

SPORTS

From student athlete to sports information manager, Castaneda finds home at UWS

2025 UMAC Honorees

Men's Golf:

Andrew Rude - Player of the Year, First-Team All-Conference, and All-Sportsmanship Team
 Andrew Slatten - Rookie of the Year & First-Team All-Conference
 Matthew Unger - Second-Team All-Conference
 Blu Anderson - Honorable Mention All-Conference
 Trevor Durfee - Honorable Mention All-Conference
 Paul Eberhardt - Coach of the Year

Women's Golf:

Olivia Weyenberg - First-Team All-Conference
 Abby Schintz - First-Team All-Conference
 Makayla Ammerman - Honorable Mention All-Conference
 Ashton Parnell - Honorable Mention All-Conference and All-Sportsmanship Team
 Sophia Otto - Honorable Mention All-Conference

Volleyball:

Savanna Hering - Defensive Player of the Year and First-Team All-Conference
 Makenna Hohbein - First-Team All-Conference
 Sidney Bader - Honorable Mention All-Conference
 Colleen Claude - Honorable Mention All-Conference
 Ella Kapus - All-Sportsmanship

Volleyball season wrap-up

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Middle hitter and right-side hitter for the University of Wisconsin-Superior Volleyball team is Sydney Smith. The volleyball team placed second in the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC), behind Northwestern University.

When asked about how the season went, Smith said, "This...season went well, we were a completely different team than last year." The team itself lost a few key seniors in Jenna Anderson and Maiana Stark. Smith continued, "I'm proud of us this season." Saying that, "We were a scrappy team." Smith says one of the things that went well was the fact that, "we didn't let...losses get us down. We just kept going...we just shook it off." Smith continued to say, "We did a good job of not caring

who our opponent was; we just played to win."

For next season, Smith said, "We all need to play more confident, play more free. We definitely did our, like, last couple games." Smith continued, "We started to play more free, more confident, but I would like to see that more next year." Smith said that going forward, "I would like us to beat Northwestern again. I would like us to be the conference champs next season."

Editor's Note: According to Yellowjacket Athletics on Dec. 3, head coach Lynne Deadrick announced her retirement effective immediately. After 23 years, Deadrick ends her career with 355 wins and 369 losses, holding the all-time winning record for the volleyball program. The search for a new head coach is underway.



Women's volleyball team celebrates on Nov. 8

Photo by Alicia Zoltowski | Promethean

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When Ryan Castaneda first arrived at the University of Wisconsin-Superior's (UWS) campus from Los Angeles, he couldn't have predicted how quickly the community would shape his future.

Years before stepping into his current role, Castaneda came to the university as a baseball recruit. "In high school, I knew I wanted to go explore somewhere else because California is pretty much all I knew," Castaneda said. After researching the school and city, he fell in love with the small-town Midwest feel. He and his mother visited, and that sealed the deal. "I loved the place. I just really loved the atmosphere, I loved the camaraderie that the team had...I loved how nice and helpful everyone was," he said. He moved to Superior with only two hoodies, no jacket and no winter boots, but eventually found his way.

That fall, he chose to stay in town for Thanksgiving, a decision that led him to his first job in athletics. "I told my coach at the time that I was sticking around and he asked me, 'do you know about hockey?'" Castaneda said. Despite not knowing the sport, his help was needed at a game. "If someone shows me what to do, I could do it," he said. He was given a quick rundown on how to run a shot chart. Afterward, Jon Garver offered him a student job in the athletics department where he learned about hockey and other sports, eventually becoming a student supervisor.

By his junior year, Castaneda was interested in a full-time athletics role. After learning what the job entailed, he took on more administrative duties to gain experience.

He graduated in 2022 with a bachelor's degree in exercise science. Still unsure of his path, he started working in the admissions office, assisted with Yellowjacket baseball coaching, and volunteered in athletics.

