

To: Dr. Weikle & The Board of Education
From: Dr. Adam Zbrozek NCHS and Dr. Angie Codron NCWHS Principals
Re: Unit 5 ESports State Champion in Mario Kart 8
Date: May 20, 2026



U5 ESports teams excel at the IHSA State Finals on Saturday in Evergreen Park. The team displayed tremendous teamwork, focus, and the ability to stay calm under pressure. They dominated the IHSA Sectional level competition, finishing first in 5 of the 6 possible events to advance to the State Finals. For reference...this is the most by a single team in IHSA Esports history!

You may not know this already, but this is a co-op team where there are participants from

both Normal Community and Normal West on the team. So both Dr. Zbrozek and I would like to recognize the following IHSA State Champion Mario Kart 8 Team members here tonight and their coaches:

👑 IHSA State Champions for Mario Kart 8 ✓

Mario Kart 8 - State Champions NCHS

- Aaron Dillow NCHS (So.)
- Juan Cruz Urcino -NCHS (So.)
- Ryan Tamm-NCHS (Jr.)

NCHS COACHES

Levi Neiburger
Matt Emberson

WEST

- Jude Sivyer -WEST (Jr.)
- Dane Schlipmann -WEST (Sr.)
- Jackson Cherry -WEST (Sr.)
- Owen Lukow-WEST (So.)
- Peter Allen WEST (So.)
- Ava Rackauskas WEST (Fr.)
- Avery Gadbury WEST (Fr.)

WEST COACHES

- Head Coach Jarrod Rackauskas
- Assistant Coach Jeff Kroesch
- Volunteer Luke Sherman



Normal West school nurse, Ms Annette Cherry, is an Esports parent and she had shared her take on each of these games in a staff email describing each of the games to help them make more sense to us adults, so I will share those also as we talk about each accomplishment:

MarioKart 8 Deluxe-State Champions-She says....The familiar racing game where you pick your characters, carts, race against each other and throw/use random items like shells/mushrooms, lightning bolts, etc...but seriously, who doesn't have at least some nostalgia for this game! 😊

MK8 IHSA Postseason Record: 9-1

MK8 IHSA Historic Postseason Record: 40-7

Overall IHSA Historic Postseason Record: 200-59 (all games)

MK8 Fun Facts:

- MK8 Team has taken [2nd place for the 3 previous years](#) which can prove to be a difficult feat. MK8 Championship match win against Lane Tech marks the program's 200th post season win! MK8 Team has proven to have an uphill battle at State as Chicago area teams tend to use strategies like sharing scouting reports to help keep titles in their area and out of our down-state area. - MK8 Seniors helped develop current rulesets used by most high school and college associations to become pioneers locally and nationally as our U5 Esports athletes continue to lead the way.

We also want to mention success in other Esports contests at State where Annette will help us again with our understanding our what our Esports teams are doing in these contests:

Rocket League-Runner Up "Imagine playing soccer in a big arena, except with fancy souped-up cars!"

Super Smash Bros Ultimate/SSBU Team-3rd Place-AKA- "Smash." Chaotic conglomeration of characters from various popular games. You put them on a platform, choose a character and push wild button combinations that can knock other players off of the platform to win!

Most Decorated IHSA Esports Athlete

Dane Schlipmann (Sr.) is now the most decorated esports athlete in IHSA history with 3- 2nd place and 1 championship medal. Dane was runner-up for his freshman through junior year and was the State Champion his senior year.

Scholarships

This is Esports 5th year in Unit 5. Once our few remaining seniors sign, we will have captured over \$1,000,000 in college scholarships!

Thank you for letting us honor our Esports State Championship Mario Kart 8 team this evening.

***If there are any family members and/or supporters specifically here with the Mario Kart 8 team members, please stand and be recognized.