

M A R A N A T H A C H R I S T I A N A C A D E M Y

# MUSTANGS

WINTER SPORTS MEDIA GUIDE



2022-23

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## FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



### Welcome to Maranatha!

Maranatha Christian Academy is positioned to go well beyond the ordinary, identifying opportunities that explore possibilities and establish purpose in our students, staff, and parents. Our unwavering vision, relentless pursuit of improvement, and dedication to our mission serve as inspiration to continue to set and then re-set the bar in education.

In our fast-paced world, change is inevitable. At Maranatha, we adopt, or better yet, get out in front of change, resulting in a truly innovative school and, in turn, learning experience. We inspire students to be Spirit-driven leaders who are courageous changemakers for kingdom building. Our Christian faith is at the core of Maranatha. We celebrate our Creator's unique design of each student, seeking to personalize education so students can discover and develop their gifts.

I am honored that you value your children's education enough to explore not only what is best but what is right. By experiencing our community of learning at Maranatha, your students will be prepared for life's next chapter as they grow into courageous changemakers, empathetic problem solvers, impactful innovators, curious explorers, Spirit-driven leaders, and gracious community builders.

I look forward to celebrating with you as we develop the co-creators of tomorrow.

Serving Him together,

Deb Larson





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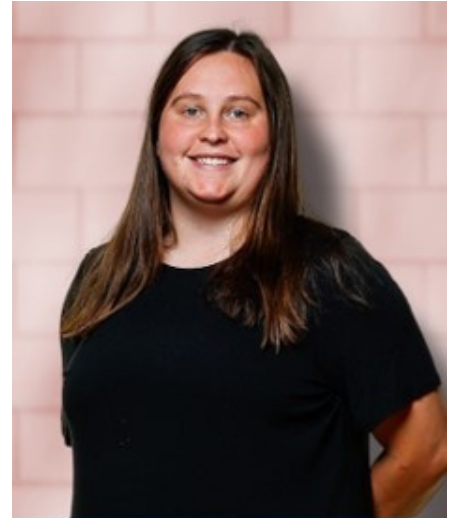
## FROM THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT



**ATHLETIC DIRECTOR  
DREW RONGERE**



**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
CHAZ MAHLE**



**ADMIN ASSISTANT  
JAMIE AXELBERG**

## WINTER SPORTS WELCOME

We are looking forward to another excellent season for our Maranatha Christian Academy Basketball programs. The Boys Varsity Basketball team is coming off a Skyline Conference Co-Championship season with six varsity players returning and Coach Bryant entering his first season as head coach. The Girls Varsity Basketball team will follow up a second place finish in the Skyline Conference with five varsity players returning and Coach Coley returning for his second season as head coach.

There is a ton of excitement in the community and support right now for this athletics program and there is no doubt that our basketball programs will make games exciting for our Mustang fans of all ages to come out and watch. Our coaches, athletes, and staff are building a winning culture in which we give all the glory to God and display passion and determination in an effort to be the best.

Go Mustangs!



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## MUSTANG ATHLETICS SOCIAL MEDIA

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# MUSTANGS

## BOYS BASKETBALL

### COACHING STAFF

Head Coach.....Ervin Bryant  
 Assistant Coach.....Dylan Gilmer  
 JV Coach.....Matt Shepherd  
 C-Team Coach.....Puma Rennie

### VARSITY OUTLOOK

- Ervin Bryant is entering his first season as Head Coach for the Maranatha Christian Academy Mustangs.
- The Mustangs are coming off a 2021-22 Skyline Conference Co-Champion and Section 5AA Runner-Up season with an overall record of 23-7.
- Seven players are returning to the varsity squad.

### SCHEDULE NOTES

- Maranatha will host 13 games at the Stable.
- The Mustangs 2022-23 opponents combined for an overall record of 318-216 (.679) in 2021-22.
- Seven players are returning to the varsity squad.

### RETURNING PLAYERS

#0 - PG/SG - Isaiah Bluford - 5'9 - Senior  
 #2 - SG/F - JaRory Purnell - 6'1 - Senior  
 #3 - PG/SG - Matthew Bluford - 5'9 - Senior  
 #4 F/P - Nick Anderson - 6'5 - Senior  
 #11 SG/F - Toli Legesse ' 5'11 - Senior  
 #24 - SG/F - Bailey McDonald - Senior

### NEWCOMERS

#5 - PG/SG - Datrell McCrimmon - 5'9 - Junior  
 #10 - PG/SG - Gresyn Rennie - 5'8 - Junior  
 #12 - PG/SG - Drew Balentine - 5'11 - Junior  
 #14 - SG - Pierce Holmgren - 5'8 - Senior

