

2025 NORTHERN STATE HALL OF FAME CLASS SET

Aberdeen, S.D. – Northern State University will induct four individuals and one team into the Athletics Hall of Fame this fall, as a part of the annual Gypsy Days Celebration. Mikayla (Barondeau) Arechigo, Conner Doherty, Arden Rapp, Todd Thorson, and the 1992-93 women’s track and field team will be honored and inducted at the 2025 Hall of Fame Banquet set for Friday, September 19 from the Kessler’s Champions Club Room beginning at 5 p.m. with a social. Tickets are required for event and must be purchased ahead of time through the NSU Foundation at 605-626-2550 or by emailing nsualumni@northern.edu. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children (kids ages 10 and under).

“The 2025 Hall of Fame Class is a tremendous group of former Wolves that highlights both individual and team success,” noted Nate Davis, Director of Athletics. “These former student-athletes had outstanding careers and we are excited to recognize their achievements and celebrate their successes as we welcome them back to campus in the fall.”

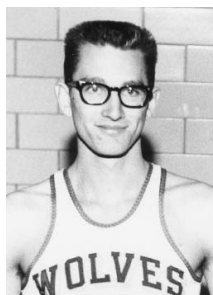


Arechigo graduated from Northern State in 2013 and 2018 with bachelor’s degrees in English Education and English and a master’s degree in Leadership and Administration, competing for both the women’s basketball and track and field teams. On the hardwood, she scored 1,062 points and pulled down 803 rebounds in her career. Arechigo holds the school record for single game rebounds with 22 against No. 6 Minnesota State in 2009. She ranks 33rd in career scoring, 12th in career rebounds, and second in career rebounding average (8.2) at NSU. Arechigo is the only women’s basketball player to record a 20-20 game with 22 points and 20 rebounds against Bemidji State in 2010. She ran three seasons of cross country, earning NSIC All-Conference accolades in 2010. On the track, she is the school record holder in the 3000m steeplechase with a time of 11:02.37. Arechigo earned NSIC All-Conference accolades in the 800m and 3000m steeplechase in 2010, finishing in second and third overall. She was a 3-time CoSIDA Academic All-American, once for basketball in 2012 and twice for track and field in 2012 and 2013; the most by any former student-athlete at Northern State across all sports. Arechigo capped off her Northern State career with the Hildred Wolfe Award in the spring of 2013. Mikayla and her husband, Jake (’13), met at Northern State and currently reside in Aberdeen with their three children: Rhea (6), Miles (3), and Rhett (1). Mikayla is a teacher-librarian at Aberdeen Central High School.

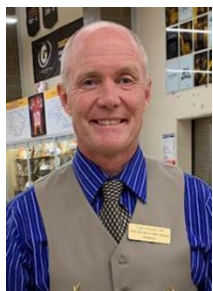


Doherty graduated from Northern State in 2016 with a bachelor’s degree in Human Performance and Fitness with a minor in Business, competing as a member of the football team from 2013 to 2016. He was a 4-time NSIC All-Conference first team performer for the Wolves and the only freshman honored to the first team in the fall of 2013. Doherty added All-Region accolades from the D2CCA and Don Hansen groups in 2014, 2015, and 2016. In the fall of 2014, Doherty was named to the Beyond Sports Network All-America fourth team. In his final two seasons, the tight

end earned All-American honors and was named a CoSIDA Academic All-American following the 2016 season. Doherty ranks third in career receptions with 171, fifth in career receiving yards with 2,334, and third in career receiving touchdowns with 23 at Northern State. He led the team in receiving yards in three of his four seasons, including a career high of 718 in 2014. Northern State won their first NSIC Championship since 1999 in the fall of 2015, taking the North Division Title with a 6-1 in-division record. Conner resides in Sioux Falls, South Dakota with his wife, Northern State alumna Mercede Doherty ('15 and '17) and their sons Ward and Nolan. He is currently a Senior Director at GPAC, based in Sioux Falls.



Rapp graduated from Northern State in 1964 with a bachelor's degree in Education, Social Science and minor in Physical Education, competing for the Wolves track and field and men's basketball teams. From 1960 to 1962, Rapp set track and field school records in the 440 yard hurdles (56.50), triple jump (43'2"), 440 yard relay (43.4), 880 yard relay (1:31.60), 1 mile relay (3:24.3), 120 yard high hurdles (15.1), and sprint medley relay (3:35.90). Northern won the SDIC Championships in 1960, 1961, and 1962 with Rapp contributing to the team total as an individual champion in the low hurdles and broad jump. He was the anchor of the mile relay that won the conference champions and broke the SDIC record in the process. In addition to his conference honors, Rapp qualified for the NAIA National Meet. Arden and his wife Judy (Wika) reside in Fort Pierre, South Dakota and have four adult children; Gretchen, Jonathan, Anne, and Megan, and ten grandchildren.



Thorson graduated from Northern State in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in Composite Health and Physical Education and is the 2025 Kretchman Coaching Award recipient. As a member of the Aberdeen Central and Ipswich School Districts, Thorson has built quite the coaching and teaching resume from 1995 to today. resume from 1995 to today. Thorson currently serves as the head boys' and girls' cross country and track and field coach at Ipswich High School and is the Executive Director of the Aberdeen Aqua Addicts Water Ski Team.

