

THE CHARGER

District holds 1st mandatory crisis drill

Eleanor Badeker
@ellybadeker

At USD 329 schools this year, traditional fire and tornado drills will be joined by a new form of preparation.

District schools carried out crisis drills August 29. After school shootings in other areas of the U.S. sparked discussion, Kansas legislators require schools to run nine crisis drills every year. According to the bill passed in July, these drills shall include intruder response and lockdown drills.

At WHS, the drill began with an announcement by principal Jan Hutley that the school was going into lockout mode, meaning all exterior doors would be locked. After receiving confirmation that both buildings were secure, she announced a lockdown. All teachers and students were to lock doors, turn off lights, and hide out of sight. Cell phones were not to be used unless absolutely necessary. Hutley said that in a real lockdown, law enforcement would be notified.

In a crisis, students and staff would be expected to utilize ALICE training. The letters in ALICE stand for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate. Evacuation is the ideal step. In evacuation situations, students from the high school would head to a reunification point at the Alma Elementary school. A head count would be taken there. "We would rather have you be safe, not know where you are, and find you," said USD 329 superintendent Brad Starnes, "rather than knowing where you are and having you be a sitting duck."

All teachers have a flip chart and manual with instructions on what to do in different crisis situations such as chemical spills, active shooter and intruder response.

One of the big goals of the drills is to give students the knowledge to have some responsibility for their own safety in an emergency.

Real crises are impossible to predict, but these drills will help students and teachers be more prepared. "In the same sense as athletics," said Starnes, "we need to practice, and to practice, we've got to go through the drill."

SCHOOL VIOLENCE SPEAKER COMING TO WHS

The Wabaunsee County Sheriff Department, Alma Police Department, Wabaunsee County Attorney and City of Alma have invited speaker Phil Chalmers to present to students about teen gun violence September 19. Mission Valley students will also attend the presentation. Chalmers previously spoke at WHS in 2013. He is a self-described teen shooter expert who has interviewed more than 200 teen killers. Some of the comments at his 2013 WHS appearance were controversial and parents will have the option to opt students out of the presentation.

Coaching changes affect fall sports



Assistant coaches Kathy Smart, Karen Wright and Cara Flach break down during a timeout at the Amy Schutter Memorial Tournament. The team is currently 9-3 after finishing second at the Lyndon Tournament.

Kendyl Bolinder, Jayna Keller
@BolinderKendyl

CAPOUN BEGINS SECOND TENURE AS VOLLEYBALL COACH

Although volleyball coach Tracy Capoun is new this season, she is not new to WHS volleyball.

Capoun began coaching in the district in 1996 at the junior high. For several years, she alternated between assistant high school volleyball coach and head junior high coach. After the passing of Coach Amy Schutter, Capoun returned to the high school to fill the head coach position from 2011-13. After taking a break from coaching volleyball, she returns this year as head coach.

In the past, Capoun worked with most of her volleyball players in junior high, then moved up with them as they played in high school. This year, however, she is working with these girls for the first time, which has been challenging so far. "I've never coached one of them, so it's a whole new season for me," she said.

Karen Wright, a returning coach this year, switched positions from C-team coach to junior varsity coach. She said that all of the coaches are fairly even, so this change has not been much different for her. While Wright is the only coach this season who worked with this group of girls in the past, all of the new coaches have volleyball experience.

Kathy Smart and Cara Flach also joined the staff. Smart and Flach both played volleyball at Wabaunsee High School, and were coached by Capoun. Smart said her previous coach-athlete relationship with Capoun will be beneficial to her current coaching position, as she has an understanding of Capoun's expectations. Both coaches look to apply their experiences as athletes to help lead the team to a successful season.

The coaching staff has high hopes for the girls this season. Coach Capoun said "Every year I have the same goals. Get better every practice. Get better every game. Get better every tournament."

All four coaches have an overall goal of improving throughout the season, and of course, the ultimate goal of winning state.

GROWING TENNIS TEAM GAINS ASSISTANT COACH

Assistant tennis coach Brandi Miller is new to the sport, but not to coaching.

Miller previously coached basketball and volleyball for four years, and this spring will be her third year coaching track.

Miller said the biggest change for her is switching from a sport where everyone works together as a team, to a sport that is much more independent. "Tennis players are responsible for their own success. The hard work they put in shows on an individual scale," she said.

This is the program's first year with an assistant. WHS added the position because of the growing number of girls out for tennis. Athletic director Jeron Weisshaar said an assistant coach will maximize practice time and up the coach/player ratio.

