

Double or Nothing

An investigation into student gambling habits

AHANA GADIYARAM &
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Staff Writers

Over recent years, teen gambling has become a widespread phenomenon despite being illegal in most states, including New York. Gambling, which refers to the risking of something valuable in a competition of chance, can include anything from poker games with friends to participation in a fantasy football league. With the emergence of online platforms, gambling has become increasingly accessible and laws preventing teen gambling increasingly difficult to enforce. And Horace Mann is not immune to this trend.

According to the National Council on Problem Gambling, 60-80% of high school students report having gambled for money during the past year, and 4-6% of these students are considered to be at risk of developing a gambling problem. Moreover, nearly 25% of students gamble frequently, and 6% of teens who gamble become addicted gamblers.

As per a recent Record poll with 138 responses, 58% of Upper Division (UD) students have gambled with money at some point in their lives, and 33% of those students gamble regularly. The most popular mediums for student betting at the school are card games such as poker

(60%), under-over betting (46%), and fantasy sports (43%).

As gambling on campus becomes more widespread, the ways that students are betting have also developed, said Bart*, who asked to remain anonymous because he does not want his gambling habits revealed. "Many of my friends gamble almost every day, whether that be on sportsbook apps with their parents or another adult, or after-school poker games," they said. Bart gambles once or twice a week on College Football and National Football League (NFL) games with his uncle, spending at most 20

much of ESPN's website and TV channel is filled with live odds and fantasy football analysis inadvertently convincing people to gamble."

Similarly to Bart, Marty*, who is anonymous because he didn't want his teachers to know about his gambling habits, noticed many members of his friend group follow the gambling trend and have begun to participate in poker nights with their friends, they said. "On some Friday evenings, we will play poker with about eight people, where everyone puts in anywhere from \$10 to \$100 to play."

Grady*, who has chosen to

betting, which is more out of your control than a poker game," he said. Grady also studies poker math, such as probabilities, to maximize his chances of winning each hand. Since he has started gambling, Grady has won more than he has lost during his time playing poker. "Playing poker is a way for me to make money while spending time with my friends," he said.

Overall, Bart has been successful in his sports betting, having turned \$100 into \$2400 in about a year and a half with the help of his friends, he said. "One of my good friends from camp runs an algorithm which helps him to decide what to bet on, which helped me with a bunch of my bets when I first got started," he said. Many of Bart's friends, however, have lost a majority of the money they bet.

Grady believes that the risk of losing money provides a thrill when playing poker and keeps the players competitive, he said. "Poker games often devolve when there is no money at stake because people start goofing off," they said. "It makes a lot more sense to have money involved."

This 'thrill' is a major component of why young people gravitate towards gambling, UD Counseling and Guidance Psychologist Dr. Ian Pervil said. "A lot of us are driven by rewards and the gratification and the feelings that we get from rewards. That system, which is biologically built into us, overlaps with gambling,"

If you believe you are developing a gambling addiction or are already struggling with one, please reach out to Guidance and Counseling or a trusted adult.

he said. "Sometimes, inconveniently for us, our system of rewards overlaps with the thrill we might get from gambling."

Even though Saturday night sports gambling with friends seems like a harmless and fun activity, consistent gambling can have detrimental effects in the long-term by increasing the risk of addiction later in life, Pervil said. "When you're an adolescent, your brain is in a moment of great growth, and it is during that time that a lot of things are developing and changing in the way that you think," he said. In this time of development, gambling can change the way a student thinks, and can cause them to be driven by a gambling-like reward path. This change can lead to a tendency to gamble later in life, Pervil said.

The unpredictable nature of gambling can also increase the likelihood of addiction,

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Dylan Leftt/Art Director

dollars per week,

they said. "I can see why some people get hooked on it, which is why I always limit myself."

Bart said he believes that sports media puts pressure on high school-aged sports fans to spend money on bets on games and players. "So

anonymous as he does not want to reveal his gambling tendencies to his teachers and his friends, plays poker up to three times a week and tends to bet anywhere from \$20 to \$100 per poker game, he said. "I view poker as more of an investment, rather than sports

Editorial: We urge the school to address absence-based cheating

Horace Mann offers a challenging academic environment. And there is nothing wrong with this fact. But in choosing to attend this institution, which offers its students countless opportunities both in and out of the academic sphere, students accept these challenges. As such, the school should not tolerate any attempts to circumvent these challenges. And it largely does not. If a student plagiarizes, they receive an F on their assessment. If a student uses AI without approval, they fail as well. However, this is not the case for students purposely skipping school on the day of an assessment.

Most students have experienced sitting down for an assessment and noticing that one or two of their peers are not in class with them. This is what modern-day academic

dishonesty looks like. Students rarely look at their classmates' papers for answers. Instead, students who wish to cheat, hunt down the questions and answers to assessments, potentially getting the answers from friends who have taken the assessment before them. However, to maximize the time with which they can find answers, students will go as far as skipping school altogether on the day of an assessment. This is a violation of the school's honor code.

In certain cases, students skip school on days they have tests to have more time to study, not to get answers. But even this is unacceptable behavior. It undermines the hard work the overwhelming majority of students put into preparing for an exam and perpetuates the bad habit of procrastination.

By not reprimanding, or even having an express policy against this behavior, the school only validates the practice.

It is not difficult for the school to track this. In fact, they do. The issue arises from parents excusing their child's absences on testing days. In theory, this prevents the school from taking action. But this isn't entirely true. Just recently, the Athletics Department implemented a policy of counting a student's absence as unexcused unless it is for a field trip or extended illness with a doctor's note. So why can't the school do the same for assessments?

