

Episode 6 - Life In The Middle @ NHMS

[00:00:05] Hi, everyone, and welcome to our Life in the Middle podcast. I'm your host, David Simpson, and I'm the principal here at Northern Hills Middle School. Every episode I'll be sharing updates and happenings from NHMS along with bringing guests to share advice and tips on how to help us all navigate these middle years. Thanks for tuning in.

[00:00:34] Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to another edition of Life in the Middle podcast. This is an exciting podcast as we are featuring a number of our student athletes here at Northern Hills Middle School to share a little bit about their seasons and things that they got out of playing sports here at middle school. First up, Elana, Elana how are you today? Good. And so life is good for you. Northern Hills. Yeah. Okay. Now a lot to tell our audience. What did you play this fall here at Northern Hills?

[00:01:03] I played volleyball.

[00:01:05] And how many years have you been playing volleyball?

[00:01:07] Ever since, like second grade or first grade. What do you love about volleyball? I just like that. I just forget everything on the court and I can just play the sport I love.

[00:01:17] Tell us a little about your season this year. What team are you on and some of your highlights from the season?

[00:01:22] The team I was on was the 8th grade A team and we went 17and 0 in the season and we won the tournament. And we be some rival teams like Central and Eastern a few times.

[00:01:33] So I had a chance to see one of your games at the tournament is pretty exciting. You also played central in the finals of the tournament that day, right? Yes. OK. Tell us a little about those games.

[00:01:45] I'm the first time we played central is very intense. And then the second time we played them, we weren't as nervous. So we really did really good and we beat them by a lot.

[00:01:55] Now, a lot of you had mentioned that when you're on the court with your teammates, you kind of just forget about everything. What does it feel like? What do you mean? Can you tell us more about that?

[00:02:03] Basically, I just like forget about all the schoolwork and stress and stuff at home that makes me like feel really stressed. And I just, like, worry about volleyball and stuff.

[00:02:14] Sophia, what sports did you play this fall here at Northern Hills? I also played volleyball and. Can you tell us a little about your season and what team you're on?

[00:02:21] Yeah, I was in eighth grade B team. I had Coach Terry and one of my favorite parts is just meeting new people and being able to play and talk with people I hadn't always talked to.

[00:02:32] What is a do you can you think of any games this season that that were a highlight for you or any moments for a team?

[00:02:38] All of the tournament games were really fun because we be a lot of teams that we hadn't been originally. So it was like a big accomplishment for us is super fun.

[00:02:47] What do you think was the reason that maybe the first time your team wasn't successful and the second time around?

[00:02:52] I think definitely through the season we got to know each other better and got to play better as a team and we definitely got better.

[00:03:00] All right. Hudson. That's in what sport did you play here this fall? I did, cross-country. And how long have you been a runner for?

[00:03:07] I started and mostly. So I think it was in second or third grade. I did a Meadowbrook. I did run for the hills and I didn't run that much. And then last year in seventh grade, I started running cross-country. And that's like really when I started noticing I could run.

[00:03:27] So some of our audience members may not know what run for the hills. What's that? Well, that's what it's about. Can you share what that is? Yeah.

[00:03:33] And who is at for that is for anyone. I think it's from my experiences it was only in. At Meadowbrook, but this year, my little brother did it and there was also trails doing it this year. So now there's a lot more people doing it. And it's where you can either choose to run a two mile, one mile or a half mile.

[00:03:59] All right. So that kind of started running early on in your lifetime. Tell us about your season with the cross-country team. Order some highlights and things that you learned.

[00:04:07] One highlight was. Well, so first we were going to do a race that I was practicing for for a long time and it got canceled or it was moved because it was flooded and then so. We went to another area where our first race was and that race I was I surprised myself a lot by getting first place in the whole meet. And then a second race was was the last one where we got first place for the conference meet. And that was just like a huge accomplishment, accomplishment for our whole team.

[00:04:46] So a personal accomplishment and a team accomplishment, and I know Coach Dunn was extremely and Coach Harvey they both were extremely proud of that conference, that first place at conference. Well, switching back quick to Sophia. You failed to mention something happened at the tournament. What place did your team come in at the tournament?

