



# Rooting for Multi-Sport Athletes

# Recognizing Our Best

**T**he things we value most are the things we are apt to talk about the most, promote the greatest and recognize the highest.

In Michigan school sports, the “ideal” student-athlete is most often a “multi-sport athlete” – the student who is involved in academic and non-academic programs, athletic and non-athletic activities, who participates in both team and individual sports, perhaps a star in one sport and a substitute in another.

This publication celebrates multi-sport participation in school sports. With only rare exception, the student who participates in multiple school sports and non-athletic activities not only gets the maximum out of his/her years, that student gets the best preparation of life after school.

Between two health epidemics – lack of physical activity leading to obesity on the one hand and, on the other hand, specialization in a single sport year-round that begins too early in life and is too intense and too prolonged, leading to overuse injuries – is multi-sport participation – balanced participation that prepares youth to be more “physically literate,” active and more healthy as adults.

This publication is organic. Hosted on MHSAA.com, it will grow with fresh features and as schools and leagues initiate creative new ways to recognize and promote multi-sport athletes as well as schools with high rates of multi-sport participation.



This is a project of the MHSAA Task Force on Multi-Sport Participation which has been working since 2016 to prepare strategies and specific tactics for the MHSAA, allied organizations and local schools and conferences to promote multi-sport participation by student-athletes.

— John E. “Jack” Roberts  
MHSAA Executive Director



## The Game Plan



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**The Task Force on Multi-Sport Participation** is a working group invited by the Michigan High School Athletic Association executive director. Task Force members’ terms are not limited; members drop off when their schedules require and members are added from time to time to maintain diversity of background, geography and expertise.

**Current Task Force members:**

- Anna Britnell, Canton-Salem
- Todd Cheney, Hartland
- Scott Dane, Grand Ledge
- Keith Guy, Muskegon
- Kevin Guzzo, St. Joseph
- Matt Joseph, Sterling Heights-Utica Ford II
- Jason Kasparian, Port Huron Northern
- Jean LaClair, Bronson
- Anika McEvans, Southfield
- Jason Mellema, Ionia
- Scott Przystas, Grand Haven
- Meg Seng, Ann Arbor-Greenhills
- Jason Stariha, Muskegon-Catholic Central
- Brian Swinehart, Walled Lake Consolidated Schools
- Mike Thayer, Auburn-Bay City Western
- Patti Tibaldi, Traverse City

# White Pigeon's West Finds Multi-Success

**B**efore most high school students have blistered their fingertips on a hot Pop-Tart in a rush to get out the door and to school on time, White Pigeon sophomore Claycee West has already completed a rigorous cross country workout.

It's not for love of the sport that West logs miles at 5:10 a.m. with longtime Chiefs coach Pete Mestelle. She doesn't even like the sport. But with volleyball also demanding her precious time, the two-sport fall athlete gets in her workouts whenever she can. And in this case, it's before the sun comes up.

When that doesn't work with her packed schedule, she'll squeeze in a run when the nets and the sun start to come down.

West, who had a phenomenal freshman year, which included a scholar-athlete award on top of three varsity letters and a trio of Berrien-Cass-St. Joseph Conference all-league team nods in volleyball, basketball and track & field, made the mature decision to tack on another athletic endeavor in order to see improvement in all the others.

"It's just keeping me in shape," said West, who also participates in club volleyball and basketball during the offseasons. "(Mestelle) really got me in shape for track season and he has put a lot of work into me. I couldn't do anything without him. He's helping me tremendously."



It works both ways. Mestelle's girls cross country teams in recent years have struggled to put enough runners on the course to register team scores. This year, though, the Division 4 Chiefs have more than 10 girls on the roster. West, with no long distance running experience, is already vying for the top spot.

She may not reap the same rewards right away as she did in her other sports, but West's competitive nature won't allow her to be just a participant.

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*"I love what I do, but if I do one thing for way too long, I'm going to get tired of it. I love so many different things that it's easy for me to change it up."*

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"She is probably going to be our No. 1 or No. 2 runner," Mestelle said. "It's going to help her with her mind. It's not just running; you have to think about what you're doing. Her form has really come a long ways."

West is grateful to Mestelle for making himself available so early in the morning and the commitment required to make playing two sports at once possible.

Mestelle made light of his pre-dawn pledge.