We are not proposing that the school track down any student who misses a single test. There needs to be an allowance for illness and other legitimate situations. And

it's unfair to assume the worst of every student. But, if a pattern emerges with a given student, the school should investigate and determine an appropriate consequence.

If the school can't implement such a policy, it should encourage teachers when possible to write new questions for students who take a makeup test. Or the school can implement slight grading curves, which would discourage students from sharing answers.

If the school does implement such a policy, the consequences need not be an immediate failure. All we are asking is that the school take greater action against this form of cheating.

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The vice presidential debate sparks diverse reactions from students

WILL CHASIN

Staff Writers

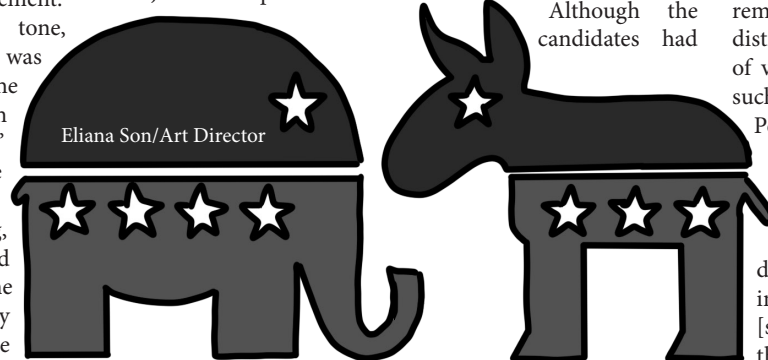
"I remember turning to my spouse and saying 'huh! This is what debates used to be like all the time!'" history teacher Dr. Alicia DeMaio said. Last Tuesday, Republican vice-presidential candidate J.D. Vance and Democratic vice-presidential candidate Tim Walz took the stage for a high-stakes debate preceding the 2024 Presidential election.

Amid a campaign cycle filled with personal attacks and fiery rhetoric, the debate maintained an unexpectedly civil tone, DeMaio said. "For me, someone who has been watching political debates since the 2008 election, this past debate seemed to be a return to normalcy," she said. DeMaio was glad students got to witness a discourse model that prioritized respect, even in the midst of disagreement.

Beyond the civil tone, Theo Gingras (12) was surprised by the clarity and strength of both candidates' performances, he said. For instance, Vance was convincing, articulate, and intelligent during the debate, particularly when answering the first question when he claimed Trump "actually delivered stability," with an explanation that was quite convincing, Gingras said. While Walz has received some backlash since the debate, Gingras believes he also performed well. "Walz definitely stuttered more and had more slip-ups, like his 'friends with school shooters' comment, but in terms of

the content of his arguments, Walz stood his ground."

Nevertheless, J.D. Vance clearly dominated the debate, Sebastian Baxter (11) said. "He answered questions more effectively than Walz, came across as more thoughtful and professional, gave some creative Republican perspectives on some social issues, effectively questioned the Biden-Harris administration's record, and focused on Strong Republican Issues like the border and the economy," he said. However, Walz appeared trustworthy and relatable to many swing-state voters with his down-to-earth approach and successful policy record in Minnesota, making his performance a positive one for the Democrats, he said. "With political nuance, I think Tim Walz's performance will benefit the democrats more than JD Vance's performance



will benefit the republicans."

While the candidates acted civilly, they still failed to address pressing questions, such as Vance's controversial 'childless cat lady' comments and accusations regarding Walz's service, military records, and statements about weapons of war, Nick Tong (9) said. Additionally, the moderators did not ask either



CC VOTER REGISTRATION TABLE

Photo by Jiwan Kim

candidate about their views on the war in Ukraine or how the Trump Administration managed the pandemic. "By leaving these topics unaddressed, the debate missed an opportunity to help voters fully understand the candidates' stances on critical issues that affect the nation."

Although the candidates had

promising performances, the debate will likely have a minimal impact on voters, Gingras said. "I don't think the debate changed anyone's mind because I believe people's minds were already made," he said. Since we're one month away from the election, Gingras can't see any Trump supporters or Kamala supporters switch their vote

now, especially since he's never heard of anyone voting or changing their vote solely based on a debate.

However, Ved Daga (10) believes that the debate may have a meaningful effect on swing states, possibly altering the election outcome. "I believe that there are very few undecided voters remaining, but in swing districts, this could flip a lot of votes, especially in places such as North Carolina or Pennsylvania," he said.

Despite many of them watching the debate, History teacher Dr. Daniel Link's students did not talk about it in class, he said. "The [students] recognize that the presidency is important and that the position of VP is also critical," Link said. "I think this is especially true for Senator Vance, given that Trump would be the oldest president in history during his second term, which understandably raises questions about his ability to take over the presidency, should that become necessary."

To emphasize the

importance of voting and political literacy amidst the vice presidential debate and the broader election, the Community Council (CC) hosted its annual voter registration table, this year, registering over 25 students to vote. "During the three days we ran the table, it was great to see how many students—even those who couldn't register—were curious about and interested in learning more," CC Chair Andrew Ziman (12) said.

The CC hoped to inspire students to think about the importance of political awareness and of having well-informed political beliefs, regardless of what they may be, Ziman said. "Voting isn't just a right; it gives each of us a voice that we can use to push for the change we want to see."



The library bans gaming

ANNIKA BHANDARI

Staff Writers

Students will no longer be able to play video games in the school library, Head Librarian Melissa Kazan wrote in an email to the Upper Division (UD) on September 26. Per the new policy, "Students are not allowed to play video



GAMING

Photo by Nicole Au

games anywhere in the library, on any device."

