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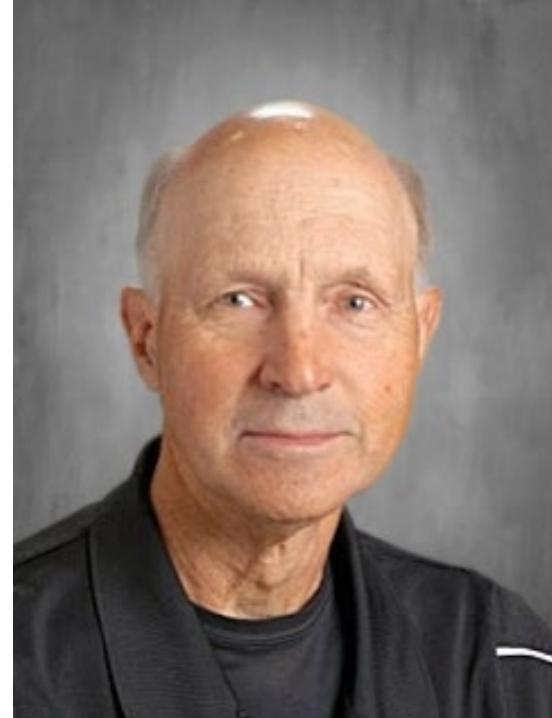
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LINCOLN, NE — The Nebraska School Activities Association is proud to recognize Mr. John Bacus of Elkhorn High School as this week's Above and Beyond Award

nominee. With an astounding 48 years in education—most of them at Elkhorn High—Mr. Bacus is the embodiment of service, dedication, and servant leadership. It's nearly impossible to capture just how vital his presence has been to the Elkhorn community.



Throughout his decades-long career, Mr. Bacus has worn many hats—and every single one of them has been worn with purpose and passion. He serves as an assistant varsity football coach, social studies department head, FCA sponsor, STRIV basketball announcer, and coordinator of the NHS tutoring program. He also officiates middle school basketball games across five local schools, runs track meets, serves on scholarship committees, and volunteers tirelessly at sports team fundraisers and club events.

But John Bacus doesn't just participate—he leads by example. He models servant leadership in the purest form, showing up early, staying late, giving high fives in the hallways, and doing whatever is needed to support the students and staff of Elkhorn High. His influence stretches far beyond the classroom and the field. He's helped launch and sustain countless student success stories by matching peer tutors through NHS, mentoring at-risk students, and offering guidance and encouragement to both new and veteran teachers.

After 45 years of teaching in Elkhorn Public Schools, the district honored Mr. Bacus with a bronze whistle, symbolizing all that he has given back to the students, athletes, and families of the Elkhorn community. This special tribute recognized both his deep legacy as an educator and the countless lives he has touched through decades on the football field. The whistle is a fitting emblem of the integrity, heart, and quiet leadership that define his career.

Coach Bacus has also left his mark in Nebraska football history. Affectionately—and semi-officially—known as the “winningest JV football coach in Nebraska,” he’s been a foundational part of the Elkhorn football program for over 20 years. He’s developed young athletes, not just with skill and strategy, but with empathy and care—ensuring all players have the opportunity to grow, compete, and feel part of something bigger. He coached his final JV football game to an 18-12 win over an undefeated Waverly team—a game that the Waverly coach dubbed “The Bacus Bowl.” The players celebrated him with a water cooler bath and chants of his name as he walked off the field—an unforgettable moment to close out a legendary run.

Even in the off-season, he can be found voluntarily coaching quarterbacks during the summer, supporting athletes long before the lights come on for Friday night games. Whether he’s in the classroom or on the sideline, officiating a middle school game or preparing textbooks for the social studies department, John Bacus is a pillar of Elkhorn High School.

Mr. Bacus has shaped generations of students, mentored countless staff members, and created a culture of support, kindness, and excellence that will resonate for years. His presence has made Elkhorn High—and the entire Elkhorn community—a better place.

It is with deep gratitude and immense respect that we honor Coach John Bacus with this week’s NSAA Above and Beyond Award. His lifetime of contributions will not be forgotten—and his legacy will be felt for years to come.

The NSAA’s Above and Beyond Program is designed to recognize the hidden gems of communities across Nebraska. [Click here to nominate someone today!](#)