[00:05:03] We also got first place at that tournament, so.

[00:05:05] That's right. Ladies and gentlemen, we are sitting here talking to some athletes that were on some very successful teams. But in middle school, we talk about and I know all your coaches talk about that and Mr. Curcuru will talk about it. It's not necessarily about the wins and loss column. A lot of can you tell us maybe more about that and middle school sports and what other things are you getting out of it besides wins and losses?

[00:05:28] I met so many new like friends and it felt like everything because I play like travel, volleyball. And that feels like a lot of stress because it's like all about wins and losses and stuff. But middle school feels a lot better because it's not all about wins and losses. It's about meeting new people and getting personal goals and getting better stuff.

[00:05:48] So, Hudson, going back to you real quick.

[00:05:52] How many runners were out for cross-country because it seemed like a large team? I seemed that there was hundreds of runners, but I know it wasn't empty. How many were on your team this year?

[00:06:02] There was a whole bunch on. There is a lot of some greeters, which I am a lot of some greeters, which is good for next year and a lot of eighth graders. So I don't really know.

[00:06:15] So if I'm a sixth grader right now, we're a family out there that's ever been involved in Cross Country. Is that someone that can join? Easy to join?

[00:06:21] Yeah. Like I was not able to. I went in not thinking that a lot of my friends would. But like when I went in in seventh grade, there was a lot of people that I got to know. And it was I don't think you have to worry about getting new friends or like meeting new people because they just Mr. Dunn and Mrs. Harvey, like, bring you as like a whole family. And it's really nice.

[00:06:49] So all three of you in fall Sports was a great way, especially as a seventh grader. A year ago to meet new kids. Sophia, as you think about life lessons that you learned by playing volleyball. What are some of those life lessons that you were able to experience through volleyball here at Northern Hills? Do you have any of those ideas?

[00:07:09] Before volleyball this year, I didn't always like I was appreciated and always want to reach out and meet the new people. And this team showed me that it's good to do that. And it's it's like helps a lot with everything. When you just have more people to talk to and have more people to be there for you.

[00:07:28] So upcoming at Northern Hills a lot of opportunities to join different sports in the winter one. The second winter season in the spring. A lot of what would you say to a seventh grader or an eighth grader who's thinking about trying out maybe a little nervous about it? What would you say to him?

[00:07:44] I'd say I'd definitely try out because it's totally worth it in the end, because you meet so many new people and it's just really worth it.

[00:07:53] And last question, Hudson, what it feel like to represent northern or husky or husky crew or husky culture, because that for us on the northern side, that means nothing when you put that ad on and that the husky logo. What was that like? And I love it right now. For our audience who can't see you. You were in a northern northern sweatshirt. We got the husky logo going on. What is that sense of being a husky for you?

[00:08:18] It is amazing. I love being a husky this year and last year and many years before that, I. I love being a husky is so much fun.

[00:08:30] Well, on behalf of our entire school, I would like to say thank you so much for representing us on the court and on the trails in the cross country and the volleyball court and showing that leadership and really talking about and being involved in middle school athletics. Thank you for taking the time today to be on the show and look forward to seeing what comes from all three of you and your future. Thank you. We have another guest in our studio, Mr. Joe Curcuru, who is the assistant principal here at Northern Hills, but also our athletic director and someone who has been involved in sports for a long time. Welcome, Mr. Curcuru. Well, thank you. Glad to be here. How would you say how many years have you been involved in sports or coaching? Can you give a little bit about your background?

[00:09:14] I have been involved in sports here at Northern Middle for most of the last 30 years. It's been a long time, but we've seen so many terrific student athletes come through Northern Hills Middle School.

[00:09:28] One of the things that you often joke about with me is that we'll be talking about maybe a parent or someone and you'll say, hey, guess what? I coached him or her. So what sports have you coach? Because it seems like most anybody going through Northern Hills you have a connection with as far somehow.