The school created the policy to control the noise levels in the library, Kazan said. While students are allowed to socialize on the library's first floor, gaming can create loud noises, interfering with students' abilities to efficiently complete schoolwork, Kazan said. "The library's chief purpose [is] as a space is to allow for silent study and quiet-ish group work, and gaming runs counter to both of these objectives."

The librarians decided to implement the change because they had noticed a gradual increase in noise stemming from gaming, Kazan said. With the new policy, gaming can result in a librarian asking a student to leave the library for that day. Multiple violations of the policy will result in a meeting with a grade dean and a temporary

suspension of library privileges, she said.

While Alex Felberbaum (11) understands the reasoning behind the policy, he thinks that it will unnecessarily limit students' independence. "If people are playing video games loud on their phones, that's one thing, but if people are just peacefully playing games, I think it's okay," he said.

Similar to Felberbaum, Michael Ji (11) worries that this policy will restrict students' ability to decompress and hang out with friends in the library, a central gathering spot for many students. This ban will also likely be difficult to enforce and will not effectively prevent students from gaming in the library, Ji said.

Other students, like Allie Bartoletti (9), support the video game ban.

Students have, in the past, used school computers to play video games, which made them less accessible to those who wanted to borrow computers to do schoolwork. The library should be used primarily for studying, and video game usage takes away from this, Bartoletti said. "I don't think that the library should be for relaxation, but for just studying. Students can relax in a lot of other places."

Kazan wants to remind students that they can game on campus, but just not around the library, she said. "Though students may feel as though their freedom and independence are being limited with the library's new gaming policy, I would remind students that there are plenty of other spaces on campus where they can game."

Springing into change: Students react to new club leadership policy

EVELYN GROSS
Staff Writer

"The goal of the policy is to create a smoother transition by giving incoming leaders the chance to gain experience and build rapport with the advisor so they can hit the ground running in September," Dean of Students Michael Dalo said.

Two weeks ago, Dalo announced that club leaders for the upcoming school year must be selected before Spring Break rather than in May. New club leaders will then assume all club responsibilities, entering their new leadership roles directly after Spring Break instead of at the beginning of the following school year. The school had been considering this change and its implications for some time and was ultimately inspired by suggestions from previous seniors and other schools' similar policies, Dalo said.

The decision also stemmed from a trending decline in club activity after Spring Break, as seniors begin to 'slump' and focus on preparing for college, Dalo said. By appointing new leaders earlier, the school hopes to keep more clubs and publications active and productive through the end of the school year.

Additionally, giving juniors or underclassmen leadership positions while previous leaders are still present will allow for mentoring and thus ensure that new leaders can find their footing

and start the following year on a strong note, Dalo said. It also will help prevent the rush of choosing leaders at the last minute in May and June, which is often overwhelming because of how busy the end of the school year gets, he said.

However, some students, including The Linguist editor-in-chief and Science Olympiad president Emily Akbar (12), believe that the new policies will negatively affect the leadership selection process, especially for magazines like The Linguist, she said. The publication selects leaders based on students' contributions to every issue, and the magazine releases its final issue in May, which will be after the deadline for choosing new leaders, Akbar said. As a result, the new deadline will place more pressure on club leaders who do not usually give much thought to leadership by March. "The policy might require us to finish an issue or at

challenging and add extra pressure on writers and editors," she said.

This new deadline and the resulting increased pressure on club leaders pose difficulties for clubs that have important events and

this event are crucial in deciding leadership, Akbar said. As a result, the team will likely have no choice but to request an extension until after the break, she said.

Dalo has already granted an

may benefit students by allowing new club leaders to gain experience in a low-pressure environment, Ethan Furman (11) said. There is already a well-established group of students involved in the club, so

"The policy might require us to finish an issue or at least the edits before the break, which would be challenging and add extra pressure on writers and editors,"

- Emily Akbar (12)

competitions during the spring. For instance, Science Olympiad's state competition occurs right before the start of Spring Break, and members'

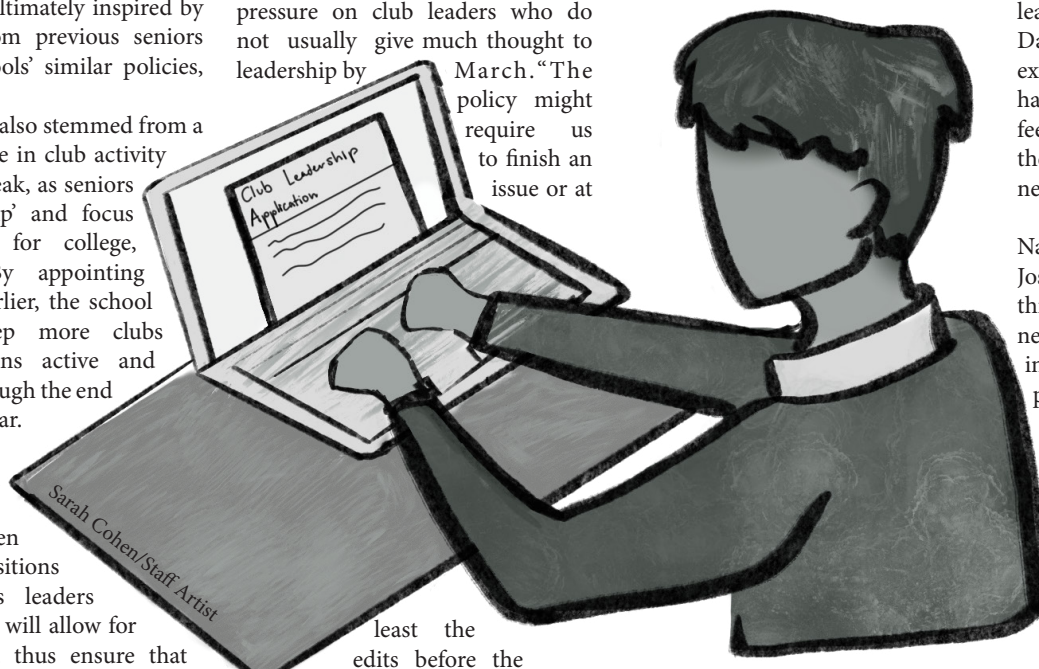
extension to certain clubs and publications, such as The Record, which already has well-established and long-standing systems for leadership transitions. In addition, Dalo is open to granting other clubs exceptions if proven necessary. "I'm happy to talk to other groups who feel that they need an exception to the policy about why they feel it's necessary," Dalo said.

