

## NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2025](#) / [August](#) / Captains Welcome Back Elementary Students

## CAPTAINS WELCOME BACK ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

FROM CROSSWALKS TO SCHOOLS, CNU ATHLETES PROMOTE SAFE DRIVING WHILE CHEERING ON STUDENTS

by [Kelley McGee](#) | August 26, 2025

Read time: about 1 min

It's been a few years since Christopher Newport basketball player Luka Matic was as small as the kids he greeted on the first day of school at Hilton Elementary School. But the 6-foot-11-inch center remembers all too well those first-day jitters. That's why he and many fellow athletes set out bright and early, signs and pompoms in hand, to help welcome Newport News students back to school.

"We want to help kids have a really great first day of school," said Matic, a sophomore. "We're hoping we can help them to shake the nerves off and even make them smile by cheering them on and high-fiving them as they walk in."

Matic was joined by President William G. Kelly, First Lady Angie Kelly and many other Christopher Newport athletes and coaches. They brought Captains' spirit into the community to not only welcome back students back, but encourage drivers to take it slow. The CNU delegations, including representatives from all 24 varsity teams, positioned themselves at busy city intersections and roadways near campus, holding signs reminding drivers that school is now in session.



CNU basketball player Luka Matic with members of the cheerleading squad.





The annual tradition gives student athletes a chance to give back to the community that supports them, underscoring that they're part of a much larger team – Christopher Newport's hometown of Newport News.

"It's very important for our guys as well as myself to show our support for our community, the same community that comes to our basketball games every year, and we want to make sure we're here on the first day of school for our kids and make sure we're a role model for the kids," said Quentin Acree, assistant Men's Basketball coach.



This first day of school tradition is one more example of Christopher Newport's commitment to athletic excellence and community engagement, a priority outlined in the University's [Strategic Plan](#). It's a mission the athletes are happy to embrace.

"We're really excited to be here to not only welcome the kids on their first day, but to get them really excited about the start of a new academic year," said Julia Couch, a member of CNU Cheerleading.