



he Trojans' first two games of the season came against the 10th-ranked Liberty Lightning on May 27.

At the beginning of the first game, things were running smoothly for the Trojans. Senior Max Pech's pitches flustered Liberty's batters, as Pech recorded two strikeouts in the first two innings. However, in the fourth inning, Liberty rattled off consecutive doubles, earning two runs. The Bolts ended the sixth inning leading 3-0. The Trojans struggled to find offensive success, as they were unable to get their hitters around the bases to home. After a couple of successful singles in the seventh inning, Annalyn Harms '26 hit a double that sent Savannah Mathias '28 to home base. Unfortunately, this flurry of hits wasn't enough, and the game ended with a final score of 3-1 in favor of the Bolts.

There were several lineup changes for the second game. Relieving Pech, Ava Gladden '28 got the start at the pitcher's mound. While the first game got off to a slower start, the Bolts immediately started strong. They hit a double at the top of the second, eventually turning into a run. The night's leading hitter, Harms, tried to respond with a double of her own, but the Trojans couldn't capitalize on it. The Bolts were up 2-0 at the end of the third inning. Trying to stop Liberty's momentum, the Trojans come up with a big double play where sophomore Delores Hubbard gets the Liberty runner out on third and slings it out to Keeley Hall '27, who tags the runner on first base out. While it was a successful defensive fourth inning, the unrelenting Bolts came storming back in the fifth. A Liberty batter hits a deep ball wide left, and the Bolts score two more runs. They rack up two more doubles, leading to another score. At the bottom of the fifth, the Bolts' lead surmounts to 8-0. With a change in the [score required](#) this year, the game ends 8-0 at the end of the fifth, via run-rule.

Going into the game, the Trojans were determined to bring the Boot to the west side after four years of falling short against City. The team was hopeful for the win, having come just one point short in their previous matchup.¶

About halfway through the first quarter, West took an early lead with a field goal from Adam Salem '26, putting them up 3-0. With this early lead, West had an advantage; however, City wasn't ready to back down. City turned the ball over, but West High regained possession and drove 60 yards down the field in six plays. The drive ended with Julian Manson '26 scoring a touchdown, making the score 10-0.¶

As the second quarter came to a close, Salem added another field goal, giving the Trojans three more points and a 13-0 lead at halftime.¶

Coming out of halftime, the Trojans came out strong and scored a six-yard touchdown by senior Campbell Janis. West was now up 19-0, putting them far ahead of City. As the third quarter came to a close, Mikey Moody '27, who shared quarterback duties with Liberty transfer Reece Wheeler '27, scored a touchdown for West. The score was 27-0 heading into the final quarter.¶

With a dominating score, the Trojans were set to win the match; however, they maintained their momentum until the final minutes, with Salem adding a field goal and capping the game at 30-0.¶

The West High cafeteria buzzed with excitement as students, teachers and volunteers gathered for 1440's Trivia Night on Tuesday, May 27. It was a fast-paced evening of fun, facts and philanthropy. Teams of five competed from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., each paying a five-dollar entry fee, with the proceeds destined for a good cause. The winning team would earn the right to choose a charity that would receive all the funds raised.

After several rounds of challenging questions and tight competition, it was a group of five ninth graders who emerged victorious. The team, William Seberger '28, Alexander Moss '28, Taha Salem '28, Emma Lai '28 and Raphael Policeni '28, clinched first place by scoring 48 points in 10 rounds with five questions each. They coincidentally noticed that their initials spelled out "W-A-T-E-R" and decided to donate the \$300 raised to [Charity: Water](#), a nonprofit organization that brings clean and safe drinking water to people in developing countries.

Following his triumph, Seberger reflected on the event, "Trivia night was really fun, and I thought the energy there was great. Nobody took it too seriously, and I think that contributed to just good vibes overall."

