



TYLER ALBERS
Papillion-LV
6-3, Sr.
PPG: 21.1



RYAN MOORE
Beatrice
6-2, Sr.
PPG: 16.5



MICHAEL JENKINS
Bellevue West
6-3, Sr.
PPG: 16.6



B.J. VALENTINE
Om. Central
5-7, Jr.
PPG: 20.2



DRAKE BERANEK
Ravenna
6-4, Jr.
PPG: 21.0



BRANDON MCGRUDER
Om. Bryan
6-0, Sr.
PPG: 20.2



AARON BRANDT
Wahoo Neumann
6-4, Jr.
PPG: 15.6



BEN SUING
Elkhorn MM
6-0, Sr.
PPG: 17.0



GABE ZWIENER
Pleasanton
6-11, Sr.
PPG: 19.0



WAID VONTZ
Cambridge
6-1, Jr.
PPG: 23.1

ALL-STATE OASIS

Bellevue West's Dotzler, Bluejays' Neuirth made teammates better, earn honors as captains of All-Nebraska basketball teams

By STU POSPISIL
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Future point guards in the state will have to measure up to Bellevue West's Josh Dotzler.

The Creighton recruit heads the All-Nebraska boys basketball team for a second consecutive season as its honorary captain.

"I haven't seen one like him since I've been around who can impact the game in so many ways," Bellevue West Coach Doug Woodard said. "Obviously there's kids who can score better than him and there's kids who can leap better than him."

"But to be able to impact the game through steals, through deflection, through rebounding the ball for (being) a guard and through assists and through scoring, I haven't seen one like him around this area."

Dotzler led his team in assists (7.5 per game), steals (5.0) and rebounds (5.1) and was second in scoring (13.4).

"No kid I've seen in high school has vision like Josh does on the court," Papillion-La Vista Coach Clint Hoelscher said. "He makes good players even better."

Also on the 91st edition of the All-Nebraska team are post players Matt Hill of Lincoln Southeast and Zach Potter of Omaha Creighton Prep and guards Matt Culliver of Omaha Bryan and Andrew Bridger of Lincoln Northeast. Hill and Bridger are juniors, the others seniors.

Second-team selections are Tyler Albers of Papillion-La Vista, B.J. Valentine of Omaha Central, Michael Jenkins of Bellevue West, Ryan Moore of undefeated Class B champion Beatrice and junior Drake Beranek of Ravenna.

On the third team are Brandon McGruder of Bryan, junior Aaron Brandt of Class C-1 runner-up Wahoo Neumann, Ben Suing of Class B runner-up Elkhorn Mount Michael, Gabe Zwiener of Class D-1 champion Pleasanton and junior Waid Vontz of Cambridge.

Jenkins and Moore were on last year's third team.

The World-Herald chooses its honor teams through nominations of coaches and observations of its sportswriters. All schools in the state were mailed nomination forms.

All of the All-Nebraska first-team players got their teams to the Class A state tournament. "It's a pretty impressive team," Bryan Coach Tim Cannon said. "I'd sing the praise of all those kids. Every one of them was tough."

None better than the 6-foot-1 Dotzler, who guided the Thunderbirds to the best record for a Class A state champion (27-1) since 1931. After its repeat state title, West moved up from 27th to 19th in Student Sports' national rankings compiled by noted prep authority Doug Huff.

"Josh is a human being and he'll make a bad play, but when he does make a bad play you just never know it. The head never goes down, there's never whining or questioning, he just goes to the next play," Woodard said. "That comes from his family, his upbringing and his character. He never wavers. He knows he's going to make a good play the next play."

Hill, at 6-10, will be a prized college prospect in another season. He shot 68.4 percent from the field in leading Southeast with averages

of 19.0 points and 10.4 rebounds. He also had 85 blocked shots.

"I think Matt is awfully good because he's so versatile," Southeast Coach Jeff Smith said. "He's developed five really good post moves needed at the college level, but the next step is to develop more perimeter-type play."

It's the fifth straight year for a Southeast player on the first team, the longest streak of any school.