In June 2023, Castaneda applied for a position in the university's athletic marketing and communications office. He spent two years as a sports information specialist and was promoted to sports information manager in early June 2025, taking over the role Garver had held for 15 years.

As sports information manager, Castaneda handles much of the behind-the-scenes work that keeps Yellowjacket Athletics running. On game days, he helps oversee facilities, sets up scoreboards, cues music and coordinates statisticians. Postgame, he publishes recaps and box scores and ensures conferences and the NCAA receive stat files. He serves as a liaison to the media and updates schedules, rosters and other athletic news online. He also continues to assist with baseball coaching and works as a public address announcer for Yellowjacket soccer.

Beyond standard tasks, Castaneda manages mishaps or "other duties as assigned." "It keeps me on my toes... always got to have a backup plan and maybe even a tertiary plan if something goes wrong," he said. He leads



Ryan Castaneda in his office on Dec. 3

Photo by Alicia Zoltowski | Promethean

a student staff of about 22 and credits them with helping him succeed. "It's not just one person, it's a whole group," he said.

The work can mean long days, but Castaneda's passion makes the hours worthwhile. "You have to love this. You have to love sports," he said. His goals reflect that commitment, from expanding UWS record books to keeping the focus on enhancing the student-athlete experience. "Truthfully, the student athletes here are awesome, every single one of them. They're just respectful, they understand, they just want to grow and mature, and they're all just fun to watch...that's what really gets me through," he said.

For Castaneda, that motivation is rooted in the community he found in Superior. "They took in a kid from California, 2,000 miles away from home and they made this feel like a second home for me," he said. "No matter if I'm doing sports information or assistant coaching... I'm making an impact in some way, and that to me is the dream right there."

New men's club hockey program comes to UWS

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The University of Wisconsin-Superior's men's club hockey team has been putting in the work as the season has started with a newly put-together team. The club hockey team made its debut in the 2025 school year with Sam Romutis hired as the head coach.

Romutis comes to UW-Superior from the Texas Roadrunners of the North American Tier III Hockey League (NA3HL). He wanted to start off this new opportunity by inviting player Hunter Houle to come with him. "I was his coach for junior hockey. We were both of the Texas Roadrunners and the NA3HL. And you know, I got the job up here, you know, back in May, and Hunter was my first call right off the bat. I said, 'Hey, I'd love to start out this program with a number one goalie,' and he was more than happy to be a part of it," Romutis said. Houle joined Romutis, enrolling at UWS as a physical science major.

Coming from Texas to Wisconsin, Romutis needed to find more players for the team, but didn't need to search too hard or wide. "I mean, an area like this is, it's easy to find a lot of hockey talent around here. You know, this is quite a hockey hotbed compared to

anywhere else in the country, so there's plenty of high-level players," he said. In a short amount of time, as a team, the brand-new players have gotten to know each other and created some chemistry amongst each other.

Houle spoke on how the team has been playing together so far. "I think a lot of the guys are really surprised about how well the group has jived and how close we've gotten, and honestly, I think that we're all very impressed with how we've done so far in the season. Especially with the amount of guys that we have been able to keep up with other teams, it's been super motivating for us," Houle said.

The team is looking forward to progressing into the season. Until the end of February 2026, they play on Fridays and Saturdays and sometimes Sundays and Tues-

days with the home games at Wessman Arena, as well as three to four practices a week. With a busy schedule, Romutis talks about some of the lessons he has learned with a new team and what his mindset for the team is going forward. "The goal of college athletics is to develop my players as scholars, athletes, and men. So doing whatever it takes to be successful is definitely the biggest lesson I think I've taken from this short time we've had together, but that'll be the mindset going forward," Romutis said.

Romutis is excited for the future of club hockey at UWS and wants to get the word out to people on campus that this sport is now a thing. "If there are students on campus interested in trying out and being a part of the team, feel free to email me at sromutis@uwsuper.edu," Romutis said.



Head coach Sam Romutis and goalie Hunter Houle on Dec. 2

Photo by Maison Wiberg | Promethean