Alexander Moss got the group together. Moss said, "When I first got the email for West High Trivia night, I was overjoyed. I love trivia, and I thought playing a game with five of my friends sounded wonderful, so I forwarded the email to some of my most intelligent friends and asked them if they wanted to do it."



In the world of competitive soccer, the spotlight is always on the players of the team, but behind all great teams is a competitive, strategic and passionate coach who leads the way. For the West High boys' soccer team, it's Brad Stiles.

Growing up, Stiles was an avid soccer player, where he started playing U11 club. He continued his soccer career through college, where he played Division three soccer at Coe College in Cedar Rapids. In college, he began his coaching career.

While playing on the Kohawk soccer team as a senior, Stiles coached the girls' junior varsity soccer team at Cedar Rapids Washington. After college and coaching in Cedar Rapids, in 2000, Stiles coached the boys' freshman/sophomore team here at West High, as well as becoming a study hall teacher.

"As a study hall teacher, it gave me a lot of time to hone my craft by reading and watching to make my mark on the program," Stiles remarked.

Just that next spring, Stiles was named the boys' varsity head coach. As the new coach, Stiles had a job to do in setting the standard for West boys' soccer.

In the years before Stiles, the soccer team had been to the state tournament just twice. The first time they made it, they placed third in the 1997 season. The second time came in Stiles's first year at West, where they won the state title in the 2000 season under Matt Wilkerson.

Being named a head coach the year after a team wins a state championship is no easy task for a coach. For Stiles, his goal as the new coach was to continue the traditions set by the previous year's team: winning.

If someone were to start talking about a track meet in the middle of Iowa, many people would probably expect a small youth event with a few hundred family members watching for a few hours. However, this is not the case for the Drake Relays. University of Northern Iowa Sophomore Chase Lauman experienced this magic first-hand when he ran for Pella High School, where he competed in multiple Drake Relays and won numerous state championships for the Dutch.

“The main thing is obviously the good competition but the environment is like no other, really most track meets will never have anything like the Drake Relays because there’s thousands of kids there so thousands of parents and also just people who love track and field too, so there’s just so many people there yelling at you supporting you,” said University of Northern Iowa sophomore Chase Lauman.

As Lauman mentioned, the Drake Relays are very different from most track meets. Unlike the state track meet, the Drake Relays is not divided by class, so athletes can compete against the best competition in the entire state.

“Especially being in 3A you get to see people from class 4A and all different classes that are also just really good,” said Lauman.

Beginnings

Kalli Titus '25, a varsity track and cross country runner, discovered her love for running through training for her high school races. However, when Titus' mom mentioned running marathons and half marathons, Titus began to train for longer distances. After running four half-marathons, Titus prepared for the marathon primarily on her own.

"I mostly just train alone. I ran alone for the entire marathon training. It sounds bad to say, but I'm a lot faster [than my mom]. We never run together, but it's fun for us to go to the race together," Titus said.

For her first marathon, Titus and her mom traveled to Florida to combat Iowa's harsh winter. There, Titus had a positive experience running with her mom, noting how marathons create a different atmosphere than her high school races.

"[Races] are usually really positive, which I like. No one's ever negative before a race or anything," Titus said. "They're always really excited because you have to sign up for a marathon, you have to train for it and pay for it. [Many] people get their start in cross country, but people tend to be a little more excited for the marathon, because they put so much into training for it."

Like Titus noted, Megan Boehme, a spanish teacher at West, got her start in distance-running from high school running.

"In high school, I started with mid-distance, and I loved that. In college, one day, I signed up for half [marathon]," Boehme said. "I really didn't have any prior knowledge or experience doing anything longer than cross country in high school, [which was] 4k for girls. I had run probably seven miles maximum before that. It was an impulse; it sounded like fun, so I signed up, and that's what sparked it all."

If you asked Ankeny students what chocolate milk meant to them, most would reportedly say nostalgia. One of the best parts of an elementary school student's day is tearing open that cardboard carton to a sweet and chocolaty treat.

On Aug. 25, 2025, students arrived at school to find their mid day treat reduced to being served only on Mondays and Fridays.

