



ETG Crusaders Alumni Newsletter

The Omaha Crusaders was formed in 1993 with this Mission:
To help raise the overall level of
Basketball in Nebraska through preparation for and
participation in local and national tournaments, while providing
the opportunity & training for collegiate exposure to talented high school
athletes.

From 1994-2001 the main partner was Godfather's Pizza
From 2001-2003 the main partner was Tournament Gold/STI Sports
From 2003 to 2008 Alegent Health was the main partner
From 2009-2022 Omaha Sports Academy was the main partner
From 2022-Present ETG has joined OSA as primary partners of the
Crusaders

The constant has been the Omaha Crusaders and we look forward to being
the ETG Crusaders this year.

I hope you are having a great start to the fall season now that school and all the activities are in full swing!

This issue of the Crusader Alumni Newsletter will feature Spotlight profiles on **Triston Simpson 2016 Crusader Grad...**and **Clare Tokheim 2009 Crusader Grad.**

Also here is a link for the first ETG Crusader Youth Basketball tournament that will be held this winter, **Dec. 12-14 at the Iowa West Fieldhouse** if any of you are involved with teams that would be able to enter!

<https://tourneymachine.com/Public/Results/Tournament.aspx?IDTournament=h20250819131520863969d8a7426fc4c>

As always we appreciate those that have already contributed back to the Crusaders organization and welcome any further support as we continue to try and provide the best opportunities we can for our athletes!



Ways to donate: Use the QR code to gain access to our Square page and complete your donation there. Click on the Donate to ETG button to complete your donation from here.

Donate to ETG



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Thank you for your generous donation and support of ETG!

Former Crusader Spotlights

Thank you to those who have graciously shared their Crusader experience with us!

Clare Tokheim- Crusader Girls Alumni Class of 2009



1. Can you take a moment and describe your experience while playing with the Crusaders? Any significant moments or memories stand out?

Playing with the Crusaders was one of the highlights of my summers growing up. It was such a unique experience to build friendships with players I had competed against all season in high school — those relationships have lasted well beyond our playing days. It also opened doors to connect with coaches we usually saw on the opposite sideline, which gave me a whole new perspective. Looking back 15+ years later, those memories still stick with me.

2. What advice or insight could you give to student athletes and/or coaches regarding the recruiting process?

Be bold and confident. Looking back, I probably undersold myself — maybe that Midwestern humility — but the truth is, you can't hesitate to speak up about what you bring to the table. Coaches are evaluating a lot of players, and you need to advocate for yourself in a way that's honest but assertive.

3. How has grassroots basketball changed since your days with the Crusaders? Do you see the changes as mostly positive or negative?

I'm not directly involved in youth sports today, so I don't have a front-row seat — but living in California and working in NYC, I hear a lot about how much more competitive and year-round the coastal circuits have become. From what I can tell, it's a double-edged sword — more exposure and opportunity, but also more pressure and specialization at younger ages. The game keeps evolving.

4. Tell us a little about your life now and if you still have any connection to basketball.

After five years in NYC, my fiancée and I made a short-term COVID move to San Diego — and five years later, it turns out we're staying. I work in venture capital, investing in early-stage tech startups. Whenever I come across a company with ties to the sports world, I jump at the chance to learn more. I'm still a die-hard basketball fan (go Creighton, go LeBron!) and while my competitive playing days are behind me, I do still dominate my fiancée in the occasional 1-on-1. I'd love to get involved in coaching youth basketball at some point down the road.

Triston Simpson: Crusader Boys Class of 2016



1. Can you take a moment and describe your experience while playing with the Crusaders? Any significant moments or memories stand out? I played with the crusaders the summer of 2015 and it was one of the best summers of my life. We were a very close group, maybe not the most talented but because of our tightness we were able to beat multiple "top 25" shoe circuit teams. The level of exposure I received in those tournaments greatly enhanced my opportunity to play Division 1 basketball

2. What advice or insight could you give to student athletes and/or coaches regarding the recruiting process? Run your own race, keep your head down and keep working. It can be difficult when you see others gaining offers but just focus on yourself and continue to work at improving each day!

3. How has grassroots basketball changed since your days with the Crusaders? Do you see the changes as mostly positive or negative? Honestly, the grassroots has changed a lot and I don't think it is for the better. In a state like Nebraska, there is no reason there should be 4-5 different AAU programs. Lets get all the top kids on maybe 1-2 teams and I think that will help the college coaches in getting more eyes on Nebraska. The one positive I see now is that they are finally using a shot clock!

4. Tell us a little about your life now and if you still have any connection to basketball. *Life is well, I am a former player and now coaching in college at South Dakota University. I'm going into year 3 and really enjoying giving back knowledge to the next generation. My family is doing well and healthy!*