Students, like Model United Nations (MUN) Secretary-General Josh Anderman (12), predict that this early change in leadership may negatively impact club engagement in the second semester. The new policy requires that leadership for MUN must be selected before the club attends the Cornell University MUN Conference in April. "This may disincentivize juniors who weren't chosen for leadership from staying engaged with the club and attending the conference," he said.

While junior spring is notoriously stressful, the policy

there's no need to go through a club fair to recruit more members, he said. "Although juniors have year-long projects and [Junior Research Papers] to manage, making it tough to dedicate a lot of time and energy to a club, seniors would face the same challenges," he said. "Seniors are less likely to stay fully engaged with their club duties or have the time and motivation to run meetings since they are heading off to college."

While she disagrees with certain aspects of this new policy, Akbar also recognizes its potential benefits, noting that it could help ease the leadership transition during senior fall, which is notoriously stressful, she said. At the beginning of the year, figuring out how to run a club can be challenging, so it may be helpful to have a good grasp on managing one by the end of junior year, she said. "But ultimately, I still think there doesn't need to be so much pressure to finalize everything by Spring Break."



least the edits before the break, which would be

performances at notoriously stressful, the policy

Continued from page 1: end of student gambling article

UD Counseling and Guidance Psychologist Dr. Liz Westphal said. "Research has shown that behaviors are most likely to reoccur when they are rewarded intermittently, or unpredictably," she said. "Since slot machines

of money and the additional risk of developing an addiction, Nate Ogiste (12) said. "At some point in your life it can become a liability on your hard-earned money, so I think it's wasteful," he said.

"It's wrong to gamble on your parents' money as there is no way to guarantee that you will get this money back,"

- Anusha Kumar (11)

reward people randomly, there's no pattern to when or how often a person at a slot machine is rewarded with a prize." This phenomenon causes gambling to be highly addictive, she said.

There are also students who avoid gambling for several reasons, including a potential loss

Other students feel uncomfortable spending money gambling, especially since the money involved is often their parents' and not their own. "It's wrong to gamble on your parents' money as there is no way to guarantee that you will get this money back," Anusha Kumar (11) said. "You shouldn't even consider gambling

until you have a steady income."

Similarly, Ethan Furman (11) chooses not to gamble due to distrust in his abilities and the principle of using income wastefully, he said. "Oftentimes, I just lose pretty horribly and end up with less money than I started with," he said. "If you lose a lot, I think it can become a toxic environment, and can cause your friends to make fun of you."

Ogiste does not gamble himself and has never felt pressure to participate in the gambling culture, he said. "I have experienced no pressure at all to gamble or bet," Ogiste said. "Gambling is an individual thing- you make your own money and lose your own money. Whether other people do it or not doesn't affect you."

Similarly, Furman believes that, even though students might feel excluded if they do not gamble, there is no peer pressure from his friends within the school community. "If you don't want to gamble, then no one's gonna force you to," he said. On the other hand, Furman

has noticed students experiencing the "fear of missing out" (FOMO), and believes that this may be a driving factor for growth in the school's gambling culture, he said. "No one's explicitly pressuring you, but if you see your friends having fun doing an activity, you might want to join in."

Gambling is also reflective of the financial privilege that many students have, Ogiste said. "Gambling is inherently an exclusionary activity-many students at HM probably don't have to worry about the money they lose," he said. "Many people can't partake in this activity because they simply don't have much money to gamble with."

Ogiste believes that gambling is becoming increasingly normalized in society, especially among young people, he said. "Most students know someone who gambles and have seen betting occur at school, whether that be in poker games or on sports games between friends."

Why school teachers should hold office hours



Henry Peck

At a rigorous high school offering college-level courses, teachers should host daily office hours to help facilitate the currently arduous and slightly impractical process of receiving academic help.

Students meet with teachers to ask questions and review assignments, often before an upcoming assessment

or deadline. The ability to consult teachers outside of class is critical to gaining a better grasp on academic material.

To schedule a meeting with a teacher, a student usually emails the teacher to find a common free period and then waits for a reply. When students suddenly develop a question, possibly while working on material for a class at school, they walk to the teacher's office to see if they have a spare moment to help them. However, the teacher may be teaching another class or otherwise eating lunch, walking around campus, or meeting with another student. Most teachers cannot answer a student's email the moment it is sent, and the student may have difficulty tracking down the teacher across the campus. Therefore, the chances of receiving help at a moment's notice are slim.

When a student emails a teacher to schedule a meeting, the teacher will find a time for that student and then block off that period. Therefore, if another student asks to meet during that time, the

teacher will reply that they are busy. Consequently, students usually meet with teachers by themselves, even if there is considerable overlap between multiple students' questions.

At colleges and universities around the world, teachers in all fields host office hours to encourage their students to stop by and share their questions, comments, or concerns. Even if students believe they are all caught up with the material, they can still come to hear other student's questions. This way, students may realize that they actually do have a question, and they will be in the perfect place to ask their question.

