

Bowlers take top sports highlight for seniors

By Colby Gast

The Class of 2025 has provided Durant High School with many sports highlights in its four-year tenure. Here are the top five.

At number five, the girls' basketball team had a record above .500 this season for the first time in nine years.

The team got close to the mark last year, posting a 10-13 record, but it finally broke through in February when it went 12-10, cementing the mark in the final regular season game against Wilton.

The team consisted of seven seniors, including three-year starter Adison Daufeldt, who had this goal in mind all year long.

"It was one of my team goals that I set at the beginning of the year to have a winning record, and it's awesome that we were able to do that," said Daufeldt.

Daufeldt credits the success this year to team chemistry.

"I feel like we played as a team, worked well together, and picked each other up all season long," Daufeldt said.

"I also feel like we all had fun with it. There was no drama with the team this year, and that helped a lot."

Daufeldt is happy to leave this legacy at Durant as her basketball career comes to an end.

"It show all of the hard work I put into the team as well with all of the others to make it happen," she said.

At number four, the football team beat the West Branch Bears for the first time in 39 years on October 18.

The Bears have had the Wildcats' number for decades, but that came to an end this fall when the Wildcats took them down in a defensive showdown, 13-6. The Bears were held to two field goals, so the Wildcats' two touchdowns were enough.

The Wildcats were led by a big group of 12 seniors.

Head Coach and Principal Joel Diederichs is proud of the win, but not just because of who it was against, but because of how his team played.

"We talked as a team about how you can control one thing and that is how we played that night, and I was proud of the team that night as we came together and faced adversity and ultimately came out on top," said Coach Diederichs, "and that week, it happened to be West Branch, which had not happened in quite a few years."

Coach Diederichs is very proud of the seniors and is grateful for all they have done for the program throughout their four years.

At number three, cross country runner Race Starr qualified for state in October and placed 34th at the state meet.

Starr led the team to placing fourth at the district meet in Iowa City where he ran an 18:03 to get his individual spot in the state meet.

Starr also ran the third fastest 5K in

school history at a meet earlier in the year at Marquette.

At number two, Conner Schwarz placed 14th at the state track meet in the 200-meter dash last spring.

Schwarz qualified for state when he ran a 22.99 to place second at the district meet. Then he ran a personal record of 22.75 at the state meet at Drake Stadium in Des Moines.

Schwarz has continued his tear on the track this year as he has already been a part of a school record in the 4x100-meter relay previously held by Schwarz and his teammates last year. He also ran on the relay at the Drake Relays in April for the second year in a row.

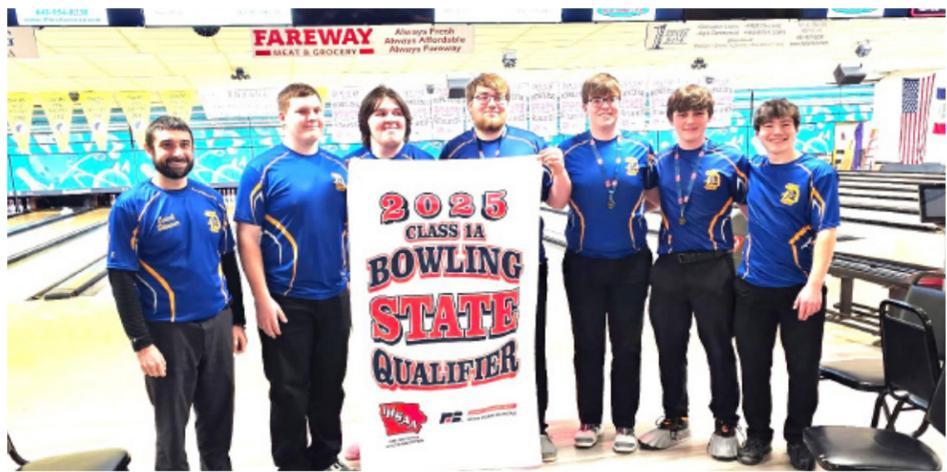
And finally, at the number one spot for the best sports moments for the Class of 2025, the boys' bowling team, led by four seniors, placed fifth at the state tournament in Waterloo.

The team qualified for the state tournament when it came in first at substate in Ottumwa.

Senior Matthew Jenkinson was very happy how his career ended.

"It was an amazing feeling," said Jenkinson.

"Ever since freshman year, it's been a goal of mine to make it to state, and obviously I wish we could have gotten a higher place, but I'm proud of what we have accomplished."