"The chocolate milk situation is a tragedy," senior Brett Winfrey said.

Students voiced complaints immediately to AHS head principal Dr. Daniel (DJ) Johnson, but quickly discovered that this policy went far beyond the ACSD.

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In 2023, the Biden administration proposed a new benchmark for the consumption of sugar in schools, following the [Dietary Guideline for Americans](#) (DGA) recommendation that added sugars only take up 10 percent of calories in a meal. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) chose a flavored milk ban, hoping it would drastically reduce how much sugar students were consuming in schools.

"I had a cinnamon roll in my school lunch today, I don't think chocolate milk is the problem," stated senior Lilian Monthei.

Data taken from the 2014-15 school year recorded in the [School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study](#) (SNMCS) showed a significant increase in empty calories and refined grains being consumed by students when compared to the 2009-10 school year.

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Point. Pose. Focus. Flash. With the help of a 20-year-old compact digital camera, the perfect Instagram photo dump is crafted. Although cell phones fitted with advanced cameras frequent the pockets of most teens, Generation Z is bringing back 2000s digital cameras.

Digital cameras haven't gone away completely, as photographers of all levels have continued to use the advancing technology. However, some of the advancements come as a surprise. Due to the increasing popularity of older models of digital cameras, camera companies like Canon and Nikon are releasing newer models of cameras, thought to be left in the past.

While certainly amplified by social media platforms and influencers, there seem to be other reasons why the trend is back. A vintage experience and look put novelty back into the mundane experience of taking photos on smartphones. Or perhaps a lower screen time and a sense of candidness make digital cameras appealing.

Kailey Mgridichian, who used digital cameras as a child, agrees that the photos taken with them hold a different kind of charm.

"Digital photos feel more real. They look like the memory of the moment, rather than an exact copy of the scene. Phone photos are fine, but they don't have that same physicality," she said.

She also noted that part of what made digital cameras special, growing up, was the process that came with developing them.

"Some of them stayed digital. We would get the ones from vacations or big events developed. It was a much longer process than it is now, and you had to actually talk to someone rather than use a kiosk," she said.

You can feel the tension on the court as the clock counts down, and it seems as if every move you make could be the wrong one. You've done the play a hundred times, yet you can't seem to focus, an experience some athletes seem to face.

Athletes are pressured every day to increase their skills and physical strength in order to see the best results on the playing field, but Ankeny High School has taken a different approach to get their athletes ahead of the game. Ankeny High School hired Codee Myers of [Myers Mental Performance](#) to serve as the official mental performance coach for the Ankeny Hawks athletic department.

"She's very kind and understanding and I think that is really helpful because in basketball and in track it's kind of all mental," sophomore Lilly Buckley said. "I feel like she has helped me overcome a lot of mental stuff, especially in track and basketball, especially when I had slumps and really bad shooting days I can just go talk to her and she instantly gets me in a better mood."

Nerves are normal, especially in athletics, but for some people it becomes more than the butterflies flying around in their stomach.

Whether it is in the dugout at a baseball game or running a camera for football film, Grady Andersen has become a fixture of Ankeny High athletics. What started as a nudge from his parents to get out of the house turned into nearly 2,000 hours of community service—and a newfound purpose.

To earn a silver cord at graduation, students must complete 120 hours to demonstrate their dedication to service, but some students choose to go above and beyond. By the end of the baseball season, senior Grady Andersen will have allocated around 1,900 hours of community service within his four years of high school.

Andersen has created a role for himself in helping some of Ankeny's athletic teams. He began his freshman year as the head statistician for baseball, and he added being the football head of film in his sophomore year, along with managing boys basketball before he switched to girls basketball in his junior year.

"He's created a niche," Andersen's dad, Kiron Andersen, said. "He doesn't really care what people think about him in a way that I guess I would, he's okay being on the sidelines, and being the support, and having the responsibility to do things that allow the coaches to coach."