

# January Athlete of the Month: Erik Salmen

BY MATT NIEDERBAUMER, CFP® Vantage Financial, Partner, Senior Wealth Advisor

Erik Salmen started playing a variety of sports at an early age with the encouragement of his parents, who were athletes throughout high school and college. A senior at Hitchcock-Tulare High School and member of the varsity football team the past four seasons, Erik was named the 2023 Preseason Player of the Year, 2023 All-State Linebacker, and All-State Running Back in 2021 and 2022. His impressive accomplishments and recognitions include 1,000+ yards rushing each of his last three seasons, 200+ tackles total from 2021-23, 2022-23 All-Around Team Player Award, and 2X Team Captain. Erik writes, "Talent will help you succeed early in your life, but hard work and putting in effort for a goal is what will allow you to succeed later in life." Furthermore, the hard work Erik exhibits in all activities sets him apart from others and is an attribute he prides himself on. His athletic talent extends to the baseball field where he's competed as a four-year varsity starter earning the SDHSBA All-Region Selection twice and making appearances in three state tournaments. Head Baseball Coach Tommy Gregg noted, "Every year [Erik] is always looking to improve a different part of his baseball game, whether it is hitting for power, fielding or baserunning. He is willing to stay late to get extra practice time in." Coach Gregg applauds how Erik stands out as a person for his kindness, his effort to create exceptional team chemistry, and his work ethic as a farmhand, student, and member of the community. Erik also has passionately pursued basketball for the last twelve years and track for seven, making him a truly accomplished multi-sport athlete.



In the classroom, Erik has an impeccable straight-A transcript demonstrating the dedication he puts towards his courses. Juggling a non-stop athletic schedule and schoolwork can be challenging, but Erik seems to have mastered a great balance. He also makes time to participate in extracurriculars as the Senior President of the Student Council, a member of the youth group at his church, a referee of youth sports and volunteer for community service projects such as building the pickleball courts. Upon graduation, Erik will continue his education at Black Hills State University to pursue Law Enforcement or Business, while competing in football.

To obtain an application for the Athlete of the Month Scholarship program email [bfast@vfplanning.com](mailto:bfast@vfplanning.com), visit [Vantage Financial Partners website at www.vfplanning.com](http://www.vfplanning.com), or ask your high school guidance counselor. If you are a high school senior who plays sports, attends a SD high school, you are eligible to apply for a \$1,500 scholarship.

## Getting to know Erik:

**FAVORITE QUOTE:** "It's not about how hard you can hit! It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward! That's how winning is done." - Rocky Balboa

**FAVORITE FOOD:** Lasagna

**FAVORITE LATE-NIGHT SNACK:** Cheez-Its®

**HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR SPORT CAREER:** Winning the state championship in football 12-0 against Herreid-Selby in 2022.

**FAVORITE CLASS:** Weightlifting - I enjoy getting mentally and physically stronger while spending the hour with my dad (the teacher).



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