"It helps keep me young," he said.

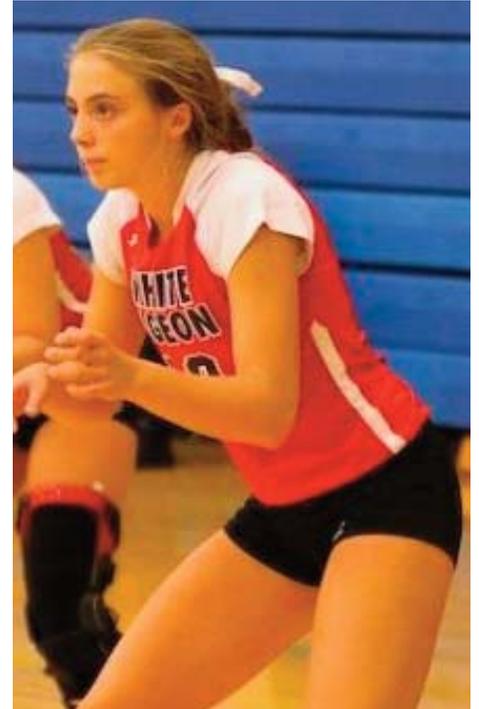
West is a middle and outside hitter for the volleyball team, she's the returning point guard and leading scorer for the basketball team and she qualified for the 2017 Lower Peninsula Division 4 MHSAA Track & Field Finals in both the 200 and 400 meters last spring. Her time of 1 minute, 00.89 seconds in the 400 was good for seventh place and all-state status.

In hoops, West scored 236 points as a rookie with 43 assists, 58 steals, 14 blocks and 89 rebounds.

But cross country is an entirely new challenge.

"I love to win, and I'm very competitive," West said. "Honestly, at first (in cross country) I wasn't trying to win. We had our first meet last week and I did OK. It killed me to see how I did compared to how I perform in other sports. I think that will change because I want to win. It's hard for me because I dislike running, so it's a mental challenge more than anything."

It may sound contradictory, but West claims the demanding schedule keeps her fresh mentally and physically.



Claycee West decided to think outside the box – and indoor venues – when she decided to tack on another activity by adding a fourth sport (cross country) to her already full resume'.

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"I think the biggest thing is that I don't wear myself out," she said. "I love what I do, but if I do one thing for way too long, I'm going to get tired of it. I love so many different things that it's easy for me to change it up. It works out my body differently. I don't overwork myself just in one area."

In a time when the topic of sports specialization in high school is heavily debated, West is a case study in how a multi-sport experience has far more benefits than that of a one-track approach. And for a small school such as White Pigeon, that attitude is vital to fielding competitive squads.

"So driven," White Pigeon girls basketball coach Brooke McClure said of West. "She works really hard. Anything you want in a kid, a student-athlete, she's it. She's been like this since she was a little girl. We're really fortunate to have her. She inspires other girls to do better in school and in sports."

— Wes Morgan  
Special for MHSAA Second Half

# Multi-Sport Efforts Are All Around Us

## A Look at Recognition and Promotion Efforts Around the State

The following pages offer a glimpse of efforts to promote and recognize multi-sport efforts in MHSAA schools around Michigan. If your school is undertaking similar initiatives, we'd love to hear from you. Email [programs@mhsaa.com](mailto:programs@mhsaa.com) to share your ideas and programs.



### HONOR ROLL

#### Adrian

**We call it:** Iron Maple/Platinum Maple

**We celebrate:** Three-sport athletes. Every one receives a T-shirt at the end-of-year athletic banquet with his or her name on the back and our Maple logo on the front. Seniors who have been three-sport athletes all four years of high school are awarded the Platinum Maple award. Recipients must be in good standing with all of their teams for the school year and with no athletic discipline or suspensions.

#### Allendale

**We call it:** Tri-Sport Award & Outstanding Senior Student-Athlete

**We celebrate:** Three-sport athletes. All, regardless of grade, are recognized with Tri-Sport awards at the end-of-year banquet. Allendale also names an Outstanding Senior Female Student-Athlete and Outstanding Senior Male Student-Athlete, based on a vote with criteria including "contribution to the entire athletic program."

