

# New Captain at the Helm: Landstrom Takes Over Football Program

BY CODY TORCZON

“If we’re not coaching hard, we’re not doing it right,” Head Football Coach Jay Landstrom said. This season will be Coach Landstrom and his coaching staff’s first season with the Mount Michael Knights.

Playing as an offensive tackle at Hasting College, Landstrom brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to The Mount’s football program.

Landstrom is well-versed in the Nebraska high school football scene, formerly coaching at Lincoln High, Lincoln Southwest, Central, and Papillion-LaVista. During his time as an assistant coach at Central High School, he helped coach the 2007 Class A state championship team.

Landstrom pointed out that he is keen on setting the standard for Mount Michael football for years to come, teaching the players to play a “new style of football.” Many of his goals for the team are intangibles that reach beyond the football field, such as hard work and perseverance.

One thing that Landstrom thinks will challenge

him this season is the limited practice time for the team. This is due in part to coaches’ commutes to practice and boarding players needing to eat at 6:00. Landstrom emphasized the need to practice with tempo and not waste any reps in practice.

“Every school has its quirks and differences. We’ve adjusted where we need to and made our style work in the constructs of the school,” Landstrom said.

Coach Landstrom brought several new coaches with him this season. Coaches Hyland (Offensive Coordinator), Baker (Offensive Line), Pietramale (Defensive Coordinator), and Gates (Running Backs) have coached teams with Landstrom for many years. He feels that they are an essential part of the team, and each is a special piece of a puzzle for success.

“Coach Landstrom has had a lot of success in the past. His emphasis on the little details will be the difference between winning

and losing games,” Derek Brewer ‘26 said. Many of the players on the team look forward to how Landstrom’s impact will be felt this season and in the years to come.



**Pregame Adjustments** Head Coach Jay Landstrom works with Ethan Moline ‘25 before the Columbus SCOTUS game. The Knights prepared for a tough game against a top ten team in Class C1.

**“He is a fantastic coach who has done a great job preparing us, both mentally and physically for our season.”**

– Charlie L’Heureux ‘26, outside linebacker

# New Leadership in the Trenches: Coach Baker Puts O-Line to Work

BY WILL STORBECK



**Looking Out for the Linemen** Coach Baker watches the team play against Columbus Lakeview. The Knights fell 14-24.

The beginning of a new school year always marks the start of a new football season. This year’s football season comes with some substantial changes, one of them being a brand-new coaching staff. Under the leadership of head coach Jay Landstrom, the new staff consists of 5 new coaches and 3 returning. One of the new additions to the coaching staff is the offensive line coach, Coach Dennis Baker.

Coach Baker has been around the game of football all his life. “I grew up playing football... first grade, all the way through college,” Baker said. In addition to his experience as a player, he also has the most coaching experience in the program with a 27-year coaching career. He’s been at 5 different high schools but spent the most time at Central High

**“My biggest thing is: are you developing and improving as a player?”**

– Coach Dennis Baker

School. Baker coached there for 16 years, winning one state championship in 2007, and it is also where he coached with Landstrom.

All of this experience is what makes him such a helpful and impactful football coach. Baker uses repetition and constructive criticism to push his players and help them improve. “My biggest thing is: are you developing and improving as a player?” Baker said. With a smaller team like Mount Michael, Coach Baker is able to help each offensive lineman individually and focus on what each player needs to improve on.

Baker has been a great addition to the coaching staff and will have a large positive impact on the team moving forward.

# Sophomore Strides into Winning Seasons

BY J1 REPORTER OSCAR HOU

Mount Michael student Mesach Nkurubujango ‘27 had a great freshmen year of sports. He learned how to become a competitive and mature athlete as a member of cross country and soccer varsity team.

Nkurubujango said, “I do it, because I am competitive. Doing cross country brings out my competitiveness.” Cross country is a sport that tests willpower and mental toughness, and Nkurubujango enjoys the challenges and difficulties that can make him a better athlete. Playing at the varsity level requires innumerable effort and competitiveness. Nkurubujango said that he never thought he would be in varsity, but now, people see his potential.

Nkurubujango already has a goal for his high school running career. “My goal, for sure, is to win the state. That is my long-term goal. This is my second year, and I still get to push myself as a top runner,” Nkurubujango said.

Nkurubujango showed his sportsmanship not only in running cross country, but also in playing soccer. “Soccer was born in my heart to play. I love soccer more than anything. Soccer makes me happy inside, when I play it, my worries go away, and I don’t care about anything in the world. I can have fun,” Nkurubujango said.

In his freshman season he surprised himself and was excited about being on the varsity team. Nkurubujango said “It is where I want to be. Playing varsity soccer is what I want to do.” When he stands on the soccer field, Nkurubujango said that he feels like he is in his happy place.

Failures and difficulties are also a big part in his soccer season. In the past season, Nkurubujango didn’t get much time to play on the field. Nkurubujango said “As the season went on, I was pretty mad, but at the end of the season, I knew I could be better and stronger. I’m going to play, so I feel like it’s fair right now.”

Nkurubujango is still working on what he loves and what he wants to do. Over the summer, he spent a significant amount of time practicing, and his improvement has been evident.

Nkurubujango said, “My goal is to score my first goal in my high school season. Also, I want to get a scholarship and play college soccer.”

Nkurubujango has a great dream, but he also has a long way to go. He is looking forward to becoming a greater runner and soccer player.



**Finishing Strong** Mesach Nkurubujango ‘27 runs the last few yards of his race. Nkurubujango led the team to first place in the 2024 Plattsmouth Invitational race. Photo courtesy of Prep Running Nerd.