



## Northwest High School Hall of Fame Announces 2021-22 Class

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The Northwest High School Athletic Hall of Fame is pleased to announce its second class for the 2021-22 school year. The Northwest Hall of Fame committee was formed in the summer of 2020 with the goal of developing a permanent hall of fame to recognize past Northwest teams, students and coaches who displayed excellence during their time at Northwest. Additionally, the committee will recognize community members who had a lasting impact on Northwest athletics.

“We have had great response from alumni and the Northwest community to our hall of fame,” committee president Kevin Fries said. “After the committee selected our first class, we received many nominations for future classes and are excited to present this class into the hall of fame.”

The 2021-22 class includes five athletes, one coach, a state championship team and three alumni who had great success after Northwest. Inductees will be recognized at various Northwest athletic events throughout the school year. On Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> the first set of inductees will be recognized. They include: Taylor (Johnson) Barnes, former athlete and coach JJ Toczek and the 1994 state championship volleyball team.

Other new inductees to be recognized last this school year included: Cody Rush, Brandon Harrington, Mike Eberhart, Chris (Becker) Schropfer, Brandon Seifert, Sharon Zavala and Vince Zavala.

Members being recognized on Tuesday include:

**Taylor (Johnson) Barnes (2010):** A three-sport letter winner at Northwest, Taylor Johnson was selected at the *Grand Island Independent* girl’s athlete of the year after her senior year in 2010. Johnson was a standout on three volleyball teams that advanced to the state championship game in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Johnson also holds three school records in the track – shot put, discus and triple jump. Johnson continued her volleyball career at Kansas State University where she played on three NCAA Tournament teams, including the 2011 Sweet 16. She was a two-time academic All-Big 12 first team selection in Manhattan.

**JJ Toczek (1990):** A 1990 Northwest graduate, Dr. JJ Toczek has had a successful career in academic administration and coaching. He got his start in coaching while in college as an assistant for Diane Rouzee on the 1994 state championship volleyball team. He assisted again in 1995 before beginning his teaching and coaching career in the Lincoln Public Schools. In 2003, Toczek was named the volleyball coach at Papillion-LaVista High School where he led the Monarchs to state five times in six seasons and won Class A state championships in 2007 and 2008; both teams were nationally ranked. Dr. Toczek is currently in his 8<sup>th</sup> year as the Athletic Director at Lincoln Southeast High School where he has been president of the Heartland Athletic Conference and a representative on the NSAA Student Advisory Committee.

**TEAM -- 1994 Volleyball:** As the NSAA celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> season of volleyball, the roots of the Northwest volleyball dynasty traces some of its early success to the 1994 state championship team. This team won the first championship in school history and was just the sixth to compete at the state tournament. On a cold, snowy weekend in November the Vikings upset their way to the state title with wins over Omaha Gross and Norris, before taking down top-ranked and undefeated Ogallala 15-11, 11-15 and 15-8 in the state championship game as they finished with a season record of 19-4.

The details of the second induction and biographies for the remainder of the class will be made at a later date with inductees set to be honored at the Dave Gee Invitational Track Meet in the spring.

The Northwest Hall of Fame has been made possible by 11 founding members that have committed to the ongoing success of the project. Those businesses and families include: Equitable Bank, Family Eyecare Center, Five Points Bank, Grand Island Physical Therapy, Grand Island Surgery Center, Holiday Bus, Home Federal Bank, Mike and Melissa Jakubowski, Pinnacle Bank, Mike and Michelle Schuster and Tom Dinsdale Chevrolet Cadillac GMC.

