each season, and an overall total is calculated following the spring season.

WHS Athletic Director Al Baker and WNHS Athletic Director Derek Crabill said they are grateful for Hurckes's support of D200 athletics and athletes who are excited about the additional incentive in their competitions.

“It was a very exciting year for Blue Streak athletics, and we are going to do our best to keep the Golden Groundhog on the south side again in 2027,” Baker said.

The Blue Streaks won the inaugural title last year with a total score of 23–17. The school received its traveling trophy at halftime of its first home football game on Aug. 28. The winner keeps the trophy for the remainder of the school year.

Crabill said it's an exciting way to showcase high school sports on both sides of town. "The Thunder look forward to competing for the Golden Groundhog this year, and plan on working hard to bring the trophy to the north side," he said.

"I hope that this eventually becomes something that athletes, coaches, teachers, families, and the community take pride in and genuinely want to win each year. I'd love for the bragging rights that come with winning the Golden Groundhog to become a fun part of the D200 athletic culture," Hurckes said.