On average, teachers instruct four classes and have four free periods per day. Additionally, teachers typically have a free period during their class' off day once per week, with the exception of most 400-level classes, which meet every single day. Thus, teachers do have multiple free periods to meet with students.

For the majority of classes with one off day per week, the teacher should try to host office hours during

that period in addition to other periods they are free. Most students in that class will share that free period with the teacher and will be able to attend those office hours. In the case of 400-level classes, teachers should announce the periods that they are free to host office hours at the beginning of the year. During these hours, teachers can wait at their office chairs doing their work and remaining ready to help any students who appear.

A teacher should host one or two office hour periods per day and possibly more during the week of a quiz, test, or essay. Since a teacher's free period may not align with a student's, the teacher should try to host office hours during different periods throughout the week in order to maximize the number of students who can attend.

Physics teacher Oleg Zvezdin hosts meetings with students akin to office hours. Michelle Grinberg (11) appreciates how his office hours allow students and their friends to meet with him without having to email the

teacher beforehand, she said.

However, if students find themselves in need of major help and are unable to attend a teacher's office hours, they should still be able to email the teacher and set up a meeting. When students do not understand a key concept or topic, one-on-one help may be the best course of action. Additionally, shyer students may feel more comfortable speaking to a teacher privately without the fear of asking a "dumb" question.

Nevertheless, these students should remain mindful that their teachers may have limited availability to meet with them. Teachers would already be hosting office hours that day, and therefore they may need to spend their other free periods differently.

Overall, establishing office hours opens opportunities for students to feel academically confident and organized throughout the day.

CC CORNER #1

Welcome to the first ever CC Corner! This space is dedicated for us to tell you what we have been up to in the past month and what we are excited to get going in the next!

VOTER REGISTRATION

Thank you to everyone who stopped by the voter registration drive—to register or just to learn more! Huge thanks to Facilities for helping us run the stand!

VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

Get ready for Horace Mann's first annual Volleyball Tournament! Whether you're a seasoned pro or you've never stepped foot on a volleyball court, the tournament will be a blast. Recruit your favorite teachers to play on your team and sign up to play!

GRADE MERCH

The CC is dedicated to getting every grade a merch design that they will be excited to wear! So, you might've noticed your grade representatives sending emails with either grade merch design submissions or voting forms. If you haven't already, please check your email for forms to have a hand in the T-shirts (9th), long sleeves (10th), sweatpants (11th), and hoodies (12th) you'll be receiving to rep grade spirit!

FOOD INITIATIVES

Depressed that you can't leave campus to get Chipotle or Emilia-no's? Well, we're bringing similar options to you! Get excited for monthly special food stations, featuring the meals you've missed the most! Up first: a burrito bowl bar in November! And...grab a bite of the Dalo! (Not the real Dalo, of course...it's a sandwich!). Be on the lookout for faculty speciality sandwiches at the panini bar.

HALLOWEEK

Your favorite time of the season is here! Halloweek is in the works, with more spooky decorations, ghoulish games during break, and opportunities to show your passion for Halloween.

C-SEE you later!

A call for classroom creativity: The need for more wall art at school



Matthew Pruzan

Has anyone ever seen those movies where someone is trapped in a sterile, white-box room, devoid of windows, slowly losing their mind? If not, just step into 303L—a classroom without exterior facing windows or even a single poster on the wall. As a student, sitting in that room was challenging. It felt detached, almost suffocating. Classrooms should be a space for growth, learning, and human connection. However, many rooms throughout the school lack any kind of visual warmth that could inspire or stimulate the mind. Instead, they remain blank canvases that fail to engage students.

Research from the University of Salford found that classroom environments that are aesthetically stimulating—through the use of art, color, and design—improve learning by as much as 16 percent.

The researchers at the University of Salford would be happy with some of our classrooms, like Mr. Berenson's history classroom and Ms. Itani's math classroom, which are decorated with posters, pictures, student projects, and infographics. However, most

classrooms and hallways are at odds with the study's findings. Many of the pinboards in Tillinghast and elsewhere remain barren, with only the occasional faded flyer or forgotten announcement from four years ago. We have the opportunity to fix this.

One idea that not only addresses this problem but also bolsters students' learning is having visual art or art history students help curate or design the art in the school hallways and classrooms. In doing so, students would not only gain hands-on curatorial experience (which is a crucial part of art history), but they would also help improve the school's visual atmosphere. This initiative would generate displays that are not just random pieces of scrap paper taken off the printer but meaningful, current, and carefully curated works. Chemistry classrooms could feature artistic renderings of molecular structures; history rooms might showcase photography from pivotal moments in history or helpful infographics about source analysis. It's a chance for students to take ownership of their space and for teachers to benefit from a more thoughtfully designed environment.

This approach is simple yet effective. As the saying goes, it kills two birds with one stone. Not only does it enrich the school environment, but it also provides valuable experiences for students participating in the school's art curriculum. It creates an interactive space that fosters a deeper connection to the subjects being taught while also building a sense of community and ownership over our spaces.

Our school must break away from dull classrooms and hallways and embrace the power of artistic expression, which is evidently missing in many corners of the school. After all, our education is as much about what we see as what we hear.

'It's just a trend': Nike Elite backpack zipper theft in the MD

ISABELLA BARTOLETTI &

ALLIE BARTOLETTI

Staff & Contributing Writers

"This trend is just people stealing other people's stuff to be trendy and cool, and I personally just don't approve of it," said Kate*, who chose to remain anonymous because she wanted her opinions about this issue to stay private.

