Russell “Rusty” Eichten

Holdingford Class of 1969

Born in the tiny town of Ethan, South Dakota, July 25th, 1951 to Ralph SR and Frances (Ludwig) Eichten, Russ is the 7th of 8 children. A childhood of sports is what he can remember, from his father playing, to all three of his brothers and his sisters playing as well. Being quite a bit younger than the others, Russ remembers each of them giving him advice and letting him tag along to join in some games. “They taught me how to win, how to lose, how to be respectful, and that if I did something good, act like I’ve been there before!”

Russ reluctantly moved to Holdingford in 1965 where his father got a new job, just before the start of his freshman year. Met with resentment from parents and classmates at first, Russ went on to gain respect from his fellow teammates once they saw his ability and got to know him on a more personal level. Russ started on the varsity team mid-way through his 9th grade season and never looked back, helping the team get to the District 19 Championship two of his four years as a starter. “Basketball was all one class back then, we played much larger schools, like the Tech Tigers.”

Russ also got the opportunity to start as a freshman for the baseball team. He could play at any position but found himself having a love for pitching. His sophomore baseball season was quite an exciting one, as the team won the conference, the District 19 Title, and went on to the State Tournament. They were defeated in the first game 4-0 by Minneapolis Washburn, who went on to win the State Title.

Baseball:

Pitching Record - 32-4

All conference -2 years

MVP – 2 years

District 19

All-Tournament Team

– 2 years

Basketball:

Points in a season– 561

All conference– 3 years

Points in career – 1587

MVP – 2 years

Free throw % - 90%

All Area – 2 years

Assists – 350+

District 19 All Tournament Team – 2 years

Russ’s senior year was also quite a feat as the basketball team made their way to the District 19 semi-finals but lost out to the St. Cloud Tech Tigers while averaging 25 points per game this season. Baseball season was a good one as well, making it to the District 19 finals again, but losing to Albany 1-0.

Russ also played amateur baseball from 9th grade to the age of 38. He started his career with the Opole Bears and pitched almost every game for them until getting a team back in Holdingford in 1975. He also played on the adult basketball team in Holdingford for years, played softball, and coached his son and daughter in little league baseball and basketball. “I fell in love with Holdingford and was so proud of being a Husker, my wife and I raised our 4 children here to be Huskers too.”

Russ married Beverly Ebnet in 1971 and they have 4 children; Rebecca (Brad) Binek, Sarah (Brad) Hoikka, Anna (Dustin) Eichers, and Jake (Angie) Eichten. 3 of their children live in the Holdingford School District, with one not far away in nearby Upsala. Russ and Bev have 9 grandchildren, Isaiah Folsom, Josie & Eli Philippi, Lydia & Dominick Hoikka, Paige & Bryce Binek and William & Lucas Eichten, 7 of these grandchildren are Huskers.

Russ worked in the beverage business for 43 years, retiring from Bernick’s Pepsi in 2013. While with Bernick’s, Russ was a big part in helping get scoreboards, coolers, etc. for the school and donating pop and water for many functions.

“FREE THROWS WIN CHAMPIONSHIPS” is one of many quotes that Russ has repeated to his children over the years, and now is drilling in the heads of his grandchildren!

Russ was very thankful for 2 of his high school coaches who contributed to his athletic success, Coach Bill Huls, basketball and baseball, and Coach Chuck Grochow, basketball.