

# DeLong leads top 5 senior athletic moments

As graduation is approaching, it's time to recognize the top five athletic moments of the Class of 2023.

Starting off in the number five spot, Kiyah Daily broke the school record for volleyball serve success. Playing in 29 matches this season, she served 204 times with a 100% success rate. Daily does not have any plans to further her volleyball career and will be attending the University of Iowa.

At number four, six seniors plan on continuing their athletic careers at the next level: Nolan DeLong, Carlie Jo Fusco, Hunter Bacorn, Zachary Pearlman, Grant Hein, and Caleb Clark.

Three of those athletes will be going for track and field. Fusco will run at the University of Northern Iowa and Hein at William Penn. Clark has plans to run for Southeastern Community College.

Two will be furthering their football careers, DeLong at the University of Iowa and Bacorn at Upper Iowa University. Pearlman will be going to Coe College for bowling.

At number three was the girls' basketball senior night. Despite not being

able to play all season due to injuries, two seniors, Mackenzie Oberlander and Kalie Weber, were able to play almost an entire quarter. Both seniors have been plagued by injuries during their high school careers.

At number two is Carlie Jo Fusco's running career. She qualified for the state cross country meet her junior and senior year. She also qualified for the state track meet her sophomore year running in the shuttle hurdle relay and the 400-meter hurdles.

In Fusco's junior year, she broke the school record for the 400-meter hurdles then set a new PR at the state meet, running 65.43 and placing fourth.

At the state meet last season, she was also part of the shuttle hurdle team that placed seventh and the sprint medley relay team.

So far this year, Fusco placed fifth in the 400-meter hurdles at the Drake Relays last month, rebreaking her PR with a time of 63.94.

Finally, the top senior moment goes to Nolan DeLong for his Wildcat athletic career. DeLong, a running back, has rewritten the Durant football record book, is ranked ninth in the state in career rushing yards, and even set a Wildcat career scoring mark in basketball, besting his own father, Coach Ross DeLong.

During his senior season, DeLong helped the football team start the season 5-0 and ranked third in the state. During the annual Green Out night in January, DeLong's football jersey was retired and put up next to the record boards in the high school lobby.

A few weeks later, DeLong qualified for the state wrestling tournament after only having a few matches under his belt.

In his track career so far, he has been a part of back-to-back fifth-place finishes at state in the 4x400-meter relay. He also helped take the 4x200-meter relay team to the state meet his junior year and has qualified in the 100-meter and 200-meter dashes as well.

In baseball, he was part of the 2020 team that made it to the state tournament in Des Moines and will finish up his Wildcat athletic career this summer on the baseball field after graduation.



Photo by Mackenzie Oberlander  
Nolan DeLong prepares to make a tackle in the Cascade game. His career at Durant was chosen as the top senior athletic moment by the *Chronicles*.



Photo by Mackenzie Oberlander  
Carlie Jo Fusco (right) competes in the 100-meter hurdles at a home track meet this spring. Her running career was chosen as the second best senior athletic moment by the *Chronicles*.

## Athletes top newsmakers of the year

By Kiyah Daily

For the second year in a row, *The Wildcat Chronicles* newsmakers for the 2022-23 school year were varsity athletes, according to a compilation of student interviews done throughout the school year by *Chronicles* reporters.

Seniors Nolan DeLong and Garrett Hollenback both appeared four times each through eight issues ending with the March 23 issue.

Senior McKenna Rockow and junior Charles Huesmann both appeared three times, tying for second.

DeLong said he takes pride in being a two-year newsmaker for the *Chronicles* and is "glad to share stories with the younger generations of the school system."

For a good interview, DeLong thinks the best thing is repetition, saying "the more you work at it, the easier and better it gets."

DeLong thinks he has received

newsmaker of the year because he is very involved at the school, both academically and athletically.

Hollenback feels honored to be a newsmaker, as it means he played a significant enough role for reporters to want to interview him.

"I went out for new sports and joined new groups like the Mentors in Violence Prevention [MVP] program and student council," he said. "Going out for more sports and groups made me feel better."

Hollenback says he feels "out of place" if he is not keeping himself busy, which is why he fills up his schedule with so many activities.

Huesmann, a four-sport athlete, said he was part of multiple successful programs this year.

Huesmann anticipates that he will be featured just as much next year, in hopes that the athletic teams are just as successful, if not more.

### Apex Ink and Apparel's girls' track athlete of the month



708 5th St., Durant, IA 52747  
563-785-6223

Sophomore Emma Meincke is running track for the Wildcats this spring. Meincke is also throwing shot-put and has a personal record of 32'2 1/4." Meincke has run in four different relay events as well as the 200-meter dash.



Meincke

### Peel's Inc. golfer of the month



755 W. Iowa 80 Road  
Walcott, IA 52773  
(563) 468-5460

Senior Robert Olsen is golfing for the Wildcats this spring. Olsen has been out for golf since his sophomore year. His lowest score for 9 holes is 44 and 94 for 18 holes. Olsen said, "My favorite part about golf is how fun practice can be since you are out there with friends."



Olsen



609 W. 5th St.  
Wilton, IA 52778  
563-732-2222

### Arty's Ice Cream and Grill's boys' track athlete of the month

Senior Brady Meincke is running track for the Wildcats this spring. Meincke runs the 100-meter and 200-meter dash. He sometimes runs the 4x100-meter relay and the 4x200-meter relay. He also is throwing discus. His main goal is to go to state for discus. Meincke said, "I go out for track to get better and stay in shape for baseball."



Meincke



502 9th Ave.  
Durant, IA 52747  
(563) 785-4541

### Today's Dentistry coach of the month

Mr. Daniel Knipfel is in his 12th year of coaching track and field and has been head varsity coach for the boys' team for four years. He is also assistant football and wrestling coach at Durant. "My favorite part of coaching is watching athletes be successful through hard work and perseverance," he said. He is hopeful that someday he can give Durant another state title in a track event.



Knipfel

### Fire Nutrition's softball player of the month



608 5th St.  
Durant, IA 52747  
(563) 261-4254

Junior Kennedy Jehle will be playing softball for the Wildcats this summer. Jehle is a pitcher and first baseman. She likes that "everyone has to work together to get outs and score runs." Jehle thinks the season will go well because "we have had a lot of younger girls stepping up during the off-season." She is excited for the upcoming season to start.



Jehle



609 W. 5th St.  
Wilton, IA 52778  
563-732-2222

### Arty's Ice Cream and Grill's baseball player of the month

Freshman Colby Gast's goals this season are to bat .300 and have a winning record as a team. Before the season started, Gast practiced with the baseball team three time a week along with additional practices outside of the school. He enjoys the relationships that develop on the team and the competitiveness the sport brings.



Gast