

2014



Nicole Blubaugh-Moran

Nicole is the daughter of Marla and the late Pat Blubaugh and sister to her most faithful supporters and brothers, Chad and Christopher. First and foremost, I'd like to thank God, not only for my salvation, but also for the opportunities He provided me to do the thing I loved most for much longer than most people get to...play ball. I'd like to thank my mom who wore many hats during my playing days including: mom, dad, taxi-cab driver and so many more. She endured excruciating heat in the heart of summer to watch me play, transported carloads full of giggling teenage girls to and from practices, and pulled all-nighters to help me with school projects, yet somehow, always found time to make sure I had a clean uniform (since we played every day in the spring it seemed) and three meals a day. I don't know how you ever pulled it off and 'thank you' doesn't even seem like enough, but THANK YOU because whether I won or lost, I could always count on you.

Next, I'd like to thank Todd Brown, who took a chance on me in 1998 as a 14-year old freshman and threw me into a position which I'd never played, but had to learn pretty quick. Thank you for pushing me harder than I could have ever imagined and for believing that I would be successful. You were my biggest critic, my 'give it to you straight' guy, my yardstick and my rock. Thank you for not being 'too proud' of me – it made me work harder and allowed me to play a sport that I'd loved since I was young enough to play catch out back with my dad and brothers at a nationally-known program.

I'd like to thank the Panther fans who have cheered for me and the teams I've played on since I was a toe-headed girl playing on the very streets and fields that surround us tonight. To my teammates: thank you to those of you who ALWAYS stayed after practice with me to throw "one more down to second" until I had a perfect throw to second or to hit "one more bucket of balls" because I'd had an awful game that night.

A special thanks to my fellow classmates and childhood playmates – Clint Bankes, Jedd DuPerow, Clayton McCoy and Jesse O'Brien who never took it easy on me on the playground. Thank you for making me tougher and teaching me that if I was going to play with the boys, I had to be hard-nosed and strong enough to handle skinned knees on our blacktop baseball field. The four of you taught me competition first.

Sports have instilled such great lessons and characteristics in me from the time I was young. I learned how to bounce back from adversity, how to work hard, how to push past the point of physical exhaustion, and I learned mental toughness and tenacity. I learned about leaving every ounce of myself on the field and how in life and in sports, I could only "control the controllables" – I couldn't control the weather or the umpires, but I was always in control of how I reacted to those things and I could always control my level of intensity. I tried to live out Mia Hamm's vision of a champion quote – "the vision of a champion is bent over, drenched in sweat, at the point of exhaustion, when nobody else is looking". I believe we achieve greatness when we work hard when no one is looking – in sports, but also in life. I used to have a self-written saying on my dorm mirror that I read every day that went "today, I must work twice as hard as everyone else just to be as good as them so that one day, I CAN be twice as good as them." Sports have prepared me for the game of life – to be a contributing member of a team, to overcome hardships, to dig deep when things get tough, and to do what you love .

At New Lexington, Nicole played volleyball, basketball and softball while earning eight varsity letters. Under Todd Brown, our softball teams won 4 sectional titles, 2 district titles, 2 MVL South titles, and 1 MVL title while compiling a 71-16 record in her four years.

In softball, Nicole was a four-time All-MVL selection and a two-time all-district selection. In basketball, under Tom Maxwell, we were MVL champions in 2001, coming down to the last game of the regular season. Nicole was an All-MVL selection as well as a participant in the Licking County/Muskingum Valley All-Star game. In volleyball, she was an All-MVL and All-District 12 selection as well as the recipient of the Kellie Padgett Perseverance Award.

Following a top ten graduation in 2001, Nicole attended Muskingum College where she played for the late Coach Donna Newberry and earned four varsity letters. In my four year tenure, we compiled a 167-27 record and as a freshman in 2002 played on the team that set the NCAA record for most home runs in a season. As a team, we were four-time Ohio Athletic Conference (OAC) champions, four-time OAC tournament champions, three-time regional champions, three-time regional tournament champions, and three-time World Series qualifiers with finishes of 7th, 4th, and 6th places respectively. Individually, Nicole was a three-time first-team All-OAC selection, three-time first-team All-Region selection, a two-time first-team All-American, a one-time third-team All-American, a one-time first-team All-Academic OAC selection, and was the recipient of the Barbara Steiner Outstanding Female Athlete award as a senior in 2005. Nicole graduated with two Bachelor's degrees – one in health education, one in physical education.