### SENIORS LOST

SG/F - Jeremiah LaVelle - University of Northwester - Basketball  
 SG - Anthony Moscoso - University of Northwestern - Golf  
 SG - LC Chatman  
 F - Anthony Lanari

### SCHEDULE

Dec. 5 vs. Hiawatha at 7:00 pm (H)	Jan. 13 vs. St. Croix Lutheran at 7:30 pm (H)	Feb. 3 vs. New Life at 8:00 pm (H)
<b>Hopkins Breakdown Dec. 10</b>	Jan. 14 vs. W. Christian at 3:00 pm (H)	Feb. 6 vs. Nova at 7:30 pm (H)
Dec. 10 vs. Maple River at 8:00 pm (A)	Jan. 17 vs. St. Croix Prep at 7:30 pm (A)	Feb. 10 vs. St. Agnes at 7:30 pm (H)
Dec. 13 vs. Cristo Rey at 7:30 pm (H)	Jan. 20 vs. Trinity at 7:30 pm (H)	Feb. 14 vs. St. Croix Lutheran at 7:00 pm (A)
<b>St. Cloud Breakdown Dec. 29-30</b>	Jan. 23 vs. Concordia at 7:00 pm (A)	Feb. 17 vs. St. Croix Prep at 7:30 pm (H)
Dec. 29 vs. Princeton at 5:45 pm (A)	Jan. 24 vs. SW Christian at 7:00 pm (A)	Feb. 20 vs. Trinity at 7:30 pm (A)
Dec. 30 vs. Hutchinson at 1:15 pm (A)	Jan. 27 vs. Cristo Rey at 7:30 pm (A)	Feb. 21 vs. Holy Family at 7:00 pm (H)
Jan. 3 vs. New Life at 7:30 pm (A)	<b>Mound Breakdown Jan. 28</b>	Feb. 24 vs. Concordia at 7:30 pm (A)
Jan. 9 vs. St. Agnes at 7:30 pm (A)	Jan. 28 vs. St. Cloud Cathedral at 2:15 pm (A)	Mar. 4 vs. Blake at 2:00 pm (A)
Jan. 11 vs. Providence at 7:00 pm (A)	Jan. 31 vs. Como Park at 7:00 pm (H)	





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## BOYS BASKETBALL SEASON OUTLOOK

### 2022-23 BOYS VARSITY

Mustang fans are ready to get back in the stands and cheer on their team after a memorable season a year ago. The Mustangs finished the 2021-22 regular season as Skyline Conference Co-Champs with a conference record of 14-1. They entered the Section 5AA Tournament as the #3 seed and opened with an easy 63-42 win over #14 Howard Lake-Waverly Winsted. They followed that with a 79-71 upset over #3 Rockford in a double-overtime thriller. The Mustangs played a solid first half against Minneapolis North in the Section 5AA Final but fell behind in the second half, losing 52-80. Despite the loss, they showed a ton of grit throughout the season and represented Maranatha Christian Academy well as the Section 5AA Runner-up.

Ervin Bryant is in his first season as head coach of the Mustangs and is ready to take the Mustangs on another conference title run. Bryant is a devout man of faith and a Christian educator who truly enjoys teaching young men about the game of life through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is highly invested in developing student-athletes to prepare them for college and ultimately achieve their life goals. Coach Bryant is determined to instill excellence in this program and hang more banners on the gym wall.

The Mustangs return seven players from last year's Section 5AA Runner-up squad. Second Team All-Conference senior Bailey McDonald and All-Conference Honorable Mention senior Matthew Bluford are ready to lead the Mustangs, along with seniors Nick Anderson, Isaiah Bluford, Pierce Holmgren, Toli Legesse, JaRory Purnell and juniors Drew Balentine, Datrell McCrimmon, and Gresyn Rennie.



The top teams in the Skyline Conference are always tough, and Maranatha will once again play a challenging non-conference schedule to prepare them for the post-season. A couple of big games to look forward to include a Homecoming re-match on Friday, February 3, against the Class A pre-season #3 ranked New Life Academy Eagles and a late-season home game on Tuesday, February 21, against the Class AA pre-season #2 ranked Holy Family Fire.

# GO MUSTANGS!

## BOYS BASKETBALL COACHING STAFF



**ERVIN BRYANT**  
HEAD COACH



As a basketball coach, Ervin Bryant has been developing a winning culture of excellence for the past 25+ years. Bryant has coached over a dozen former College Division I and NBA players throughout his career. He has also trained players in various AAU, elementary, and high school programs.

