

THE CHARGER

EDITORIAL | Rock Creek secession creates uncertainty for Mid-East League

Rock Creek has announced that it will leave the Mid-East League after 30 years of competition

It will be joining the North Central Kansas League starting Fall of the 2022 school year on the middle school side and then high school will officially switch over Fall 2024. The current members of the NCKL — Abilene, Chapman, Clay Center, Concordia, Marysville and Wamego — unanimously accepted Rock Creek to the league.

According to an article from The Manhattan Mercury, Rock Creek's athletic director Darwyn Thomlinson stated that the move is motivated by growth. "One of the things that we run into at the middle school level is that most Mid-East League schools have just three teams (for middle school basketball): a combined B-

Team and a 7A and 8A team," Thomlinson said. "Our school has enough kids on the middle

school girls' side of things to be able to do 7A, 8A, 7B and 8B on a consistent basis. So what we run into is we have a large number of girls who miss out on competition. So one of the things that we're trying to do is expand opportunities for all of our programs by doing this."

Rock Creek's decision is a justified one and we personally hold no animosity towards them. Unlike college league realignment in leagues such as the Big 12, where fans are currently in uproar over the situation with Texas and Oklahoma, there are different concerns for high schools when it comes to partnering with other schools. It is completely understandable for Rock Creek to seek similar schools to create the best situation for their players. We wish

OPTIONS FOR THE MID-EAST LEAGUE'S FUTURE

The MEL has several ways to move forward. Here's our take on a few scenarios.

ADD ANOTHER TEAM

To replace Rock Creek, there are several teams in the area the MEL could invite. We would put the priority on finding a school that fits in both geographically and in size. We also prefer to add a public school if possible. Replacing Rock Creek with a 4A school or adding a long road trip wouldn't benefit our teams.

them the best, and we hope we still get to face them occasionally in non-league play.

However, we are concerned about what may happen to the Mid-East League as a result of moving down to five schools.

Wabaunsee's athletic director Jeron Weisshaar said "At this time, the MEL is working to find one or more schools to replace Rock Creek in an effort to maintain the existence of the

CONTINUE WITH FIVE TEAMS

The MEL is already small compared to other leagues, but a 5-team league would be OK. We would need a couple more non-league games in some sports to fill out schedules. League tournaments for some sports and activities are already pretty small though. And shrinking that even more isn't ideal.

DISSOLVE THE LEAGUE

MEL schools could each find a home elsewhere. WHS was invited to the Flint Hills League several years ago, and other schools are near leagues where they would also fit geographi-

ally (Riley County to the NCKL or Wheat State, other schools to the Big Seven or Northeast Kansas). Although WHS would find a home in this scenario, we prefer to continue the rivalries we've built over generations in the MEL.

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MERGE LEAGUES

Adding our five teams to another league would still create a manageable number of teams, although there is no way to avoid adding a few longer road trips. Our opinion of this situation would really depend on the league.

always provided for us." The League also provides competition for activities like scholars bowl and forensics, as well as collaborations like league band and art.

Hopefully in the end, every school will be able to find a suitable situation that best fits their needs and competition will remain at the highest quality possible.

Emmert, Barton prepare to perform in Nutcracker productions

AJ Grutsch | Podcast Editor

As Christmas inches closer and closer some of our WHS students decide not to spend their free time doing the normal Christmas hullabaloo but perfecting their ballet movements for their production of The Nutcracker.

Celia Emmert and Eliza Barton have spent the last 13 Christmas seasons reciting the Nutcracker ballet. With practices taking place for over five hours at a time, these girls have learned all the aspects of their performance down to a science.

Celia and Eliza have put in the work and will soon reap the reward on their big night.

The following story is from an interview with Emmert and Barton on the latest Senioritis podcast. Visit whscharger.com to listen to the full conversation.

Tell me about your production of The Nutcracker.

Celia: I go to ballet Midwest, which is in Topeka. This is my final year doing it because I'm a senior and then I go off to college. We've done over 45 Productions. My grandma, in fact, helped make some of the scenery when she was a lot younger. So that's how I got connected with Ballet Midwest was my grandma. This is my 13th year doing it.

Eliza: I have not lived in Kansas all my life. So I've only done The Nutcracker with my current company Kansas Ballet Academy for seven years. In Utah I danced at Valley West and I did the Nutcracker there for five years.

Isn't ballet super, immensely hard work?

Celia: I go to class three

times a week. And as of right now, for my rehearsal schedule. I have Saturday and Sunday for over five hours non-stop. We started in September, and it's more rigorous since we have nine days until the first performance.

What role do you play in the Nutcracker?

Celia: I have three lead roles this year. So I'm a lead flower, which is a seven minute long dance. And then I am a friend in the party scene and I am lead Spanish.

Eliza: I am Arabian lead. I am also a lead flower and a snowflake.

Have you met any cool new people?

Celia: At my company, we basically get assigned little and big sisters when we get into the company. And it is basically a little family and we all know each other and everything. So it's really fun to do these productions. I'm not very social. So it has kind of put me more out there because I know no one from Topeka. Well, I know some people, but most of them are from dance.

Eliza: Oh, yeah, for sure. I mean, I actually danced with my touring company. So we travel all around the US. I mean, I've gotten to meet various adjudicators and actually professors of universities like the University of Indiana, so that was kind of cool. And I've



Senior Cecelia Emmert appears in a promotional photo for the Ballet Midwest production of The Nutcracker. Emmert has danced since she was five years old.

met a ton of dancers from other companies, and they are seriously so sweet. Like the ballet community is super supportive.

Did you guys plan on doing any stuff in college?

Eliza: I am. Yeah, I would either like to dance collegiately or professionally, I have not quite decided yet. Because I'm just an indecisive person. But we'll see where that takes me.

Celia: Sadly, this is my last

year. I have our recital and spring ballet. Well, I'm working towards a career in veterinary medicine. So eight years of college and science and all of that. It's what I love.

What other ballets have you guys done before?

Celia: I've done Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Romeo and Juliet, Donquixote, Swan Lake. And we're going to do Giselle this spring.

Eliza: My company has also done Donquixote. We've done Poquito, Lake Corsair, Rye Monta, Giselle, Nutcracker, Fairy doll, Carnival of the Animals. Peter and the Wolf, which is interesting, and we've also done Sleeping Beauty and Swan Lake.

What is your favorite aspect of dancing, and being a ballerina?

Eliza: Probably my favorite part is having to push myself way past my limits to reach the point of what I would consider perfection for a certain role. And I know that sounds like a little extreme, but it's honestly kind of a thrill. And I know this sounds a little toxic, but I like being able to feel like I'm better than somebody else at something. So I don't know, that's probably my favorite part. Besides getting to work towards more interesting skills, and more advanced roles, and of course, potentially working up to that career that I want.

Celia: I have a lot of things that I like about dance. But I think like, besides the con-

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