



THE CHARGER

ALUMNI ASSISTANCE

Recent graduates Miller, Wertzberger assist fall sports

Lauren Schutter | Sports Editor

Assistant coaches Cara Miller and Mitchell Wertzberger are essential keys to their respective team's successes through coaching, but recently they were keys to success as players too.

Cara Miller is in her fourth season at Wabaunsee as an assistant coach. She graduated with the class of 2015, and is now 24 years old. The first three years of the four years she has coached were under head coach Tracy Capoun, and three of her four years in high school she was coached by Capoun. "I loved being coached by Tracy," Miller said, "she kept us in check and believed in us when we didn't fully believe in ourselves."

Miller truly played some great ball in high school, and not only volleyball. She averaged nearly a double-double in basketball and had a .279 batting average, .972 fielding percentage, and .409 slugging percentage in softball her junior year. Most notable of her stats, though, was volleyball. Her senior year she hit 486 kills at a .353 hitting percentage. This led to 1294 career kills through 4 years. After high school, Cara played volleyball at Cloud County

Community College.

Today, outside of coaching, Miller teaches 4th grade at Maple Hill Elementary School. "I love the kiddos, this school and community so much," Miller said. "I went to school 1st through 4th grade at MHES."

Cara is super experienced in the community and is gaining experience every day in coaching. "I've learned more about the sport, but I've really earned a huge appreciation for all coaches. It's a very under appreciated job, and I wish all people saw everything that goes into coaching a high school sport," Miller said.

Football assistant Mitchell Wertzberger, on the other hand, is a new kid on the block. He graduated in the class of 2017, and is now an assistant coach four years later at the age of 22. Rutledge coached Mitchell three of his four years of high school, and played a huge part in his development. On the topic of coming back to Wabaunsee, Wertzberger said, "I think what brought me back the most was just my love for the game of football. I enjoy being around the game so much. Also, watching how Rutledge has been really trying to turn this program around the last few years drew me in as well."

Wertzberger directs his coaching towards the offensive line and linebackers, assisting head coach Jess Rutledge. Rutledge appreciates the help from Wertzberger, and recalled how it felt



to coach him in high school. "It made my job really easy because he was always a very hard working player and an exceptional talent," Rutledge said. He really was an exceptional player, playing in the Shrine Bowl, and also averaging 13 tackles a game and reaching 118 total tackles his senior year as a linebacker.

Though the football program had some solid years with Mithchell on the field, Wertzberger said he sees new growth in the program now. "I think the one thing I have noticed as the biggest change in the football program is the atmosphere and players holding each other more accountable. I think the coaches have made a huge impact on that, as well as the schedule we are able to play now. Winning football games isn't easy, and being able to play teams that are more our size has made these kids hold themselves to a higher standard. We have no



Top: Miller huddles with the team before sub-state volleyball. Above: Wertzberger coaches against Centralia.

excuse to not go out, compete, and win games."

Outside of coaching, Wertzberger takes care of the cattle on his parents' ranch. He also helps with the business side at times, but his main job is focused around managing the ranch.

It's always hard to say goodbye to a special pet



Celia Emmert | guest writer

This week we had to put down our basset hound Macy.

She was in our lives for 14 years, and has been around since I was three. Macy went through a lot during her time with us. She ate rocks twice, had bladder stones, and suffered from diabetes for five years.

But despite all of this, she was a happy puppy. She lived for belly rubs, attention and treats. She was always happy to greet new people and receive their love. In her old age, she started to deteriorate, losing about 30 pounds, most of her sight and hearing and getting weaker as time went by. So when she started to lose her appetite and seemed to be getting uncomfortable, we made the call to end her suffering.



It's never easy to lose a pet when you have had them for so long and love them so much.

Now something about me is that I am aiming to become a veterinarian. I have worked with several veterinarians over the past few years. So I have seen and assisted in more euthanasias than I can count.

It never gets easier. I have seen animals that are in great pain get put down, and even though I know that it's for the best, it never fails to break my heart. The animal tends to hold on even when in pain for its people. They know that they are loved and they don't want their people to be sad. The client reaction is one of the most emotional parts of this process. You see how much they love and care for the animal and how much it pains them to lose a part of their lives.

I will never forget Macy and all the memories I have with her. I know the importance of doing what's best for your pet, but that does not mean it will hurt any less.

They are a part of your family and they will always be special.

Sports | Wurtz places 2nd, team 6th at state XC

Justin Carlson | opinion editor

Girls cross country concluded its successful season on Saturday in Victoria with a 6th place finish as a team and two individual medalists.

Freshman Payton Wurtz and junior Rebekah Stuhlsatz finished 2nd and 15th respectively. Wurtz's time of 19:27 is a new school record and her 2nd place finish is the highest an individual has placed at state in program history. Stuhlsatz had her 3rd consecutive year of placing at state, which ties her for most individual medals won at state.

Wurtz said she was pleased with her freshman year. "I think I really started things with a bang this year. I was worried because I did so well in junior high, so I put a lot of pressure on myself not to do poorly in high school." Only a freshman, Wurtz still has high hopes for the future. "I'm proud of the team and how hard we've worked. I'm going for it next year though. Now that I've dipped my toes in the water I want to win it all."

Stuhlsatz reflected on the season saying, "I think I did

OK. I think I could have done better in some races, but it went well overall. I think next season will be really good. A lot of our top runners are returning, so it should be a fun season. I think we all expect to go back to state."

FOOTBALL MOVES ON IN PLAYOFFS FOLLOWING DOMINANT WIN

Eli McDaniel | social media editor

The WHS football team had an explosive start to the playoffs Thursday evening, defeating the now 0-8 Northern Heights Wildcats 68-0.

Coach Jess Rutledge said the win was another positive step for this year's team. "We did what we were supposed to do and put the game away early, which is what we told the boys to do. We got everybody on the football team into the game which is awesome and doesn't always happen so late in the postseason."

The win marks the first time in school history that the Chargers have won playoff games in consecutive years and with a record of 7-2 in the season, one more victory

will tie the school record for a single season.

The team will continue its playoff run Friday evening at Lyndon. "We need to have a great week of practice, come out and pop 'em in the mouth on Friday," senior quarterback Cade Oliver said.

"Lyndon is a good football team. They've got some big players and some fast, skilled players, but I feel like we match up well with them so we need to have a good week of practice and be ready to play on Friday," Rutledge said.

STATE VOLLEYBALL ENDS IN POOL PLAY

Mayah Mumpower | news editor

Charger volleyball ended its season in pool play at the state tournament Friday afternoon, going 1-2.

For the first match of the day, Wabaunsee faced a tough loss against Hillsboro 25-17, 25,14. "We came in overconfident and feeling like they weren't that good. They weren't beating us, we were beating ourselves," senior Lauren Schutter said.

With a close match against Smith Center, the volleyball team lost 25-21, 25-20. Smith Center ended up being the state champion.

"We knew it was going to be a tough game going into it and we started out really good but then mistakes led to other mistakes," senior Kara Hafentine said.

Wabaunsee ended its season with a victory over Pittsburg-St. Marys Colgan. The first set was close with a score of 25-23 and the second set was 25-15.

"That game we knew was our last so we thought why not just have fun. I mean obviously we wanted to end our season on a win and do our best," senior Sydney Holthaus said.

Overall the volleyball team ended with a record of 33-10. With a loss of four seniors, the Chargers will have three returning starters. "We just continuously prove that even when we're losing people we can still continue this great program. I hope that the seniors next year can continue on that," Schutter said.