Culliver, on the other hand, is the first All-Nebraska player from Bryan. The 6-0 point guard who signed last fall with the University of Nebraska at Omaha averaged 25 points a game for the Bears, whose 18-5 record was the best in school history.

"Matt has great energy," Cannon said. "He brought a lot of enthusiasm to the way he played the game and the way he practiced. He became a much better, all-around player as time went on."

"We were at our best when he could do many phases of the game, the assists and the steals. He had games of seven, eight steals and you wonder how he came up with so many. He was very good in jumping into passing lanes, anticipating the pass."

Potter is the first Prep athlete since Concetto "Kayo" Robino in 1935-36 to make the All-Nebraska first team in football and basketball in the same season. The 6-foot-7 Nebraska football recruit is the 33rd selection overall from Prep, the most for any school.

He averaged 17.9 points and 10.5 rebounds for the Junior Jays, who reached the Class A final for the first time since winning the 1994 title.

"His numbers probably were sacrificed (the past) two years because of the inability to get the ball to the low post," Prep Coach Josh Luedtke said. "Because our perimeter guys grew, the numbers this year reflected the kind of player he is."

"Zach did everything you asked him to do. He worked hard to become a good basketball player."

Bridger, who is Northeast's first All-Nebraska player since 1999, averaged 16.5 points to lead the Rockets. Their 20-4 season ended in the state semifinals with a loss to Bellevue West.

"He can swing the momentum of a game in so many ways," Northeast Coach Steve Bartek said. "He knows when he has to score and when to get other people involved."



KENT SIEVERS/THE WORLD-HERALD

The World-Herald All-Nebraska basketball boys and girls basketball teams were photographed in the Desert Dome at the Henry Doorly Zoo. Front row, from left, Samantha Schuett of Millard West, Katie Frank of South Sioux City, Matt Culliver of Omaha Bryan, Andrew Bridger of Lincoln Northeast, Katie Smith of Omaha Skutt, Yvonne Turner of Bellevue East, Megan Neuirth of West Point Central Catholic and Josh Dotzler of Bellevue West. In back are Matt Hill of Lincoln Southeast, left, and Zach Potter of Omaha Creighton Prep.

All-Nebraska boys

Josh Dotzler	Bellevue West	6-1	Sr.	13.4
Matt Hill	Lincoln SE	6-10	Jr.	19.0
Zach Potter	Om. Cre. Prep	6-7	Sr.	17.9
Matt Culliver	Om. Bryan	6-0	Sr.	25.0
Andrew Bridger	Lincoln NE	6-0	Jr.	16.5

Captain: Josh Dotzler

All-Nebraska girls

Megan Neuirth	West Point CC	5-11	Sr.	19.1
Katie Smith	Omaha Skutt	5-10	Sr.	17.0
Katie Frank	S. Sioux City	6-0	Jr.	19.9
Yvonne Turner	Bellevue East	5-8	Jr.	13.7
Samantha Schuett	Millard West	6-1	Jr.	17.4

Captain: Megan Neuirth

By MIKE PATTERSON
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Four years, no losses.

That sums up the high school basketball career of Megan Neuirth, who helped lead West Point Central Catholic to its fourth straight Class C-2 crown this season. The Bluejays are riding a state-record 102-game win streak, which means a four-year varsity player like Neuirth hasn't tasted defeat for a very long time.

"It's hard for me to believe that my basketball career is over here," Neuirth said. "But I'm excited about moving on to the college game next year."

Neuirth (pronounced NYE worth) won't have far to go. She'll remain a Bluejay, too, as she signed last fall with Creighton.

For her performance this season, Neuirth is recognized as the honorary captain of The World-Herald's All-Nebraska girls basketball team. "Everybody talks about Megan's offense," Central Catholic Coach Jerry Stracke said. "But I can't say enough about her defense. She really is a complete player."

Neuirth is joined on the first team by senior Katie Smith of Omaha Skutt and juniors Samantha Schuett of Millard West, Yvonne Turner of Bellevue East and Katie Frank of South Sioux City. Second-team members are Kay Broekemeier of Central City, Dominique Kelley of Lincoln Northeast, Jade Meads of Elm Creek, Kyla Roehrig of Papillion-La Vista and Shelly Thompson of Norris.