Following graduation from Muskingum College, I obtained a Master's Degree in Adapted Physical Education from the University of Virginia and worked for eight years as an elementary physical education teacher in an inner-city school district in Virginia where I continue to reside. Most recently in 2013, I was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at Muskingum University.



Rebecca A. Bryant-Fink

Rebecca A. Bryant-Fink is a 2001 Graduate of New Lexington High School. Rebecca's sport of choice was softball where she was a four—time letter winner. In 2001 she led her team from the pitcher's circle to the school's only Muskingum Valley League Championship to date.

In 1998 Rebecca took the field as the starting shortstop for the Lady Panther's varsity squad and also shared time as starting pitcher. She also led her team in hitting her freshman year, which helped her earn first team All-MVL Honors.

Bryant-Fink continued in the pitching circle in 1999 as the Lady Panthers won the Sectional Championship and advanced to the District Finals with 18 wins in the season. Rebecca was honored as team MVP that year as she led the team in hits, on base percentage and pitching with a 1.06 ERA with 182 strikeouts. 1999 was also the year she earned her first title as MVL Player of the Year in addition to first team All-MVL honors and Times Recorder Athlete of the year.

The 2000 Lady Panthers softball team had even more success earning a berth in the MVL Championship game and winning Sectional and District Championships. Rebecca performed all the pitching duties and led the team in hits, on base percentage and was awarded team MVP for the season. In the same year Bryant-Fink earned her second MVL player of the year award, First team All-MVL and Times Recorder athlete of the year. Rebecca also garnered first team All-SEO and Second team Division II All-Ohio. She pitched a perfect game that included twenty strikeouts in the Sectional Championship win over Miami Trace.

New Lexington High School's only MVL Softball Championship occurred in 2001. A season in which Rebecca pitched sixteen shutouts, totaled 222 strikeouts, one perfect game and a ERA of 0.19. She also led the team at the plate with a batting average of .456, an base percentage of .572 which earned her another Team MVP award. Bryant-Fink again earned First Team All-MVL, Times Recorder Athlete of the year, MVL Player of the Year and first team All-SEO. She was honored with Second team Division II All-Ohio for the second straight season.

Rebecca attributes her NLHS success to her love of the sport of softball and the support from family, coaches and teammates.

Rebecca is the daughter of Scott and Denise Bryant and sister to Jennifer Bryant-Gleckler, all from New Lexington. Bryant-Fink is employed by the Perry County Clerk of Courts Title Department and resides in New Lexington with her Husband Brandon and eleven year old daughter Breanna. Rebecca still has her passion for softball and spends her summers coaching youth sports.



Karley Mohler

Karley graduated in 1997 from New Lexington Senior High School. She played four years of volleyball, basketball and softball, making varsity in all her sophomore season. As an athlete Karley was named to multiple All-MVL and district teams in all three sports. She was named MVL and District 12 player of the year her senior season of basketball.

Karley was president of student council her junior and senior years along with belonging to several other clubs and groups. Karley went on to attend the University of Rio Grande on a full basketball/ academic scholarship.

At the collegiate athlete, Mohler was named MOC Freshman of the Year, three-time First Team All-AMC, and an NAIA All-American while playing basketball for the Red Women. Graduating ranked first in several categories including; games played and won, blocked shots, and the All-Time Leading Rebounder in school history and ranked third on the All-Time Scoring list. She was the first basketball player in Rio Grande history to amass over 1500 points and 1000 rebounds. Karley graduated in 2001 with a B.S. in Secondary Education – Social Science. She was inducted into the University of Rio Grande Athletic Hall of Fame in November, 2011.

Karley has spent most of her working career as a high school and college basketball coach; coaching three years of basketball and volleyball at Berne Union high school, one year as an assistant basketball coach at John Carroll University (Cleveland, Ohio) and three seasons as head golf and assistant basketball coach at Walsh University (North Canton, Ohio). While at Walsh University, Karley was named AMC Golf Coach of Year in 2004 and also achieved her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership in 2007. Most recently Mohler has the last five years as head basketball coach at Midway College (KY), where she also served Assistant Professor within the Midway College Teacher Education program, and served as the Faculty President for the 2012-2013 school year.