#### Alma

**We call it:** Commitment Award & Triple Threat Award

**We celebrate:** The Commitment Award is presented to athletes who participate in a sport every season of every year of their high school careers. The Triple Threat Award (new for 2017-18) is intended to recognize senior ath-

letes who participated in at least two sports, hold a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher and have participated in one of Alma's service or honors programs.

**Bonus:** Multi-sport participation is a major factor in the selection of Athlete of the Month and Athlete of the Year winners. Alma also plans to begin recognizing the team with the highest percentage of multi-sport participants.

#### Alpena

**We call it:** Female Athlete of the Year/Male Athlete of the Year

**We celebrate:** Graduating seniors who have shown excellence in multiple sports over their four years of high school. All head coaches nominate a deserving athlete in their sports, with bios written detailing the athletes' accomplishments. Each head coach then ranks nominees with a point system determining the winners, who are presented with a large trophy that remains on display.

#### Ann Arbor Greenhills

**We call it:** Senior Athlete Award

**We celebrate:** One female and one male senior athlete who have earned the most varsity letters during their high school careers. This has special significance as it is the only athletic award presented by the school.

#### Belding

**We call it:** Multi-sport awards & scholarship

**We celebrate:** Student-athletes who have participated in two sports for four years receive certificates and recognition on stage during the end-of-year athletic program, with plaques awarded to those who have participated in three sports for four years (and in one case a four-sport athlete for four years received a larger plaque). Also, Belding's athletic boosters award a scholarship to a student-athlete who has participated in at least two sports.

#### Berrien Springs

**We call it:** Multi-sport Athlete awards

**We celebrate:** Students who play three or more sports are recognized for their efforts with a T-shirt. Both high school and middle school students are honored.

#### Bloomfield Hills Roeper

**We call it:** Iron Athlete Award

**We celebrate:** Student-athletes who have participated in a sport all 12 seasons of their high school careers. Bonus: Athlete of the Year, Academic Athlete of the Year and Sportsmanship awards are presented with heavy weight given to athletes with multi-sport experiences.

## Byron Center

**We call it:** BC Triple Threat Award

**We celebrate:** Seniors who have participated in three sports (one for each season of the school year) for all four years. Honorees do not have to be on varsity all of those 12 seasons. Athletes also must have been passing all classes at semester breaks through all four years. Plaques are presented during the annual senior awards night.

## Chelsea

**We call it:** Iron Dog

**We celebrate:** Three-sport athletes.

Bonus: Chelsea coaches take a retreat each year in part to create a bond that allows for “sharing” of more athletes by creating schedules that eliminate conflicts. Coaches also meet to schedule summer training so there are not conflicts and athletes don’t have to choose between them. Also, summer strength workouts for athletes are organized by groups that are not specific to sport – mixing athletes from different teams together for training.

## Chesterfield

### Austin Catholic

**We call it:** Scholar Athlete/Scholar Athlete of the Year

**We celebrate:** Student-athletes who have taken part in at least two sports and carry a 3.5 grade-point average receive a Scholar Athlete award and T-shirt recognizing the honor. From that group, a Scholar Athlete of the Year is chosen.

## Comstock

**We call it:** Triathlete Trip & Colt Commitment Award

**We celebrate:** Athletes who have participated in sports in the fall, winter and spring are treated to a day trip. Sponsored by the school’s sports boosters, “triathletes” have taken in lunch and a movie, Detroit Tigers games, Fort Custer team-building courses and paintball, Grand Rapids’ Treetops Rope Adventure Course and Michigan’s Adventure. Each honoree receives a T-

shirt. Seniors who have played at least nine varsity sports or were triathletes all four years receive the Colt Commitment Award plaque, with smaller plaques given to athletes who are not seniors but have participated all three seasons.

## Delton Kellogg

**We call it:** Graduating with Athletic Honors

**We celebrate:** Student athletes who accrue points in certain criteria over their high school careers, including for participation, postseason honors, captainships, promotion to varsity from sub-varsity, grade-point average, standardized test scores, etc. Ejections, quitting teams and similar lead to a subtraction of points. Honorees are presented with medals to wear over their gowns at graduation.