Following a popular TikTok trend, Middle Division (MD) students have stolen zipper tags off Nike Elite backpacks in a recent but limited string of thefts. By collecting zipper tags, or the signature cords attached to the zippers of Nike backpacks, students form decorative "dreads" on their own backpacks, Kate said.

This theft has been a source of frustration for some members of the MD, including Liv Ramos (8), whose friend's zipper tag was recently stolen. Her friend's backpack was not even a Nike backpack, Ramos said. "It's just heartbreaking to see that people are having their backpack zippers stolen. Something as small as that is still impactful."

MD Dean of Faculty Eva Abbamonte first learned of the trend from the complaints in her eighth-grade advisory who blamed the sixth graders, she said. "They were like, 'you can't even leave your bag around.' And I was like, 'you really shouldn't leave your bag around anyway, [because] it's vulnerable to other kinds

of things."

Students leaving their property in public places, like the tables outside the cafeteria, is one of the main ways zipper tag stealing happens in the first place, Kate said. "It's from leaving backpacks near the cafeteria and the little room [near it] unattended. Then, a student will go back and their [zipper is] missing."

The irresponsible habit of students leaving their backpacks in spaces outside of their lockers makes their property more susceptible to being stolen, Abbamonte said. Because the school has strict rules that prevent MD students from bringing their backpacks into the cafeteria for safety purposes, students resort to storing their backpacks in the hallways for convenience, she said. "We don't have a culture here of using lockers," Abbamonte said. "Frankly, students don't want to walk back to their lockers before they go [elsewhere]."

The rise of zipper tag theft during lunch has sparked concern among students, Jon Gursel (8) said. "One of my friends was deathly scared of having his zipper pulls stolen during lunch," he said. "He was watching his backpack like a hawk for a few days."



students are willing to go to extreme lengths to

While only a handful of students participated in this TikTok trend, those who do often keep their theft secret and hide the stolen zippers, Ramos said. "I think that this is something that people are more discreet about, because even though it's popular and it's a trend on social media, they still know that it's wrong, so they try to hide it."

However, other students who steal Nike zipper tags are quite open about their thefts, Jacob Brown (6) said. Due to this trend, a black market has formed where students sell stolen tags for exorbitant prices, Brown said. "In class, somebody wrote down on a sticky note and gave it to me, [saying] 'You want a zipper for \$15?' I thought it was crazy."

For most students, the motivation behind stealing zipper tags remains unclear, Brown said. Additionally,

accumulate the zippers, he said. "I saw people having a full-on tug of war, in the middle [of the Pforzheimer entrance], and they both had bags, [trying] to take them from each other," Brown said. "It's kind of confusing, because why zippers?"

Although only a few incidents of theft were reported, the MD grade deans sent emails to their respective grades addressing the social media trend and expressing the seriousness of stealing, he said. "The deans wrote a letter to the community and spoke directly to individual students when appropriate," 8th Grade Dean John McNally said. "Framing this trend as theft seems to have put an end to the issue."

However, because instances of theft have not escalated dramatically, Claudia Di Vincenzo (8) views the trends as a joke since the issue never became too serious; students were even laughing when it was addressed at the grade meeting, she said. "[McNally] pretty much told us that stealing is bad and that it is really annoying and mean to take zipper tags from your classmates," she said. "He's not wrong, but it's crazy that it became such a big thing he had to address the whole grade."

Regardless of whether the trend is a good-natured prank or explicit theft, stealing anyone's property without permission should never be normalized at the school, Abbamonte said. "I don't think it's ever okay to take somebody's personal property, even if it's insignificant to them."

MD Fall Athletics Day roars with success

GRACE KINNEY &

SURIA DOSSANI

Contributing Writers

The coaches and students were excited to show their progress since the beginning of the year to the rest of the community, Coach Joseph Bernardone said. Last Wednesday, the Middle Division (MD) celebrated its annual Fall Athletics Day, bringing together students, faculty, and families for a day of spirited competition and community engagement. Every team spent considerable time and effort preparing for their games and events,

and every team faced Trinity School.

Director of Athletics Matthew Russo was delighted with this year's turnout on MD Athletics Day, he said. "I think it's just a nice way to have the community celebrate MD athletics." The considerable crowd at the event showed support for all of the teams and players, Russo said.

With the crowd behind him, Nathaniel Weintraub (8) was filled with adrenaline as he won his cross-country race, he said. He was so focused that he did not even realize he won the race until he turned over his place card. "It was face down, and I turned it up and looked at it, and

it was just a single line, and I didn't know that I was first until then," Weintraub said.

The MD Boys 8th Grade Soccer team worked hard to prepare for their game, which showed in their 9-4 win. Using the entire field to space out for passes, Bernardone was particularly proud of the win because MD Boys Soccer is the first team he has coached at the school, he said. "A huge key to our success is playing as a team."

Vik Brunink (8) and Kaden Hussain (8) scored hat tricks, each scoring three goals during their game. "They played a phenomenal game," Bernardone said. On top of their numerous goals, they also had many assists and supported their other teammates, he said.

The MD Girls Soccer team had an outstanding win, with a final score of 6-1. They worked to make simple passes and worked as a team, Coach Taylor Partridge said. "It was really the idea of coming together as a team and really just connecting the dots to work up the field," she said.

The Water Polo team finished with a 21-15 win, with eight different players scoring goals. The players were anxious because there were a lot of parents watching, which caused a lot of nerves, Coach Michael Duffy said. "I think every player gets a little nervous before a game, and that's a good thing," Duffy said. Players utilized their nerves effectively to increase their energy in the game, Duffy said.