This past year, he was a varsity assistant basketball coach at Eagan High School. “Coach Bryant has excellent knowledge of the game and unmatched experience. Those traits, along with his ability to connect and care for players, make him a tremendous asset to any basketball program,” said Kevin McKenzie – Eagan High School Boys Basketball Head Coach. He has also been heavily involved in the AAU circuit for many years and currently coaches in the Grassroots Sizzle program.

Prior to coming to Minnesota, Bryant coached successful programs in Chicago, Illinois as the varsity head coach at John Marshall Harlan, Paul Roberson, and Providence-St. Mel. He also started the first AAU basketball program in the Chicagoland area, Team Chicago. He has received many awards over his career, including District Coach of the Year, Region Coach of the Year, and State Coach of the Year, to name a few.

Before heading to Chicago, Bryant served as an assistant coach at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette under Jesse Evans, who was the top assistant at the University of Arizona during their NCAA National Championship season in 1997. After his college

### THE BRYANT FILE

#### PERSONAL

Hometown.....

Education.....

Years Coaching.....

#### YEAR-BY-YEAR

YEAR	SCHOOL	RECORD
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## BOYS BASKETBALL COACHING STAFF

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playing days, Ervin Bryant headed off to the University of Arizona, where he had the opportunity to learn from legendary Hall of Fame Coach Lute Olson as an undergraduate assistant for the men's basketball team. Additionally, Ervin coordinated basketball camps for numerous NBA players such as Juwan Howard, Antoine Walker, Kendall Gill, Bobby Simmons, Eddy Curry, Jannero Pargo, Dwyane Wade, and Michael Jordan. "I've known Ervin since the early '90s. He is a man of integrity and an excellent teacher of the game. He cares about his players, is a leader, and will be a great fit at Maranatha," Fred Whitfield – President and Vice Chairman of the Charlotte Hornets.

Coach Bryant is a devout man of faith, a Christian educator who truly enjoys teaching young men about the game of life through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is highly invested in developing student-athletes to prepare them for college and achieve their life goals.

Ervin's educational background includes an AA in Communication from Navarro College, a BA in Communication from the University of Arizona, and a BS in Special Education from Grand Canyon University.

"Maranatha Christian Academy hit a home run with the hire of Coach Ervin Bryant. He is well respected in the Midwest as a basketball coach. He is a leader and advocate for young people and will be for many years to come," Chris Crutchfield – University of Nebraska-Omaha Men's Basketball Head Coach. "I've known Ervin Bryant since 1987. He has never been anything but an upstanding human being and a great coach. He did a lot of great things with his student-athletes in Chicago. I don't think Maranatha could have asked for a better guy. He really cares about his players and their success on and off the court," Deon Thomas – Associate Director of Development for the University of Illinois Athletics. "Great coach for youth on and off the floor, high character individual with a kind heart to help student-athletes. One of the most loyal workers I know. He is an honest and encouraging leader of youth," Chad Groth – Areacodes Talent Scout.





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## BOYS BASKETBALL COACHING STAFF

**DYLAN GILMER**  
ASSISTANT COACH



### THE GILMER FILE

**PERSONAL**

Hometown.....

Education.....

Yeas Coaching.....

DYLAN'S BIO...



# FACTS<sup>®</sup>

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## BOYS BASKETBALL COACHING STAFF



### MATT SHEPHERD

JV COACH



### THE SHEPHERD FILE

#### PERSONAL

Hometown.....La Fontaine, IN  
 Education.....North Central University (2014)  
 Yeas Coaching.....8

Coach Shepherd is in his seventh year of coaching in the Mustangs Basketball program. After finishing his playing career at North Central University, Coach Shepherd transitioned into coaching. He was on staff for a team that went 16-14 and finished third in the UMAC conference. After his one year at North Central, Coach Shepherd began coaching at the high school ranks. Starting at the middle-school level, Coach Shepherd has worked his way up to be the JV head coach and Varsity assistant coach. Coach Shepherd is in his second year as the JV head coach and fifth year as a Varsity assistant.

### PUMA RENNIE

C-TEAM COACH



### THE RENNIE FILE

#### PERSONAL

Hometown.....  
 Education.....  
 Yeas Coaching.....

PUMA'S BIO...