He started his career as the Aberdeen Central boys Cross Country and Track and Field and Girls Gymnastics Assistant Coach in 1995. In 1999 he was hired as the Head Boys and Girls Track and Field and basketball assistant coach in Ipswich, SD. He restarted cross country in Ipswich in 2000 and has built his program to be one of the best programs in SD history. The awards list for Thorson over the years is extensive including the SDHSCA Girls Track and Field Coach of the Year (2012), SDHSCA Boys Cross Country Coach of the Year (2017), SDHSCA Girls Cross Country Coach of the Year (2000, 2011, 2013), coach of the SD Sportswriters Association All Sports Girls Team of the Year (2000, 2013, 2016), and a 2-time finalist in 2014 and 2023 of the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Girls Cross Country Coach of the Year.

At the high school level, Thorson has coached 16 South Dakota State Championship teams in cross country and track and field and 9 combined team state championships. His teams have finished as the state runner-up 9 times and won 72 team conference championships. He has coached 285 individual state medalists, including 44 South Dakota State Champions, in cross country and track and field.

Thorson is the founder and executive director of the Aberdeen Aqua Addicts Water Ski Team which began in 1995. They are now nationally known for their jumping and barefoot water skiing and have hosted the Midwest Water Ski Show Regional tournament 4 times in 2014, 2017, 2021 and 2024. The team has grown to over 100 members and they put on weekly water ski shows in Aberdeen throughout the summer. He has coached 2 Individual National Freestyle Jump champions and 6 skiers that have water skied professionally in the United States, Germany, China and Australia. He has also coached 2 skiers that participated in the world championships for team USA and their teams have won the world championships 4 different times.

Todd has spent his entire career encouraging athletes to work hard to achieve and to always believe in themselves through positive thinking and physical activity. Todd and his wife Crystal, a 1993 and 1999 Northern State alumna and member of the 2025 HOF class with the 1992-93 women's track and field team reside in Ipswich. The pair have a daughter, Ashlee, and son Taylor, who is a current cross country and track and field student-athlete for the Wolves.



The 1992-93 women's track and field team swept the NSIC Championships that year, winning at both the indoor and outdoor meet and scoring a conference record 217 points at the outdoor event. In addition, the group placed tenth at the NAIA Indoor Track and Field Championships and 14th at the NAIA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. Amy Von Wald led the

team, earning MVP at both NSIC Championships and recording four NAIA All-American performances.

Individual champions for NSU at the NSIC Indoor Championship included Rebecca Deehr in the shot put, Heidi Nelson in the long jump and triple jump, Tracy Randall in the 55m hurdles, and Amy Von Wald in the 55m, 300m, and 400m. Debbi Holmes (triple jump), Elissa Backous (55m, 300m), Heidi Nelson (55m), Jamie Fiechtner (1000m), and Stacy Bohle (1500m, 3000m) added runner-up finishes and all-conference honors in their events. Von Wald and Deehr placed at the NAIA Championships with Von Wald finishing third in the 440 yard and 600 year and Deehr taking seventh in the shot put. Top-6 finishers at the meet brought home All-American awards.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - NORTHERN STATE ATHLETICS

1200 S. JAY ST. • ABERDEEN, SD 57401 • 605-626-3336 • NSUWOLVES.COM



The Wolves added an impressive ten individuals at the NSIC Outdoor Championships including Amy Ellis in the discus, Heidi Nelson in the long jump, triple jump, and 100m, Elissa Backous in the 100m hurdles and 400m hurdles, Amy Von Wald in the 200m and 400m, and Crystal Kuyper in the 10,000m. In addition, the

Wolves swept the relay events winning the 4x100m (Backous, Nelson, Lick, Von Wald), 4x400m (Backous, Holmes, Fiechtner, Von Wald), 4x800m (Pipal, Bohle, Johnson, and Fiechtner), and sprint medley (Charron, Nilsson, Lick, Von Wald). Stacy Schmitt (javelin), Debbi Holmes (triple jump), Michele Lick (200m), and Stacy Bohle (3000m, 5000m) added runner-up and all-conference finishes for the Wolves. At the NAIA Outdoor Championships, six Wolves competed and earned All-American status. The sprint medley relay time of Elissa Backous, Heidi Nelson, Michele Lick, and Amy Von Wald took fifth, while Von Wald placed third in the 400m, Amy Ellis took sixth in the discus, and Crystal Kuyper finished sixth in the marathon.

Members of the 1992-93 team include Elissa Backous, Stacy Bohle, Misty Charron, Rebecca Deehr, Charity Drone, Amy Ellis, Jamie Fiechtner, Debbi Holmes, Barb Johnson, Nancy King, Stacey Kopp, Crystal Kuyper, Buffy Lawrence, Dawn Leznar, Michele Lick, Heidi Nelson, Eva Lotta Nilsson, Kris Pipal, Tracy Randall, Stacy Schmitt, Audra Stebbins, Lisa Steiner, Jodi Thorp, and Amy Von Wald. Northern State was led by head coach Jim Fuller and assistant coaches Brenda Fuller, Shawn Wheelock, Henry Schneider, and Carrie Nace.