Presently, Karley has switched gears and has taken on a business role as a National Account Manager for The Dannon Company and Evian Water, at Coyote Logistics located in Hilliard, Ohio. Karley is the daughter of Shirley Steve Mohler. She would like to thank her family and our community for the support they have given her throughout the years. "I would not be who, where, or what I am without my family and my community. It takes a village and villages do not get much better than Junction City, Ohio!" Says Mohler



Zeb Wood

During his athletic career Zeb earned 3 varsity letters in Wrestling (1991, 1992, 1993), 2 varsity letters in Football (1990, 1991), and 1 varsity letter in Track (1992). He was a member on the 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1993 unbeaten MVL championship wrestling teams while winning the program's sixth consecutive title his senior year in 1993. Zeb was also a two way starter (wide receiver and defensive back) on the 1990 MVL championship and state playoff football team.

During the 1990-1991 school year, Zeb finished his sophomore wrestling season with a 25-4 record while earning MVL runner-up and a Sectional championship. The wrestling team earned a MVL league title along with a Sectional Championship. He also earned All MVL honorable mention in football as a defensive back on the MVL championship and State Playoff team.

During the 1991-1992 school year, Zeb completed his wrestling season with a 32-2 record, an individual MVL championship and Sectional Championship. The 32 wins set a record for most wins as a junior at that time. He was also selected to the Southeast Ohio All Star team. During the track season he placed in the MVL, Sectional and District in the High Hurdles, Pole Vault and 4 x 100 meter relay. Zeb was also the starting quarterback and defensive back on the football team.

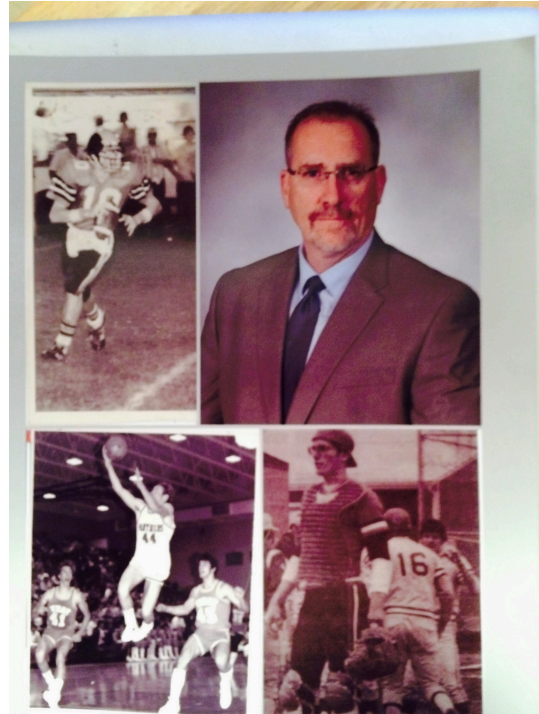
During the 1992-1993 school year, Zeb became the second state placer in school history by placing third in the state wrestling tournament and finished with a 41-1 record. He was a MVL, Sectional and District champion; along with receiving the honor of being named the East/Southeast District Wrestler of the Year, Times Recorder Athlete of the Year and selected to the Southeast Ohio All Star Team. Zeb helped lead the wrestling team to a top ten finish at the state tournament, which remains the only Top Ten finish in school history at the State Tournament.

Zeb finished his wrestling career with a 98-7 varsity record, a 2 time MVL Champion, 3 time Sectional Champion, District Champion and a 3rd place finisher in the State. He still holds the school record for the highest state place finish and the school and MVL record for the highest winning percentage for career (.933) and in a single season (.976). At the time of his graduation, Zeb also held records for takedowns in a single season (125); career takedowns (245); most wins in a single season (41); and career near fall 3's (66).

Zeb continues to be involved in wrestling as a coach. His wrestling coach experience includes New Lexington Jr. High Wrestling Head Coach 1994-1996 earning MVL coach of the Year in 1995, Jr. High Head Coach 2007-2009 placing 8th in the state duals in 2009 (the only team in school history to place in the state duals). He now works with the New Lexington youth wrestling program, high school wrestling team and the Wildcat Elite Wrestling Club in Junction City as an instructional coach.