The Durant bowling team holds the banner showing it qualified for the state tournament in Waterloo in February.

Senior Gus Thoma to return to PE class—as a teacher

By Madison Smyser

As the class of 2025 prepares to receive their diplomas and leave Durant High School, one senior might come back in four years.

Senior Gus Thoma plans to attend two years at Kirkwood Community College and then transfer to the University of Northern Iowa to finish his teaching degree, so he can teach PE at the high school or elementary level in Iowa.

"Growing up, the PE teachers that I had influenced me the most," said Gus

whose favorite PE teachers were Mr. Jeffrey Workman and Mr. Casey Strub.

Gus also wants to teach health and coach football or track.

Through his years of school, Gus enjoyed only certain classes with PE being his favorite. He said that the classes he did not like, such as math, "made me realize how much I actually like the ones I do like."

The other careers Gus considered were physical therapy and business. Gus' family does own Jeff's Market, which has stores in Durant, Blue Grass, and West Lib-

erty, but he has decided he does not want to work for the family business.

Gus is entering a field that has struggled lately to fill positions. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 86 percent of American public schools "reported challenges hiring teachers" for the previous school year.

Seventy percent of public schools reported not receiving enough candidates for open positions, and 66 percent reported a lack of qualified applicants.

Principal Mr. Joel Diederichs

strongly encourages students like Gus to become teachers.

"It's a great profession," said Mr. Diederichs. "Teachers are hugely important to build a relationship, to give students a chance to expand and learn."

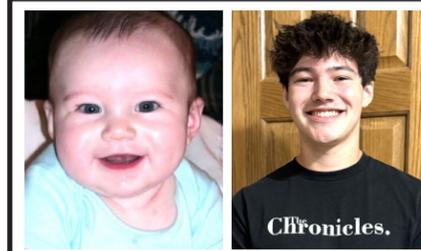
Gus' mom, Mrs. Brooke Thoma, currently teaches third grade at Durant. She is proud of Gus for pursuing teaching and is not surprised with his choice.

"I think he was born to be a PE teacher because that kid loves to play," said Mrs. Thoma.



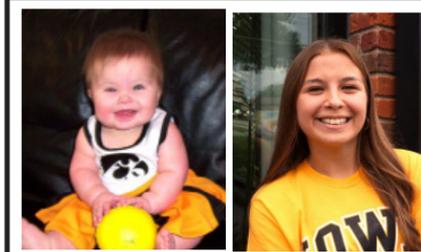
From your first steps to your senior year, you've always been a shining light...kind, funny, adorable and determined. Here's to the boy who's made his mark and is just getting started! The future is bright, Gus. We love you and are so proud of you.

Love,
Mom and Dad



e. e. cummings wrote, "To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else—means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting." So proud of all you've accomplished, Garrett. Stay true to yourself and you won't go wrong.

Love,
Mom and Dad



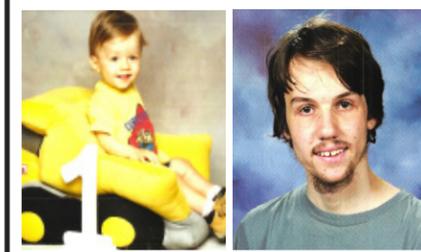
Leah, We are so proud of what you've accomplished and are excited for the adventure to continue.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Ben, Anna, Emma, Cooper and Sparky

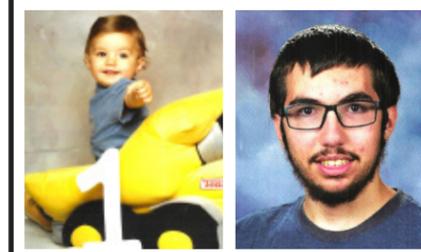


You have the strength, resilience, and potential to achieve your dreams and goals. Never doubt your capabilities.

Love,
Dad and Stephanie



We're proud of you!
Love,
Mom, Dad, and Sis.



We're proud of you!
Love,
Mom, Dad, and Sis.



As you move onto this next journey of yours, continue to be true to yourself. Your scars are symbols of strength and determination. You are courageous and never gave up. We have enjoyed every minute watching you grow into a young man. Thanks for the memories. Your future is bright!

We love you,
Mom and Dad.



Never doubt that you are deserving of every opportunity that comes your way. You give 110% in everything you do ALL the time. You are good-hearted, and it's been a joy watching you be the man you have become and continue to be. Thanks for the memories. Your future is bright!

We love you,
Mom and Dad.