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## BOYS BASKETBALL SENIORS



**NICK  
ANDERSON**

SR | 6'5 | F/P



**ANDERSON FILE**

**FAVORITE SPORTS HERO:** LeBron James  
**ONE WORD THAT DESCRIBES YOU:** Chill  
**WHY MARANATHA:** Teammates, Environment, Community  
**FAVORITE SPORTS MOVIE:** Space Jam 2  
**ONE WORD FOR THE THIS SEASON:** Showtime



**ISAIAH  
BLUFORD**

SR | 5'9 | PG/SG



**BLUFORD FILE**

**FAVORITE SPORTS HERO:** Jimmy Bultler  
**ONE WORD THAT DESCRIBES YOU:** Persistence  
**WHY MARANATHA:** Teammates, First Title, Excitement  
**FAVORITE SPORTS MOVIE:** Coach Carter  
**ONE WORD FOR THE THIS SEASON:** Exciting





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## GIRLS BASKETBALL

### COACHING STAFF

Head Coach.....Tylor Coley  
JV Coach.....Mary Francois

### RETURNING PLAYERS

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#2 - SG/F - JaRory Purnell - 6'1 - Senior  
#3 - PG/SG - Matthew Bluford - 5'9 - Senior  
#4 F/P - Nick Anderson - 6'5 - Senior  
#11 SG/F - Toli Legesse ' 5'11 - Senior  
#24 - SG/F - Bailey McDonald - Senior

### VARSITY OUTLOOK

- Tylor Coley is entering second season as Head Coach for the Maranatha Christian Academy Mustangs.
- The Mustangs are coming off a 2021-22 Skyline Conference second place finish with an overall record of 19-9.
- Nine players are returning to the varsity squad.

### NEWCOMERS

#5 - PG/SG - Datrell McCrimmon - 5'9 - Junior  
#10 - PG/SG - Gresyn Rennie - 5'8 - Junior  
#12 - PG/SG - Drew Balentine - 5'11 - Junior  
#14 - SG - Pierce Holmgren - 5'8 - Senior

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#### Hopkins Breakdown Dec. 10

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#### Mound Breakdown Jan. 28

Jan. 28 vs. St. Cloud Cathedral at 2:15 pm (A)

Jan. 31 vs. Como Park at 7:00 pm (H)

Feb. 3 vs. New Life at 8:00 pm (H)

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Mar. 4 vs. Blake at 2:00 pm (A)



# MUSTANGS

## GIRLS BASKETBALL SEASON OUTLOOK

### 2022-23 GIRLS VARSITY

Get ready to cheer loud in the stable this year for your Mustangs when they step on the court in early December! The Mustangs finished the 2021-22 regular season with a second-place finish in the Skyline Conference with a conference record of 10-2. They entered the Section 5AA Tournament as the #4 seed and opened with a 70-28 win over #13 Minneapolis Patrick Henry. They were back in the Stable for a quarterfinal game and secured a close 60-56 win against #5 Annandale. The Mustangs traveled to STMA for a semifinal game against #1 Providence Academy. The Lions, who would eventually win the Class AA State Tournament, proved to be too much for the Mustangs as they went on to win 93-36.

Tylor Coley is entering year two as head coach of the Mustangs and has a roster full of young talent. Coach Coley is looking forward to the 2022-23 season and is confident that the Mustangs will again finish near the top of the Skyline Conference and make a good run in sections.

The Mustangs return nine players from last year's squad. First Team All-Conference senior Chloe Jarrot is ready to lead the way along with senior Ella Paschke, juniors Janiya Wright, Destiny Wiggins, Autumn Lanari, sophomore Sophia Ash-Johnson, freshman Heather Sheehy, Olivia Lanari, Anna Sathre, and eighth graders Kaja Nash, Gigi Coleman, and Aubrey Pannhoff.



The Mustangs have another tough schedule in 2022-23. A couple of big home games to look forward to include Cretin-Derham Hall on Tuesday, February 7, and a late season game at the Stable against the defending Skyline Champs, St. Croix Lutheran Crusaders, on Tuesday, February 14.

## GO MUSTANGS!





# MUSTANGS

## GIRLS BASKETBALL COACHING STAFF

As a player at Grace College, Coley was a four-year letter winner, two-year all-conference player, 1,000-point scorer, and earned a contract to play professionally.

Coach Coley brings passion and heart to the Maranatha program stating "I intend to lead this institution back to basketball prominence and dominance in the state of Minnesota. 'Imitating Christ's Humility (Philippians 2:1-4) and taking up 'The Armor of God' (Ephesians 6:6-10), MCA will make its way back to the pinnacle of hoops using these verses, and the teachings that come with them. They will be our foundation of how we will hold steadfast in our testimony as we proceed to win at all levels on and off the court."

A graduate of Grace College and Seminary in 1989 and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 2000, Coach Coley is a licensed educator in the state of Minnesota. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his four children and supporting them in their various activities.

For additional information about Coach Coley, visit the Coley Chronology page.

### MARY FRANCOIS

JV COACH



### THE FRANCOIS FILE

#### PERSONAL

Hometown.....	La Fontaine, IN
Education.....	North Central University (2014)
Years Coaching.....	8





# MUSTANGS

## GIRLS BASKETBALL SENIORS



**NICK  
ANDERSON**

SR | 6'5 | F/P



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