



State-bound Tennis Players

Jack Eberwein & Stathi Maniatis

Brett Bowman & TK Hammond

Nate O'Rear & Jacob Boomgarden

Andrew Seehausen

How to unite as a team

Delaney Atchison, Staff Reporter

One team to show us all. Not the Broncos, nor the Yankees, but the Ranch Unified team. The team that values trying your best and lifting each other up. In regards to preparing the Unified team, Unified coach and Significant Support Needs teacher, Daisha Archer, said, "We have to be willing to acknowledge our strengths and also acknowledge our challenges."

In order to build unity, the Unified games create an environment that's conducive for everyone. The Unified program reaches all skill levels by grouping together students more challenged by sports into one team, and vice versa. "It seems to build in a little more confidence for everyone, a little more level of play," said Archer.

Tiffany Baker, mom of Unified student Tristan Baker, first discovered Unified with her son in 7th grade at Cresthill Middle School. In her eyes, Unified requires teamwork between peers who do and do not have special needs. "Teammates need to be able to trust that they have each other's well-being in mind, that they will try not to be absent on each other,

and practice different forms of effective communication with one another," she said.

When Baker watches her son play, the emotion that surfaces is pride, as is the case with other Unified parents. They are not only proud of their kids for pushing past their comfort zones, but participating in activities with their peers, and celebrating what makes them diverse. "Playing sports celebrates diversity, and encourages people to bring their best selves out to the forefront," said Baker.

This unity can not only be seen between Unified students themselves, but also between Unified students and peer coaches, as they support Unified players in all instances. Tristan Baker, Unified player, said, "I like the fact that they help lots of people who have problems, and I'm glad they're around."

This team works together to ensure fair play, communication, confidence, and the celebration of individualism. Ask any parent, coach or teacher, when it comes to finding unity, look no further than the Ranch Unified team.



Top: Cresthill Unified players watch with anticipation to see if the ball will fall into the hoop.

Bottom: Mario Lopez, senior, runs out onto the court while receiving a thunderous cheer from the fans.

Photos by Noelle Harff