On the third team are Tara Abbott of Ashland-Greenwood, Cassy Drueppel of Lincoln Southeast, Katie Homan of Bellevue East, Jackie Knieval of West Point Central Catholic and Natasha Weishahn of Beatrice.

All-state teams are based on nominations by coaches and observations of World-Herald sportswriters.

The only underclassman on the 2004 All-Nebraska first team, Neuirth averaged 19.1 points and 8.7 rebounds this season for the 25-0 Bluejays. The 5-foot-11 forward scored a game-high 29 points to lead Central Catholic to a 72-44 win over Exeter-Milligan in the Class C-2 final.

Neuirth teamed with two other seniors — center Knieval and guard Angie Ridder — to form the

nucleus of the Bluejays' powerful squad. Central Catholic moved past Sandy Creek's consecutive-win mark of 95 with a victory over Pierce in its regular-season finale.

Smith provided much of the spark for the SkyHawks, who reached the state tournament for the second consecutive year. Skutt (18-5) lost to South Sioux City in a Class B semifinal despite a game-high 27 from Smith.

"She was the proverbial heart and soul of our team," Coach Mark Zulkoski said. "She seemed to have a new level of intensity when we needed her the most."

Zulkoski said the 5-10 guard also led by example.

"If things weren't going well out there, she'd ask to say something," he said. "Then she'd say what needed to be said and we went back to work."

Smith, who will walk on at Kansas, averaged 17 points and 6.7 rebounds. She proved to be a tough matchup for opponents, having the ability to play inside or outside.

"She could score from just about anywhere," Zulkoski said. "And she always had the desire to make herself better."

Schuett showed much of that same versatility for Millard West. She was second in Class A scoring average (17.4) and first in rebounding (10.0).

"She usually played every minute of a game and she always played in high gear," Wildcats Coach Kip Colony said. "She put up unbelievable numbers but still played very selflessly."

Schuett, a Nebraska recruit, led Millard West in every offensive category. The 6-1 junior also played every position, from point guard to post.

"The great thing about Sammy is that she's not just an outstanding player, she's an outstanding person," Colony said. "You couldn't find someone nicer off the court."

The 5-8 Turner thought she'd be combining with good friend Chevelle Herring this season in the Chieftains' backcourt. But a season-ending knee injury to Herring in the second game against Omaha Central changed everything.

"Vonnie was asked to play a lot more point guard, and it was a role she accepted," Bellevue East Coach Scott Jensen said. "She stepped up and still had a great season."

Turner, who is being recruited by several Division I programs — Nebraska and Creighton among them — still averaged 13.7 points while helping the Class A runner-up Chieftains finish 25-3. She also spearheaded a ball-hawking defense that continually flustered opponents.

"She's one of those players who makes everybody else out there better," Jensen said. "She could have scored a lot more, but she did a great job with our team concept."

Frank, a 6-foot center, was the important inside presence for South Sioux City. She averaged 20.2 points and 7.0 rebounds for the 22-5 Cardinals, who captured their 10th Class B title in the past 11 years.

"Katie knew coming into this season that she was going to be counted on pretty heavily," South Sioux City Coach Kelly Flynn said. "She dealt with that pressure and still had an outstanding year."



JADE MEADS
Elm Creek
5-9, Sr.
PPG: 26.0



KAY BROEKEMEIER
Central City
5-9, Sr.
PPG: 24.7



DOMINIQUE KELLEY
Lincoln Northeast
5-8, So.
PPG: 14.4



KYLA ROEHRIG
Papillion-La Vista
6-2, Jr.
PPG: 15.0



SHELLY THOMPSON
Norris
5-11, Sr.
PPG: 20.0



TARA ABBOTT
Ashland-Greenwood
5-7, Jr.
PPG: 15.3



CASSY DRUEPPEL
Lincoln Southeast
5-6, Jr.
PPG: 18.5



KATIE HOMAN
Bellevue East
6-1, Sr.
PPG: 12.5



JACKIE KNieVEL
West Point CC
6-1, Sr.
PPG: 15.9



NATASHA WEISHAHN
Beatrice
5-8, Sr.
PPG: 11.5