## Fruitport

**We call it:** Outstanding Achievement Award

**We celebrate:** Athletes who have earned six or more varsity letters during their careers at Fruitport.

## Jenison

**We call it:** Triple Threat Award

**We celebrate:** Athletes who have participated in a sport every season of all four years while at Jenison.

## Kent City Algoma Christian

**We call it:** Knights Order of the Cross

**We celebrate:** Athletes who have played all three seasons at least twice during their careers. Award nominees will be nominated (beginning in 2017-18) by athletes and school staff based on athletic prowess, dedication to school and family, sportsmanship and community service. Staff will choose finalists for a vote, and winners will be “knighted” at the school’s Senior Awards Banquet with their photos placed on the gym wall.

## Livonia Clarenceville

**We call it:** Three-sport athlete awards

**We celebrate:** All three-sport athletes, who receive patches and T-shirts at the spring sports banquet.



### Macomb Lutheran North

**We call it:** Three-sport awards & Mustang Sport Award/Distinguished Athlete Award

**We celebrate:** All athletes who have participated in three seasons of athletics. Each senior who has completed 12 seasons at Lutheran North receives the Mustang Sport Reward, including a trophy. Faculty and staff then vote for a Distinguished Athlete Award winner from the senior class, with multi-sport participation receiving weight.

**Bonus:** Lutheran North includes how well a coach promotes other sports as part of its postseason evaluation, and supplies coaches with literature to help them defend multi-sport participation.

### Manchester

**We call it:** Three-season medal

**We celebrate:** All athletes, varsity and junior varsity, who participated all three seasons of the school year. Honorees cannot have violated the department's code of conduct.

### Marcellus

**We call it:** Iron Wildcat/Golden Iron Wildcat

**We celebrate:** Athletes who play all three seasons. They receive a T-shirt at the end of the year, warm-up suits identifying them as Iron Wildcats, special



recognition at a year-end ceremony and plaques at senior awards night. The school's athletic boosters also sponsor a field trip, which in the past has included visits to Detroit Tigers games, bowling/arcade/go-kart facilities and Michigan's Adventure. Seniors who participate in all 12 sports seasons of their careers receive the Golden Iron Wildcat Award, including a special plaque and a lifetime pass to all home events at Marcellus.

### Middleville-Thornapple Kellogg

**We call it:** Tri-Sport Awards

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three sports during the school year. Seniors receive personalized plaques,



juniors receive gold medals, sophomores receive silver medals and freshmen get the bronze medals.

### Mt. Morris

**We call it:** Triple Threat

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in all three seasons during the school year. Juniors, sophomores and freshmen receive patches and seniors receive T-shirts. If senior compete in all 12 seasons during their careers, they also are awarded a plaque.



### Onaway

**We call it:** Seasonal banquet recognition

**We celebrate:** Multi-sport participants as part of each end-of-season all-sports banquet to conclude the fall, winter and spring. Onaway has athletes who participate in multiple sports in the same season, and those accomplishments as well as career accolades are ac-claimed.

### Pellston

**We call it:** 9-Letter Award

**We celebrate:** Athletes who earn nine varsity letters, which means they must participate in three sports at least



one year. Honorees receive a plaque at Awards Night and are added to another plaque that hangs permanently near the gymnasium.

### Petoskey

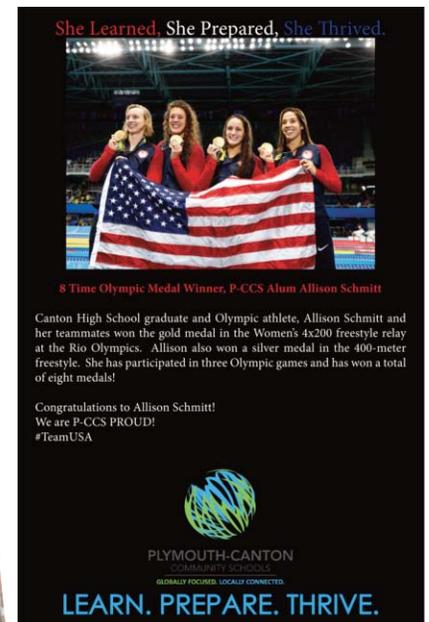
**We call it:** Three-sport award



**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three sports during a school year. Those students also are highlighted in the local newspaper and on the school's social media.

### Plymouth-Canton Community Schools

**We call it:** "Learn. Prepare. Thrive."



**We celebrate:** Current students who are learning and preparing and graduates who are thriving thanks in part to their experiences at Plymouth-Canton Community Schools. The district highlights honorees with social media posts through its communications department.

