

# PRAIRIE GRIT

ADAPTIVE SPORTS

YEAR END NEWSLETTER

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## HIGHLIGHT OF 2018

### Gold-medal Paralympians in town!

One of the highlights of 2018 has to be when the U.S. Paralympic Sled Hockey team called Minot their home for almost a week in mid-October. Prairie Grit was proud to host the players and coaches in our community and very proud for the opportunity to be on the ice with them.

The Minot Daily News covered their visit to the Magic City in the following story, permission granted to do this.

## U.S. National Sled Hockey Team trains in Minot

By: Alex Eisen, Minot Daily News - published 10/13/2018

The United States National Sled Hockey Team has made Maysa Arena its training hub this weekend. The reigning three-time consecutive Paralympic gold medal winning squad (2010, 2014 and 2018) has been holding a three-day training camp in Minot, which started on Thursday and will go through this evening.

The sessions are open and free to be viewed by the public and have provided a unique opportunity for those in the community to watch these world-class athletes compete, especially for local athletes in the Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports program.

"This is pretty much a once in a lifetime opportunity for us here," said Drew Hanson, the Prairie Grit director. "It's amazing it came to fruition and came so quickly. We have a bunch of support from the community and we will have a bunch of people out here watching them. We are really excited to have them here." (continued)

The U.S. Sled Hockey Team is being led by Bottineau native David Hoff. After being an assistant coach on the team's gold medal run in the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, South Korea, Hoff is serving as the team's head coach for the first time.

"It's been really interesting," Hoff said about becoming the head coach. "It's my 30th year at Bottineau High School, teaching and coaching the high school team up there. I've been the head coach all of that time and the last couple of years I've been the assistant for the national team. I've really enjoyed that. I say that from the standpoint as a head coach, I knew what I wanted out of an assistant coach. It was an opportunity for me to be that guy. I didn't have all the final decisions and that was OK. I worked more with individuals, and not necessarily the whole team part."

While Hoff enjoyed his time as an assistant, he jumped at the chance to be the next head coach.

"I'm at the point of my career that I'm eager for the challenge," Hoff said. "I'm just in on a lot more things now. Even something like this with the media. As a high school coach, if we were playing Minot High, you'd come in and interview me at the end of the night. When I was the assistant coach, I had none of that responsibility. If this was a game day, I would have just been dealing with individuals. So, now I have to get back into some of the responsibilities that come with being a head coach."

After practicing Thursday night, the team went up to Bottineau on Friday to spend some time with the school and community. They returned to the ice Friday evening for another practice in Minot. The team will have two more practices today at Maysa Arena from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

"Our guys come in from all over the country to get around 4-6 practices, depending on the location and availability of the guys getting in (to the location of the camp)," Hoff said. "We just selected our team back in July and have had about two and a half months of nothing going on. Really, this is a chance for us to see where guys are at. Out of the 17 guys we had on last year's squad, 12 of them are back and we have five new guys in the mix right now."

This is the second training camp the team has had this month after playing in Las Vegas last weekend (Oct. 4-6). This is also the first time the team has ever trained in North Dakota.

"This being a non-Paralympic year, we would have a training camp once a month," Hoff said. "October turned out to be a little different with us having a couple training camps going on this month. It's a little busier, but we don't have some things later this winter."

Bonding and getting better isn't just reserved for the U.S. National Team. Prairie Grit is also embracing this opportunity to the fullest.

"We have a lot of youth, some adults as well, but I think this is huge for the youth to have someone to look up to on Team USA," Hanson said. "We are just two years into our program, so we are still in the infancy of it. This is a huge opportunity and not one that often comes around, so we are going to take advantage of every second we have with this team. Learn from the best."

*Alex Eisen covers Minot State athletics, the Minot Minotauros and high school sports. Follow him on Twitter @AEisen13.*



[www.prairiegritsports.com](http://www.prairiegritsports.com)



# Annual Banquet a Huge Success!

The Second Annual Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports Banquet and Family Social was another huge hit this year! With more than 320 people attending, generous individuals were able to raise more than \$40,000 toward various programs. We would like to thank the major sponsors for this year's banquet, including First International Bank & Trust, Vibeto Orthodontics and Qdoba Mexican Eats. As well, thank you to Yum!, Qdoba, Applebee's, The Starving Rooster, and Elevation for providing food for this year's banquet.

The guest speaker for this year's banquet was Patrick Moore, a former Minot resident and current golfer on the Professional Golf Association Tour. The evening also included music by Magic City Music Factory, a silent auction and children's activities. We look forward to seeing all of you at next year's banquet - date to be determined!

# PGAS Adaptive Swim Meets

Two adaptive Swim Meets were held at the end of 2018, with 12 participants between the two meets taking the dive and testing their skills at the YMCA in Minot. The meets were open to ages 4 and up, came with no cost, and any disability was welcome. We hope to continue supporting these swim meets if the interest in having them continues. Another bonus, thanks to the YMCA, there was free swimming afterwards for participants and their families!

# Congratulations!

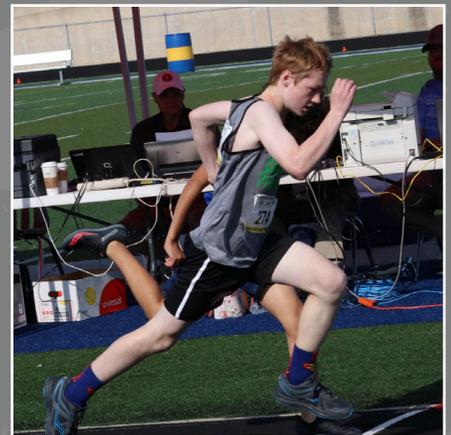
Congratulations to our founders, Chad and Angie Krebsbach Thompson, for receiving the 2018 Minot Association of Builders Citizens of the Year Award at their annual Builder Bash in December! They deserve all of this and more for their leadership in bringing Prairie Grit to Minot. Thanks to everyone who helped make this a complete surprise to them!

# Director's Corner

2018 has been an incredible year for Prairie Grit with all our new programs and opportunities we are giving youth and adults living with disabilities; from golf to gymnastics to swimming to track & field to archery and trap shooting to yoga to wheelchair basketball. Our growth has been an incredible thing to see for the entire Minot community and surrounding area!

Our biggest success was having the entire 2018-19 USA National Sled Hockey Team here in Minot in October for a training camp to open their year. They held four practices at the Maysa Arena and on the last day, Prairie Grit athletes had the opportunity to skate on the ice with the entire team!

What a year it has been and we can't wait to continue to grow and offer even more of these opportunities to our athletes with disabilities. Thank you to all our supporters and donors. Without you, none of this would be possible!



# Thank you



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## Ways to Give

Amazon.com Smile: You shop, Amazon gives. When you shop at Amazon.com they will donate a percentage of your order to Prairie Grit. Be sure to select Prairie Grit as your non-profit choice to activate.

[smile.amazon.com/ch/81-3690358](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/81-3690358)

Thrivent Financial: If you are a member of Thrivent Financial you can direct your choice of dollars to benefit Prairie Grit.

[Thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/](https://Thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/)

Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports: [www.prairiegritsports.com/donate](http://www.prairiegritsports.com/donate)

## Did you know?

Any person five years of age through adult with a disability can participate in Prairie Grit activities. Participants include, but are not limited to those with: cerebral palsy, down syndrome, autism, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, stroke, amputations, etc.

**“These are my people.”**

- Sam Winter (Prairie Grit Athlete) - Set & Broke 8 National Adaptive Sports USA Track & Field Records



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