

Student athlete finds passion in sports nutrition

Crittenden senior Whitney plans future helping others fuel performance



Teen of the Week

Crittenden County High School senior Ella Whitney said she believes her experience as an athlete will give her a unique perspective as a dietitian helping other athletes work to maintain or improve their health.

Contributed



BY MAX DAVIS
FOR THE TIMES LEADER, HERALD LEDGER

Crittenden County High School senior Ella Whitney's experience as a student athlete has inspired her to pursue a career as a dietitian after graduation, aiming to help others fuel their bodies to their highest potential.

Whitney is this week's Murray State University Teen of the Week. After she moved to Kentucky three years ago, she joined her school's track and field team. As she began focusing on nutrition with her teammates, her future career path emerged.

"I actually had my own little health journey that I went on that kind of made me realize that I want to go into that field. I could not really figure it out at first, but

I realized that I really like talking about food. So, I want to be a registered dietitian and hopefully be a sports dietitian for college athletes before settling down and starting a clinic."

Whitney said she believes her experience as an athlete will give her a unique view of the job and help her relate to other athletes working to maintain or improve their health.

"I love sports, and I really understand what it feels like to want to succeed as an athlete, and I know it can be really hard if you don't have enough muscle, if you don't eat right," Whitney said. "So, I just want to be able to help other athletes be their healthiest selves so that they can excel in that."

Whitney said a staff member at her previous school also helped her discover her passion for health and nutrition.

"She was more of a physical therapist, like an athletic trainer, but she was still really helpful," Whitney explained. "When I moved to this school, it was kind of sad because she wasn't there anymore, and I really realized how important they are to have around."

Whitney plans to attend Murray State University after she graduates from Crittenden County High School. After graduating from Murray State, she plans to pursue a career as a dietitian for sports teams.

"I have this passion to just travel and be fully into sports,

and travel between different sports teams, probably a college team," Whitney said. "But I think

at some point I definitely do want to settle down and hopefully create a practice of my own."

WPSD News Director, Executive Editor Bidwell shares vision for coverage

BY WILL SPENCER, BRYCE PATTERSON
FOR THE TIMES LEADER AND HERALD LEDGER

The new year will bring new ways of telling stories that matter at the newspapers in Paxton Media Group's West Kentucky Division and television news station WPSD-TV. Freshly instated News Director and Executive Editor Jeff Bidwell said he aims to transform the way WPSD delivers news.

Bidwell previously served as WPSD's sports director from 2002 to 2022. He took the helm in the West Kentucky Division newsroom following the retirement of previous News Director/Executive Editor Perry Boxx, who retired in December. In a conversation with the Crossroads SunCast, Bidwell discussed his relationship with journalism, driving factors behind local news coverage, the importance of adapting to digital media and more.

Bidwell said his earliest passion was for sports as a high school athlete, but his interests shifted when he and teammates would "race home" to witness their "20 seconds of fame" on the local news. He would compile a "video scrapbook" of VHS recordings from television. Bidwell said that spotlight was formative in understanding news as a platform for communities, something he advocated for as sports director and plans to continue to champion as news director.

"That was always kind of my North Star. From a sporting standpoint, it's important for us to be in these gyms and on these



JENNIFER RUKAVINA BIDWELL

Executive Editor and WPSD-TV News Director Jeff Bidwell discusses his relationship with journalism, driving factors behind local news coverage, the importance of adapting to digital media and more in the latest episode of The Crossroads SunCast.

fields in local towns. There's going to be a point somewhere down the line when it's going to be cool for them," Bidwell said. "From a news standpoint, something matters to everybody. People need to know what's going on in their communities."

Bidwell said WPSD in particular serves a large geographical area that includes western Kentucky, southern Illinois, northwest Tennessee and southeast Missouri. While the "constant battle" is achieving balance among varying topics and locations, he said WPSD strives "to cater to as many at any given time."

Transparency is especially vital, Bidwell said, and news outlets should hold elected officials accountable for decisions that impact the quality of life of everyday people.

"In a time where everything is very money-driven and affordability is important, we should try to educate the public as best as possible," Bidwell said. "Hopefully, they can make decisions that are

best for themselves and their families."

He added that news should not just be "doom and gloom," taking the opportunity to highlight positive developments.

"We are sort of the front porch to the community in a lot of ways, and we need to be able to showcase what's going on," he continued. "There's a lot of good, and I really want to be able to shine a light on that."

Bidwell said he wants to rededicate WPSD's focus on local stories over national issues or political controversies.

"Who's the governor? That matters. Who's your mayor? That matters. But the higher up the chain you go, [in] the day to day, it doesn't really impact your life," Bidwell said, explaining that he wants the station's sole mission to be keeping viewers informed about the news that truly matters to them.

Bidwell said focusing on national political news coverage can diminish the credibility of local news outlets, and it's important

for WPSD to strive to be as unbiased as possible, which motivated his decision to get the station "out of the national political news game."

"If you need to know what's going on in Washington, there are 9,000 places you can go...We don't need to give that to you. There are exceptions to every rule, but there's no need for us to just be like, 'What's the low-hanging fruit in Washington today that's just going to inevitably make somebody mad?'" he said. "There's no reason for us to antagonize our viewership...The best way to win this fight is to walk away from it."

Bidwell said while WPSD can report on political division, it doesn't need to contribute to it, which is why he recently made the decision to disable comments on the TV station's Facebook page.