Head coach Brendan Praeger is grateful to have an assistant coach. He said he likes having another coach to bounce ideas off of. He can't always watch everyone, so it's good to have someone else there. When varsity has a meet, the JV girls can now get practice time, and vice versa.

Miller said her role on the team is to recognize the connections between tennis and her past coaching experiences, and apply them to help the athletes. She said she enjoys coaching tennis so far, and is having fun with the team.

ASSISTANT FOOTBALL COACH TAKES OVER PROGRAM

After being the assistant football coach for the last four years, Jess Rutledge has stepped into a new role as head coach.

He describes the head coach position to be a much bigger responsibility than that of an assistant coach. "Everything that occurs is ultimately my decision, good or bad," he said.

Sophomore Adam Miller said each coach has a lot to offer, having each played different positions throughout their high school careers. As a result of the coaching changes, Miller said he feels the team is more focused and hardworking than ever.

Coach Kolby Harris returns this year as an assistant football coach. He played four years of football at Fort Scott, and went

on to coach young kids in flag football. This is his second year coaching at the high school level.

Harris feels that the football program has changed a lot from last year with the new coaching staff. For example, the team now has scheduled practices, and has developed a new point system to help motivate athletes.

Assistant coach Adam Laubert has been around football his whole life. He started playing around the age of 7, and played every year through his high school career. He has played many different positions in his career, which has helped him to be able to coach as many athletes as possible. Last year he coached the Jr. High football team, and individually trained athletes prior to that. This is his first year coaching at the high school.

His goal for this season is to make it as far as they can in the playoffs. "Make it run. Go as far as we can until someone can beat us," Laubert says. His long term goal as a coach is to have his own program sometime in the near future. He also strives to one day coach professional football.

This year's coaching staff has high expectations for the team. They are hoping to see that the hard work they put in over the summer, and at each and every practice will show as they kick off this season.

FORMER CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER TAKES OVER AS ASSISTANT COACH

Assistant cross country coach Alicia Stott has participated in 33 marathons, two 50-mile races and ran cross country throughout high school, but has never coached before.

"This is my first opportunity to coach cross country, and it's my passion," Stott said.

With 33 kids out for cross country this season, having an assistant coach to help supervise is crucial. Head coach Roger Alderman said Stott has a lot to offer. "She has a lot of enthusiasm, and is an experienced runner."

Her goal for this season is to see each and every athlete improve. "That's what it's all about," she said, "improvement and positive attitudes." She doesn't know all the ropes yet, but is learning to be more of a leader as the season goes by.

OPINION Nike ad sparks stupid controversy

Emma Frey, Laurel Barber
@emmafrey_ @Lawl_e_20

Last week Nike unveiled a new campaign featuring controversial former NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick.

Nike released an ad picturing Kaepernick's face with the caption "Believe in something even if it means sacrificing everything. Just do it." The campaign caused an uproar among many NFL fans who argue that the ad disrespects veterans, the national anthem and our country.

Why is a shoe ad disrespectful of veterans? Kaepernick made the news when he became the face of the movement to kneel during the national anthem ahead of every NFL game. This peaceful protest against police brutality sparked controversy over whether this was disrespectful to the flag or not.

People responded to Nike by posting videos on social media with the hashtag #BurnYourNikes depicting the destruction of Nike merchandise in protest of Kaepernick and the movement.

While Kaepernick's peaceful protest was both effective and genuine, the #BurnYourNikes protest is not. Those who are outraged by the ad need to examine why they oppose Kaepernick in the first place. If you think the protest disrespects the flag, you have missed the point. This is not a protest against America or anything we stand for, it is to bring light to the issue of police brutality and racism in America. Kaepernick started a foundation called Know Your Rights that fights oppression globally through education and social activities, contradicting any arguments that Kaepernick isn't doing anything to genuinely help the fight.

If you have considered everything and still think the smartest option is to destroy something that you have already paid for simply because of the logo on it, just know that it won't ruin Nike's income. The publicity coming from this ad will generate far more business than it will lose, so in the end of the day your lack of support for Nike won't change much. In fact, Nike's sales have risen 31 percent in the week since the campaign began.

Nike didn't accidentally choose a controversial figure, it chose Kaepernick because of what he represents. A large part of Nike's target audience is happy to support a socially progressive company. Whether you choose not to buy Nike in the future, burning or defacing items you already own is not the best option. A more effective alternative would be to donate any clothes or shoes you want to get rid of.

The choice to be politically engaged is good, no matter what side, and it's critical for citizens to voice their opinions on issues that matter. That includes Colin Kaepernick, and in some cases, shoe companies.