## Salem

**We call it:** 3 Sport Athlete

**We celebrate:** Athletes who compete in three sports, honoring them with a T-shirt that says "3 SPORT ATHLETE" on the back. All honorees also receive individual posts on Salem's Facebook and Twitter accounts highlighting the sports they play, and are treated to a breakfast or lunch hosted by the athletic department in June. Athletes who play four sports during a school year receive a hooded sweatshirt. Additionally, we are making strides with our digital graphics sent to our school community highlighting multi-sport athletes

## St. Joseph

**We call it:** Iron Bears

**We celebrate:** A program called the "Iron Bear" Club at our school rewards those who are three-sport athletes. Students who are three-sport athletes receive an "Iron Bear" shirt and we celebrate them on social media.

## St. Johns

**We call it:** 12-Season Participation Award

**We celebrate:** Athletes who have participated in all three sports seasons all four years of high school.

**Bonus:** To further encourage multi-sport experiences, St Johns has made its participation fee annual instead of per season hoping students will participate in many sports for one price.

## Schoolcraft

**We call it:** Iron Eagle/Triple Threat/Eagle Pride

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three sports, to escalating degrees. All three-sport athletes are honored with Triple Threat awards. Those who play three varsity sports during one school year receive Eagle Pride awards. Students who play three sports all four years of high school are awarded the Iron Eagle.



## Scottville Mason County Central

**We call it:** 3-Sport Spartan

**We celebrate:** Three-sport athletes who receive an annually-designed T-shirt during the spring awards assembly.

## Southgate Anderson

**We call it:** 3-sport patches

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three varsity sports during one school year.



## Vassar

**We call it:** 3-sport photo display

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participated in three sports either the previous school year or all four years of their careers. Photos of those athletes are displayed above the showcase at the main entrance to the school.

## Warren DeLaSalle

**We call it:** Ironman

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three sports during one school year. Honorees receive a letter and T-shirt that lists each of the 13 sports DeLaSalle sponsors. Ironman winners and their coaches also are treated to a breakfast by the school.



## Wayland

**We call it:** 3-sport career blanket

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three sports for all four years, regardless of level (varsity, JV or freshman). They receive a blanket in school colors displaying their name, graduation year and sports they've played stitched into the blanket, which is presented at the senior awards ceremony.

## West Branch Ogemaw Heights

**We call it:** 12-sport plaque

**We celebrate:** Athletes who have participated in 12 sports over their high school careers. They receive an engraved plaque at the senior awards ceremony.

**Bonus:** Ogemaw Heights coaches promote the multi-sport experience by attending their athletes' competitions in other sports to show support.

## Westland John Glenn

**We call it:** Multi-Sport Athlete award

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in multiple sports throughout one school year. Students who do so receive a Multi-Sport Athlete shirt, and those shirts also are given to teachers, secretaries and custodians to help promote the message of the multi-sport experience.

**Bonus:** John Glenn also has started a leadership group made up of captains and other athletic leaders who are charged in part with promoting a multi-sport experience by influencing their peers.

## Wyoming

**We call it:** Triple Threat award

**We celebrate:** Athletes who have participated in three sports all four years of high school. They are recognized on a plaque that is displayed in a main hallway.

## LEAGUE OF LEADERS

### Blue Water Area Conference

**Lineup:** 8 schools located near Port Huron and the thumb region.

**We call it:** 3-sport varsity patch

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three varsity sports during a school year.

### Cascades Conference

**Lineup:** 8 schools located near and surrounding Jackson.

**We call it:** Scholar-Athlete Award

**We celebrate:** Students who have played at least two sports for three years, including senior year, while carrying at least a 3.4 grade-point average. These athletes are honored at a league-wide banquet.

### Downriver League

**Lineup:** 10 schools located on the southeast side of the Detroit area near the Detroit River.

**We call it:** 3-sport varsity patch

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three varsity sports during a school year.

### Kensington Lakes

#### Activities Association

**Lineup:** 14 schools located mostly north and east of the Ann Arbor area.

**We call it:** 3-sport varsity patch

**We celebrate:** Athletes who participate in three varsity sports during a school year. Athletes also must remain academically eligible throughout the entire three seasons and complete all three in good standing. After a first patch is awarded, chevrons are awarded for additional years of achievement.

