

## PLAYERS TO WATCH

Up-and-coming players to have on your radar

**Dallas Metzger**



Photo by Maggie Elliott

"I only have one goal, and that's to win a state title."

**Kael Ramsey**

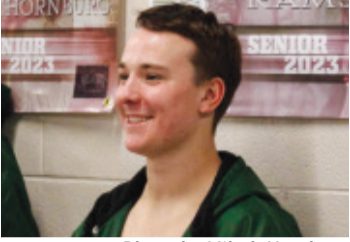


Photo by Mikah Herzberg

"I set big goals and reaching them will be a challenge, but I'm confident I will reach them by the end of the season."

**Jaden Wilson**



Photo by Lolaina Gutierrez

"Our goal for sure is to win every game we can ... we want to improve every game. That's probably been our main goal."

**Knowlyn Egan**



Photo by Erica Sengthavorn

"The main goal for this team is a state title. We've worked extremely hard, and the only thing in mind is getting a state championship."

**Colby Hedden**



Photo by Maggie Elliott

"I think as a team we are doing really good this year."

**Trinity Williams**



Photo by Erica Sengthavorn

"My main goal would be to win state. That would be a big accomplishment for me, just to be able to taste a championship."



# FAR FROM FINISHED



Story by Reese Cowden

The nerves, that's what senior Brock Zerger remembers about his first varsity football game as a freshman.

"I didn't know what I was doing but I kind of got thrown in there, and that's just something I'll never forget," Zerger said.

A broken fibula during the Class 6A quarterfinals ended his senior football season — and his basketball season. He is focused on returning to track, which starts on Feb. 27, and qualifying for state track meet in May.

Zerger had been looking forward to his senior season since the second grade.

"I can remember going to all the Derby games when I was in Derby Junior Football, just seeing all those guys," Zerger said. "I've been waiting for this moment awhile, and I'm glad I was able to take advantage of it."

His goals weren't fancy.

"Just being able to win the starting job, earn the role of being the starting quarterback and just being able to lead my team to victories, basically what I wanted to do was be a good teammate and be a good leader," Zerger said.

"... I think as a team we grew together, we made bonds together and you know unfortunately it didn't really end that way we wanted it to.

"We hit some adversity at the end and I thought we just kept fighting till the end and I'm just super proud of the whole team."



Photos by Reese Cowden  
Quarterback Brock Zerger runs for a first down against Newton on Oct. 21.



Before the boys varsity basketball game against Salina Central, Zerger dribbles off to the side while the Panthers warm up.



Senior Kaeson Fisher Brown, left, celebrates with Zerger and the team while the band plays the school song after beating Salina Central.

## Recovery begins

While being tackled on a run near the Panthers' sideline on Nov. 12, Zerger broke his left fibula and tore a number of ligaments ending his 2022 football season.

"It was just super frustrating because I was thinking 'why me?'" Zerger said. "It was my senior year and I have been looking forward to this, and we had goals to win a state championship.

"... I was playing one of my best games before I got hurt and I was playing the best football I had played all year. I think if we wouldn't have had injuries to myself and other people, outcomes would have changed."

Three days later, Zerger had surgery when a plate and eight screws were inserted to fix his left ankle.

The recovery has been smooth.

"I can tell that with each day I am getting better, getting stronger, and slowly getting

back to where I used to be," Zerger said. "I am hoping to be almost back at full strength by the time track season comes around.

"... I realize now that everything happens for a reason and I'm just trying to make the best of it and just keep moving on," he said.

## Still on the court

Although he can't play basketball, Zerger's role on the boys basketball team hasn't been lost.

"Brock is one of the most mature members of our team," boys basketball coach Brett Flory said. "He understands what goes into winning and having a good team culture as well as anyone, and we will count on him to help support the team in those ways."

Flory, who is Zerger's neighbor, has watched him grow into

the well-liked and respected teammate he is now.

"I know the type of person he is and the kind of family he comes from; you won't find a better kid anywhere," Flory said.

The Panthers also missed his three-point shooting and the physicality he provided defensively.

Zerger accepted his role at the end of the bench where he keeps stats and provides words of encouragement or even just someone who will listen to a teammate.

"We have a lot of new guys and younger guys that are going to have to step up and play some big roles for us, and unfortunately I can't be out there this year. But I'm just going to do the best I can to coach them up," Zerger said.

Flory isn't looking at the state championship yet. "I'm just looking at today's practice, how we can get better."

## Up next

Zerger has plenty of motivation for track. There's the time he missed on the basketball court coupled with the controversy that kept the 400 relay team from even running at regionals in May.