Zeb has earned a Masters of Education Degree and Bachelors of Social Science Degree from Ashford University where he earned Magna Cum Laude Honors; Associates of Applied Science in Photographic Technology from Ohio Institute of Photography and Technology. He is currently an Intervention Specialist with the Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center in Zanesville and was a business owner in New Lexington with a photography studio and still photographs youth sports in New Lexington and Junction City areas. Zeb also served as the Special Olympics Coordinator and Coach for Perry County in 2009. He has a daughter, Makina, that attends Junction City Elementary.

2015



Rick Chovalas

A 1982 graduate of NLHS, Rick Chovalas lettered three years in basketball and baseball and lettered his junior and senior years in football. In 1981, he shared the title of Offensive Back of the Year with NLHS tailback Chip Ryan. Rick received All-League honors in three varsity sports and achieved All-Southeastern District honors for baseball in 1981.

Additional awards during his high school athletic career included: Captain Award in basketball (1981 and 1982); Leading Rebounder and Scorer(1981 and 1982); Leading Hitter in baseball (1981 and 1982); Selection to East/West Basketball All-Star team (1982); Played in the first MVL/Licking County All-Star Football game (1982).

In 2013, Rick was inducted into the Perry County Baseball Hall of Fame. His community service efforts include coaching, volunteering for Big Brothers and Big Sisters and gate attendant for varsity football games from 2003-2010.

Chovalas has been employed with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction for thirty years and currently holds the position of Warden in the Correctional Reception Center in Orient, Ohio.

He is the humbled father of Amber and Austin, also NLHS grads, and the proud grandfather of Alana, Mari and Cruz. Rick and his fiancé Diana enjoy bicycling, gardening and spending time with family.

Rick would like to dedicate this honor to his mother June Chovalas. June never missed a ball game, always encouraged him to do better and above all, win or lose, she was his biggest fan.



Charles “Meatball” Fondale

Charles “meatball” Fondale was a 1967 NLHS graduate. He was class president his sophomore, junior and senior year. He graduated fifth in his class and received the NLHS Scholar Athlete.

Charles was a member of the 1964, 1965, 1966 and 1967 MVL Champions Track teams. He lettered in track in 1965, 1966 and 1967. He was All-MVL in the shot put as a junior and senior, including league champion as a junior.

Fondale lettered three years in football (1964, 1965 and 1966). These teams had a combined record of 23-5-1, including 10-0 MVL Champions in 1964 and 7-2-1 MVL runner-ups in 1966. Coach Jim Rockwell appointed “Meatball” as a captain his junior year and he was voted co-captain by his teammates his senior year. His junior and senior years he played all 48 minutes of each game.

As a senior he lead the MVL in rushing (1,072 yards) and yards per carry(7.5). He led the MVL in total offense with 1,164 yards and tied for fourth in scoring with 66 points. During his career he rushed for over 2,000 yards and scored over 130 points.

As a senior he was selected First Team All-MVL as a fullback and Second Team All-MVL as a linebacker. He was chosen All-Southeast Ohio and was named Honorable Mention All-Ohio.

After high school he attended Capital University, where he played football for four years and lettered the last three. He led the team in yards per carry two years as a running back. His senior year, Capital won the OAC (7-0) and won the Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowl to become the 1970 college football Division III National Champions.

Upon graduating from Capital, he became a teacher and coach in the Cambridge City School System. He held these positions until he retired in 2009. During his tenure he coached, football, track, cross country and volleyball. He also spent time as assistant athletic director and ticket manager.

As head varsity girls track coach his teams won six league or conference championships. The team also earned one district co-championship and one district runner-up finish. He coached nine All-Ohioans, including two state champions.

He also has been active in the Eastern District Track and Cross Country Coaches Association, having been treasurer from 1974 to present. He was presented the OAT&CCC Distinguished Service Award in 2012.

He has been a track and cross country official for forty years. He officiated his fourth state track meet this past June. In 2010 he received the “Contributor Award” from the OHSAA Track and Field Officials Association.

Charles established the “Charlie Fondale Girls Track Scholarship” for Cambridge girls track athletes upon his retirement in 2009. He has been a Cambridge Lions Club member since 2000 and is currently club president. He received his Masters Degree from Ohio University in 1992.

Charles and his wife Margaret of 45 years (1966 NLHS homecoming queen) have three children and seven granddaughters.



Joe Huffman Jr.

A 1983 graduate of NLHS, Joe Huffman lettered three years in wrestling and football and lettered his junior and senior years in baseball. In 1983, he earned All-Ohio honors in wrestling. Joe earned his second MVL title at 126 pounds. In football he was named Honorable Mention All-Ohio, All-Southeast Ohio and All-MVL as a Linebacker. Joe was also a letterman in baseball.