"I just firmly believe that there is no benefit to allowing a platform for people to just be hateful to one another. I was at a conference a couple months ago, and there was a reporter up there talking about, 'How do you report news in this divided time?'" he said. "And it's kind of one of my North Stars right now, of like: We can describe the outrage; we don't need to contribute to it. By just posting a story and then going, 'Folks, have fun,' we are contributing to just angst. That's not our job."

That doesn't mean the station won't accept criticism or comment from viewers, who Bidwell said are still welcome to reach out via other channels, such as Facebook Messen-

ger and email.

In terms of the modern news landscape, Bidwell said the proliferation of social media outlets such as X and Facebook and instant news alerts have dramatically changed news consumption habits. He said viewers and readers now expect to receive content as soon as news breaks, so immediacy should be paramount for WPSD.

Bidwell elaborated that these recent trends require television stations to reconsider the traditional model. The 5 o'clock newscast functioned as a "first look" for local, national and global news, the 6 o'clock newscast delved into local coverage and the 10 o'clock newscast finished local stories while "catching you up" on national topics.

"Now, you're not telling anybody anything at 5 o'clock they don't already know because they've been inundated with it since the minute they woke up," Bidwell said. "You have to be a very unique human to just be in a complete information vacuum until 5 in the afternoon."

"This is a giant battleship that needs to get turned around in a lot of ways," he continued. "We cannot do news in 2026 the way we did it in 1996, let alone 2016. We have to evolve to be able to meet our customers where they are."

Bidwell said TV news may become an "older generation tool" like newspapers 20 years ago, a medium that retains longstanding customers but struggles to garner new ones.

He said the priority is now disseminating news digitally. He emphasized that the challenge is still accom-

modating the older demographic that receives news through television while building an audience with the younger generation.

"I've got to figure out a way to get some connective tissue between both. I don't think there are necessarily industry standards yet, and that's why the industry as a whole has fallen behind," Bidwell said. "We have to cater to our older generations that are still very important pieces of what we do, but we also have to cultivate and grow this next generation of news consumers. Obviously, they are not sitting in front of the television at 6 o'clock."

"We need to have some sort of digital newsroom, where there are infrastructures in place and mechanisms in place that when we get information at 10 in the morning, it's out," he continued. "If a story is done, we need to get it out into the world because there's no acceptance anymore for later."

Listen to Crossroads SunCast to hear more of Bidwell's vision — and his first memories of coming to Paducah.

Listen now at paducahsun.com, wpsdlocal6.com and on YouTube @WPSD-TV, Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Amazon Music.



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LEGAL NOTICE TO ALL PROPERTY OWNERS

JANUARY 1 - MARCH 1 is the period for listing your real estate for assessment of taxes for the year 2026. The assessment date for real property is January 1 as required by KRS 132.220.

THE PROPERTY VALUATION ADMINISTRATOR (PVA) does not have authority in setting property tax rates. With the exception of the state rate, all property tax rates are set by local citizens that are on the governing bodies of local taxing jurisdictions.

REAL ESTATE: Farms, houses and lots, mobile homes, vacant land and commercial buildings. Anyone who has built a new structure or made an addition, deletion or improvement to an existing structure on their property during the preceding year should list or report that to the PVA office.

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS: Anyone who has not submitted a change of address form with their 2025 tax bill would need to report this address correction.

DISABILITY/HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS: Persons who will be eligible for Exemptions for 2026 should make applications during January and February. Persons eligible for the exemption must either be 65 years of age or will be during the 2026 tax year. You must be totally disabled for the entire year. Verification documentation must be submitted to the Property Valuation Administrator before December 31 of the current year to be eligible. The PVA Office should be notified of any change in disability status. All applicants must own and occupy their dwelling. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOUR BIRTHDAY** if you will be 65 anytime during 2026, **COME IN NOW.** The office of the Property Valuation has determined that the Homestead and Disability Exemption amount for the 2026 tax year will be \$49,100.

ALL MOTOR VEHICLES AND BOATS are assessed by the Department of Revenue in Frankfort, KY from motor vehicle registration. Year 2026 motor vehicle, trailer, recreational camper and boat taxes will be paid to the County Clerk when the vehicle registration is renewed for 2026.

TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY: All individuals, partnerships, corporations and other business entities owning, leasing or having a beneficial interest in taxable tangible (moveable) property, which is located in Kentucky on January 1, must file a Tangible Property Tax Return. This would include items such as Manufacturing Machinery, Inventory Office Equipment, Documented Watercraft, etc. This filing date is January 1 through May 15. All Tangible Property Tax Returns postmarked after May 15 will be forwarded to the Department of Revenue's omitted section for billing with a 10% penalty as required by KRS 132.290. Tangible Property Tax Return forms are available at revenue website [http://revenue.ky.gov/fonns/26PTBF .htm](http://revenue.ky.gov/fonns/26PTBF.htm) If an owner does not have access to a computer or printer they can call the office of Propeliy Valuation at (502) 564-2557 and a form will be printed and mailed to the owner.

THE MISSION OF THE PV A OFFICE is to provide fair assessments and efficient services to the property owners or anyone utilizing the PV A office records and to administer the statutes of the Commonwealth of Kentucky in an impartial manner.

PLEASE LIST YOUR PROPERTY EARLY

RONALD D. WOOD

Property Valuation Administrator

Caldwell County Courthouse Room # 28

Princeton, KY 42445

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