"It's unknown who all will be on it, but no matter what, we just want to show the state what they missed out on last year," said Zerger, who will also throw the javelin.

After track, it's back to football. On Feb. 1, Zerger signed to play at Friends.

"The thing that influenced my decision the most was the simple fact that on both of my visits that I took there, it just felt like home," he said. "I never got that feeling on any of the other visits I took to other schools."

# Opinion

## Society's views of women absolutely suck

I hate being a woman. No, let me rephrase. I hate how women are treated.

How they're viewed to be a womb. Women are nothing. Women are an object. Women are sex symbols. Women are less than. Women are dumb. Women are hysterical. Women are disrespected. Women are sexualized. Why can't we be more than our bodies? Why can't we be funny? Why can't we be smart?

My whole life I've felt like women's lives revolve around men, like there's an obligation to serve them.

Even in the Bible when Eve is made from Adam's rib, it shows that women are only a part of a man, while Adam is made from God.

Since the beginning of time, everyone has been indoctrinated to think that women serve men, we stay home and watch the kids, we clean and we cook.

Women have always been objectified. I can't even watch TV without feeling the guilt of being a woman. I can't stand the constant sexualization.

Watching a "comedy" and seeing the jokes are about the only woman in the cast. She's wearing a tight shirt and is a bimbo, she's dumb because of the clothes she wears. The male characters are making her jump up and down, but she's too dumb to understand what's happening.

There is one more woman in the show — she's snarky and is a total jerk. She's called a lesbian the whole show because she wears T-shirts and jeans.

No matter what we do, what we wear

or how we act, there's always a constant judgment.

The judgment isn't always from men. Often it's from other women. Why can't we support each other?

In a fantasy world, women don't degrade each other. Instead we compliment each other and we're accepting. We aren't getting support from anyone else, so why not support each other?

Then there's Andrew Tate. What hope is there for women if young men are looking up to him and believing in his ideologies?

When was it decided that hating women is cool?

What happened to the men with similar ideologies to Tupac? The rapper believed women were to be respected. He believed that we are people, too.

When women feel emotional she's "on the rag" or she's "PMSing." But when a man is angry, he's just being a man.

When a woman is sad, she's hysterical or she shouldn't be listened to. When a man is sad, it's awesome that he's showing his emotions.

Why can't you all see we're so much more?

Women are cool.  
Women are smart.  
Women are powerful.



## It's time to cancel Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day needs to be canceled.

Valentine's Day is a waste of money and time with a lot of negative effects.

Valentine's Day is a stressful holiday whether you have a valentine or not.

If you have a valentine, there is the stress of money and planning.

Americans will spend \$175.41 on average this year on the holiday, according to an annual survey from the National Retail Federation.

Valentine's Day is a depressing holiday for people who feel alone and left out, especially since half of all Americans are single, according to nationalsinglesday.us. I think the holiday isn't fair to the men, either.

According to the National Retail Federation, men on average spend double the amount women do every year on gifts, with an average of \$108.38 spent compared to women spending \$49.41.

The holiday also encourages comparison and jealousy which could be harmful to a relationship and your mental health.

I find it concerning people need a designated holiday to show they love someone.

You should show love to people consistently rather it's big or small, you shouldn't have to have a holiday to give you a reason to show love.

Valentine's is a pointless, stressful holiday that promotes superficial love and that needs to be stopped.



## Mass shooting fears stick around too long

When most people think of what my generation grew up with, it's usually the internet or social media.

But as somebody that is actually in the generation, I think of the overall view of mass shootings and the rates that have increased.

Remember the Aurora, Colorado movie theater shooting in July 2012? A 25-year-old man went into a midnight screening of "The Dark Knight Rises" and killed 12, injuring 70.

I was 8, and yet it has stuck with me and left me so scared that I still get nightmares about being in a mass shooting.

I get to school, look around the halls and make sure no one looks out of place or looks like something bad is going to happen.

Two years ago when the Oxford, Michigan school shooting happened in December, the first thing I did was look around my third block class at places I could hide or escape. I jumped in fear at loud noises for a week after, scared it would happen here.

In the 2019-2020 school year, a gun was found on campus. In January, a hollowed-out grenade was found on campus.

I am absolutely terrified I'm going to be at the school learning — and the next minute, I'll become a statistic on the news.

I should not have to worry more about if I'm going to die at school that day than the amount of homework I'm going to have that night.

Nobody should.



— Lilly Macormac

— Arabella Hounshell

— Sara Collins