In 1982, in wrestling, he became NLHS first state qualifier, first District Champion and was MVL Champion. He lettered in football and baseball. In 1981 Joe was the first district placer in NLHS wrestling history.

Additional awards during his high school career included: NLHS Scholar Athlete (1983); Graduated in top 10% of class with a 3.66 GPA in college prep courses; Captain Award in wrestling (1981, 1982 and 1983).

In 2015, Joe was awarded with a 25 year Safe Driving Circle of Honor Award by UPS.

Huffman has been employed with UPS for twenty-nine years and currently holds the position of driver.

He is the father of Tyler, Spencer and Allie, also NLHS grads and 2 year old Aubrey. Joe and his wife Paula enjoy walking, dancing and spending time with family.

Joe would like to dedicate this honor to his parents Joe Sr. and Becky and Coach Mike Halaiko.

Joe Sr. and Becky encouraged and enabled him to reach his dreams in athletics and life in general. Without Mike's efforts and belief in his accomplishments this honor would not have been possible.



Joe Smith

Joe Smith attended New Lexington High School from 1998 – 2002. At an early age, Joe fell in love with the game of golf. Joe’s accomplishments in golf have been many. Prior to high school, he competed and was successful in many junior golf tournaments statewide.

During his high school career he was a four year varsity member for the Panthers. In 1999, as a sophomore, he helped lead the Panthers in to a Sectional Team Championship. In the same year, he went on to win a four person playoff in the District tournament to qualify for the State tournament. There he placed 21st individually in Division II.

In both his junior and senior seasons, Joe earned All MVL and was named to the All-Tournament team. As a senior, he was named All-District, District Medalist, and Times Recorder “Athlete of the Year” in golf. To top off his senior year, he qualified for state a second time, and finished 6th, earning him All Ohio honors in Division II.

Upon graduation, Joe attended Muskingum University where he was a 4yr letter winner for the Muskies. In, 2002 he was part of a Muskie team that qualified for the Division III National Championships. Joe completed his time at Muskingum in 2006 receiving a Bachelor’s degree in Business.

Joe was fortunate to be around a lot of talented and dedicated teammates at NLHS.

He was also appreciative of the support from the dedicated and caring coaches/mentors such as: Larry Saffell, Joe Nash, Jeff Nash, and everyone else at Perry Country Club. Joe would also like to give a special thanks to his mom Sally and dad Jerry, along with his three sisters Kindra, Chrissy, Becky for all their love and support.

Currently, Joe is a Manager of Business Intelligence for Acosta Sales & Marketing in Ponte Vedra, Florida. Joe continues to play the game he loves when he is not helping his Fiancé Ela plan for their wedding in 2016.



2002 Football Team

The 2002 NLHS football team finished the regular season undefeated with 10-0 mark. The victory over a Division I playoff team, Logan, (33-6) and their perfect record vaulted the Orange and Black to AP State Runner-Up Division IV and a #16 National ranking. The 2002 Panthers won the school's 18th MVL championship and made the fourth playoff appearance in school history.

The team was led by Head Coach Bill Nutt and assisted by Todd Brown, Kevin Cannon, Bill Kimble, Dan Morgan & Paul Wollenberg.

In 2002, The Panthers outscored their regular season opponents 307-105. Running back Drew Cannon was named First Team All-Ohio and 2X MVL Player of the year. Offensive Tackle Jordan Barnard was the MVL Offensive Lineman of the Year.

All-MVL Honorees included Jordan Barnard, Drew Cannon, Kory Cook, Tyler Huffman, Travis Lightfoot, Coleman McCoy, Will Nutt, Nathan Sidwell, Ryan Sidwell and Jordan Spohn.

Other varsity letterman were Justin Addington, Greg Edgington, Alex Fowler, Cory Hill, Keith Holstein, Jon Huffman, Matt McCabe, Caleb Miller, Ben Padgett, Josh Smith and Shawn Tucker.

The varsity cheerleaders were coached by Lisa Heavener. Varsity members were Michelle Berry, Amanda Clark, Sarah Eiseman, Ashley Folk, Kaleigh Garris, Samantha Heavener, Shanda Knipe, Mandy Owens & Crystal Taylor.