[00:09:46] Oh, I've had experience coach in many, many sports, both here and I at four at Forest Hills, Forest Hills, Northern and Forest Hills Central. So yeah, we've it's been really neat to see so many athletes come back and it's been really fun to see these athletes come back as parents in prepping for this podcast.

[00:10:10] I came across and research that students who participate in athletics end up having higher GPA. More students go to college. Fortune 500 CEOs end up having more involvement in sports. They're more likely to have success. But what do you see here at the middle school level? What's the benefit for kids playing sports?

[00:10:31] We are so proud that this winter, early winter season, we have 130 over 130 basketball players. And you mentioned that research. But I think it's important to know that I think parents also see the value in our our students being involved in athletics. The research is overwhelming that when our students are involved, they're going to succeed better in school. They're going to succeed better in life. And it's it's great that we can offer those opportunities to our student athletes.

[00:11:12] One of the things that I love here in Northern Hills, but also in Forest Hills, you mentioned one hundred and thirty over hundred thirty boys coming out. And we have rec teams, we have eight teams. We have big teams. No one gets cut here, is that right?

[00:11:28] That is correct. There is a place for everyone. We talk to our athletes about that. Any sport that we offer, whether it's volleyball, whether it's cross-country, whether it's a basketball, right now, we're going to have wrestling beginning after winter break and then girls basketball moving into track. And our community ad offers swimming and water polo as well as tennis. And I may have even missed a sport. We have many opportunities for our student athletes and we encourage we encourage them to get involved. It's great that so many are.

[00:12:04] I remember talking to a mom last year. Her daughters had never tried volleyball before, and they both went out there on the rec team and absolutely had a great experience with that. Well, Joe, we interviewed three of our student athletes earlier, Elaina,

Sophia and Hudson. What do you think they said as some of the things that they enjoyed from plain middle school sports? Any guesses?

[00:12:31] Boy, it would be hard, hard to say. I'm sure they enjoyed the successes that they had because we had a very successful fall this year as far as from a competitive standpoint. But more importantly, and again, the research will show this. Middle school athletes, their number one memory is going to be the friends that they made and just the time that they got to spend with their team. Too many times we as parents, we get worried about that final, how the team did to the team. When did the team have success? Well, many times our student athletes measure that differently. They like to be involved. They like to push themselves to see how far they get. As you said, they get a chance to to learn something new. And so much about middle school is learning something new, experimenting, trying something if you like it, than continuing to do it.

[00:13:30] Well, this is where I think your experience comes in because the students did talk about that. Some of their highlights Sophia talked about a little bit that she met new people that she hadn't before and built relationships and new friendships. Hudson talked about being that family in the Cross Country team and with Coach Dunn and coach Harvey. And Ilana talked about those memories she has of playing with each other. Yeah, it was nice that they're successful, but that's not what stuck with them. And I think that's a great point for us as adults that our kids are getting so much out of those interactions, those connections. It's one of things we talk about in crew that we want to connect with others. And this gives those kids an opportunity to do that. One thing I would like to say, that memory our lives listeners may not be aware of the number of hours, Mr. Curcuru, that you put in behind the scenes, scheduling, prayer, planning out for the tryouts, all of the stuff that parents don't see and our students don't see. And I just want to say thank you for everything that you're doing to give our students those opportunities to be on our sports teams to participate. And it goes beyond sports here at the middle school and, well, other opportunities, things like science Olympiad and math counts. And new this year, Social Studies Olympiad will be coming. So a lot of opportunities to be connected. I want to say thank you for everything that you're doing to making our students having a memorable experience here at Northern Hills Middle Mr. Curcuru. Thank you. Very nice, our. Our kids are worth it.

[00:14:58] Our kids are worth it. I would like to thank our student athletes for giving some time to be on the podcast along with Mr. Curcuru. I'd also like to thank the pride of Northern the Northern Marching Band for supplying the music featured in this podcast today. We always love hearing our fight song. Go Huskies!

[00:15:27] Thanks again for listening to Life in the Middle podcast. I would like to thank Kevin McCloud for composing the music featured on this show. Have a great day.