In all of the games and matches, players displayed not only individual skill but also the ability to work together, Partridge said. "They put



PREPARING TO SCORE

Courtesy of Barry Mason



EYES ON THE PRIZE

Courtesy of Barry Mason

practice into play and really came together as a team."

MD Fall Athletics Day was an

ultimate success, Russo said. "It is a fun way for them to be able to play up here and enjoy campus."

Olivia Coward (12) showcases taiwanese children's art in Fisher Gallery

CIANA TZUO
Staff Writer

"The whole experience was enlightening and all the students had amazing, lively personalities," Olivia Coward (12) said. Coward's art gallery, which will be open until October 11, displays work curated by Coward and created by students in rural Taiwan, with the theme of "Our World."

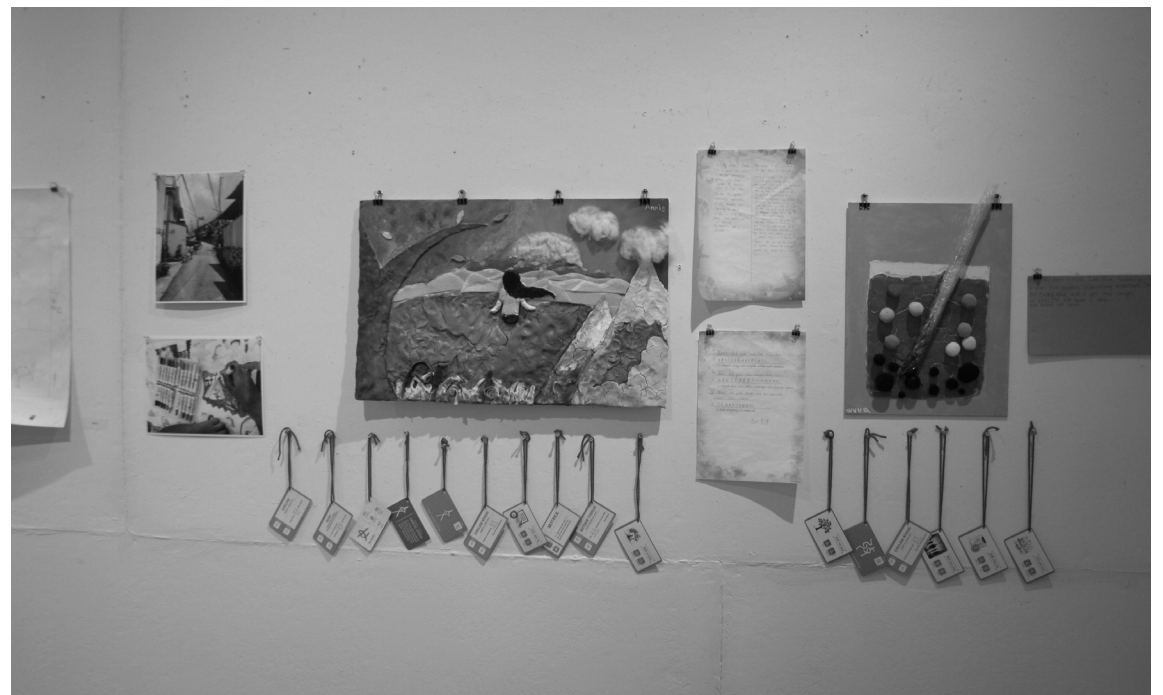
Over the summer, Coward traveled to Renhe, Taiwan to host a workshop teaching art to students from nine to 12 years old. The students independently decided on their themes and created their drawings, she said. After returning to the United States, Coward facilitated the creation of the exhibition in collaboration with the Visual Arts Department at the school to showcase the students' works.

In preparation for her five-day workshop, Coward created a curriculum and activities for the students, such as playing games, teaching them English, and posing guiding questions to help them compose their ideas in English and Chinese, she said. Coward worked with her brother, teachers at the school, and teachers in Taiwan to organize the curriculum and deal with the language barrier, she said. The process started with discussions, sketching, and designing, leading to a student's final product. "I tried to be as hands off as possible and let [the students] share whatever they

offered by the school for students wishing to pursue community service, to help fund her trip, she said. As she was applying, Coward explored her interests before deciding to incorporate art in her service project, she said. Knowing she wanted to curate a gallery at the school, Coward saw the grant as a great opportunity to both teach art and facilitate an exhibition, she said. After connecting with a family friend who worked for schools in Taiwan through a charity, she presented her idea to start a workshop, she said. Though Coward ultimately did not receive the Capelluto grant, she still decided to follow through with the project to pursue something she would enjoy doing.

In line with her philosophy of giving her students independence, Coward let her students select the gallery's theme. Ultimately, the students decided on "Our World," a representation of their daily lives and how they see the world, she said. "The gallery is a great representation of the theme – it was interpreted differently among the students, with each student using their work to illuminate their own perspective," Coward said.

One piece that stood out to Coward was by a nine-year-old girl named Uvau. Uvau created a rainbow that showed a Taiwanese indigenous group's story, where when a person dies, they cross a rainbow to get to heaven. Uvau's rainbow showed two hearts, one representing her living family members and the other



TAIWAN STUDENTS' ART

Photo by Evan Content

about her dead family members and rainbows and I was in awe of her vulnerability and creativity."

The works in the gallery successfully conveyed the theme,

the theme of connection and reminded her that although there are other perspectives in the world, we all have a common thread of humanity, Agopian said.

Coward said. Any student who attends the exhibition can write their reflections on the gallery in a letter that Coward will mail back to the Taiwanese students. The process can

"I wanted to form a connection between two different communities and hoped that HM students could reciprocate the communication."

