

A NEW GENERATION IS ARRIVING

The freshmen may be the spark that rebuilds the program

As the 2026 season kicked off, a large group of freshman talent arrived, turning what many expected to be a "rebuilding year" into a "reloading year," where a new generation came ready to refresh the STMA boys basketball name. With tryout numbers significantly higher than previous years, the setting quickly shifted from an annual routine to a high-stakes environment where everyone had to prove themselves. This volume meant the coaching staff implemented tougher drills and faster cuts to build the best teams. The jump from middle school to high school for the class of 2029 meant the "everyone plays" philosophy was replaced with a reward-based system where every spot must be earned and kept. **Sawyer Andrus ('29)** explained, "I think the high turnout for tryouts was good because it forced people to

work harder to prove themselves and brought a lot of competition, which is great for the program." This competitive fire is being felt throughout the program as veteran players support the newcomers and help set the standard. **Braedon Deneson ('27)** said, "Show up everyday and outwork everyone. Although your spot can be easier to maintain, work hard everyday knowing that it is not guaranteed." Beyond physical demands, the new generation is also balancing academic expectations with longer, commitment-based daily practices. **Elliot Lahr ('29)** shared, "My goal for the 2026 season was to get moved up and play a varsity game with my brother because I think it would be cool to play with him," highlighting the excitement and long-term vision building within the program.

Spread designed and photos by Addison Schmoyer



PUTTING IN THE EFFORT

After the game, when speaking to **Maurice Martinez Huff ('29)**, he mentioned how he is making a point: "I'm here to show the varsity team and coach that I am ready. I'm also getting settled into this new program and meeting new teammates along the way, but I also play more often on the 9A team, though, and have become a better play maker."

MOVING UP IN THE WORLD

Freshman gets moved up to JV halfway through the season

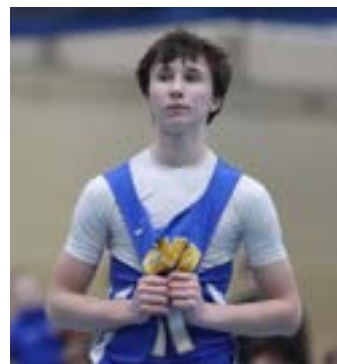
READY FOR MORE

Luke Kruse ('29) dribbles the ball down the court right before taking a shot. Kruse shared, "My transition from 9A to JV happened really quickly. I only had one practice before my first game with the team. I am grateful for it though because I enjoy playing and even starting a lot on the JV team."



FUELING THE FOCUS

After the game, **Brody Adrian ('29)** shared his routine: "To prepare for my games, I always make sure my jersey is clean and then I listen to my playlist. Usually during the game, I'm just thinking about what I get to eat after it ends."



ONE GAME, ONE CHANCE

Gabe Thelen ('29) shared, "Something I've learned that through playing high school basketball for the first time is that it's really different than travel basketball because it's one game and you don't get more than one chance in a day so do your best."



TIME MANAGEMENT LOOKS *DIFFERENT* NOW

How do you manage your high school work alongside your sports and commitments?

“ I plan my whole week ahead of time, and I prioritize what is most important while staying organized.

- De'Mario Allen ('29)

“ I try to get all my homework done in school. But being on a more committed team has pushed me to always get good grades so I can still play.

- Kade Schmitz ('29)

“ I stay up late to do my work and practice more. The most rewarding part has been getting better at basketball and getting good grades at school, too.

- Bradley Rakos ('29)

GROWTH THROUGH SUPPORT

When asking **Isaac Haug ('29)** what his favorite part of the game has been he brought up his classmates and said, "My favorite part is always having teammates and coaches supporting me and encouraging me. They have helped me grow as a basketball player and as a person. My work ethic has improved, and I have gotten more confident from having people in my corner and helping me every time I play." This shows the importance of good relationships within a sport.



WIN THE MOMENT

As Corey Wagenbach ('29) defends the ball against Minnetonka. Wagenbach said, "One thing I have going through my head while I'm playing is that whenever I get the ball, I need to make the best play I can, while trying my hardest to win." Showing a commitment to the team and a willingness to grow throughout the season.



THINKING AHEAD

When **Luke Lindenfelser ('29)** was sitting in the sideline he shared the things going through his head before entering the game: "When I need to shoot, When I can make a move to score, and on defense when I have to to see where the opposing players are going to stop them from scoring."

KEEPING A GOOD MINDSET

Kameron Medlock ('29) shared that something he reminds himself often to, "Keep practicing, and never let someone tell you your to small or too slow." Throughout the season, Medlock contributed on both teams and worked to make an impact in every way he could.