- Olivia Coward

"The gallery is a great representation of the theme – it was interpreted differently among the students, with each student using their work to illuminate their own perspective,"

- Olivia Coward

wanted and however they wanted," Coward said.

Coward originally planned to apply for the Capelluto grant, a grant

representing her deceased ones, Coward said. "I cried after reading Uvau's background on her artwork – she was a tiny nine-year-old writing

colors and adorable drawings that evoked a swell of affection for kids she had never met before, she said. Overall, the gallery communicated

students and found the experience life-changing, she said. Before the workshop, Coward did not expect the kids to produce such thoughtful ideas. "My perspective completely changed when I worked with them," she said. "They had so many amazing ideas and interesting stories, and art really allowed them to communicate them," she said.

Coward was amazed by how vulnerable the kids were, especially Uvau and her rainbow, she said. Further, Coward found that kids, compared to adults, are a lot less influenced by social rules and judgment and can speak more freely, allowing them to be vulnerable and freely express themselves.

After hosting the workshop over the summer, Coward hoped to bring the students' artwork to the school, she said. "I wanted [the gallery] to be an exchange of ideas and culture between our students and the students in Taiwan," she said.

To facilitate this exchange, Coward added another component to the exhibition, she said. The Letter Project, an extension of the gallery, is aimed at making the communication between the schools two-sided,

expose people to different cultures and broaden their understanding of the world and human experience, Coward said. "I wanted to form a connection between two different communities and hoped that HM students could reciprocate the communication."

At first, Coward was unsure whether to highlight individual artists or the overall process of creating the art, she said. After consideration, she decided she wanted to show the progression of time during the workshop and invite viewers to understand the creative process, she said. Coward gathered all of the students' early sketches together at the beginning of the gallery and as the audience progresses through the exhibit, they see the student's final pieces.

"This exchange is important because it can broaden the understanding on both ends, between the kids in Taiwan and Horace Mann students," Coward said. Coward hopes that the school community will learn to see the world and life from other perspectives and forge connections with other communities, she said. The whole point of the project was to have an exchange of different cultures and display the different world views and stories that each culture contains, Coward said. Being able to display their work in New York is a dream to the students in Taiwan, and Coward is honored to help them fulfill it.



HM STUDENTS TOUR THE GALLERY

Photo by Evan Content

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Photo by Kader Kane (11)



Cross Country makes strides at Ivy Developmental Meet

JULIA LOURENCO,
ZACH HORNFELD &
JACOB GORDON
Staff & Contributing Writers

This past Wednesday, Girls and Boys Varsity Cross Country competed in the last of the four Ivy Developmental races, with start runners placing in 10th, 12th, 13th, and 16th in their individual events. Serving as qualifiers for the NYSAIS championship later in the runners need to compete in at least two of the developmental races, Lexi Lawsky (12) said.

The day before the meet, both the Boys Varsity Cross Country (BVXC) and Girls Varsity Cross Country (GVXC) ran the same Van Cortlandt Park course they would during the meet, Lawsky said. The team ran slowly around the 2.5-mile course to get a sense of the elevation changes and key points. "That is always really helpful for us, because it lets us think about strategies for the next day, like where to speed up."

As a part of their training regimen, the team did a mix of hill sprints, speed workouts, 400 and 800-meter repeats, and figure eights, Nakul Sethi (9) said. Since this level of physical exertion can be tiring, it is encouraging when up-

perclassmen push us to work harder, Sethi said. "Our Captain [Joe Brener (12)] is always pushing us to do better, especially in practice, he said. If we are having a hard day, he is always trying to motivate us to do better."

An optimal personal goal for BVXC members is to run the 2.5-mile course in under 15 minutes, BVXC Assistant Coach David Berenson said, though that can take several years of hard work. "The ultimate goal is to have the boys team develop as runners and move up as a team in their placement in the Ivy League," Berenson said. "In the meantime, the team is working hard towards that goal, pushing each other and building camaraderie."

Given how intense and monotonous it can be to run long distances, team bonding, Peter Benson (11) said. "Cross Country is one of the few sports that nobody really enjoys. And yet we do it anyway," he said. "It's like our shared bonding experience, something to suffer through together." So far this season, Benson's work has paid off with a new personal record, which he hopes to improve upon even more before the end of the season, he said.

Before and during meets, GVXC Captains Asha Tandon (12) and Story Sossen (12), along with Brener, made sure that all runners felt sup-

ported and prepared for their race, team manager Nara Brunink (11) said. "Everything on the day of a race is done as a team – they all have warm-up and cool-down runs together, and will cheer on one another in the freshman and varsity races." The team's sense of community is one of the most important factors in their success, Brunink said.

The team's camaraderie goes beyond just racing. During a meet earlier in the season, Sebastian Baxter (11) left in the middle of his event to help a fellow runner who injured his ankle. "Since he usually finishes quickly, we were pretty worried when we hadn't seen him and heard that someone had gotten injured while running," Brunink said. "As it turned out, Sebastian was just with the kid who got injured, and he gave up his usual ranking to help him out."

When Baxter saw the runner go down on the track, he kept running at first, contemplating whether he should help. "I was running down the hill next to them, and then I suddenly heard this screech of agony as they fell," he said. "I continued running around and I started feeling worse and worse that I didn't go back," Baxter said. As much the product of his conscience as his unwillingness to run, Baxter proceeded to loop back around the course



PUSHING PAST THE LIMITS

Courtesy of David Berenson

to investigate and help the runner coordinate with the paramedic, he said.

Unfortunately, not everyone appreciated the kindness of this gesture, Baxter said. "Mr. Berenson told me after the race to never do that again unless someone is bleeding out."

Having joined the team only this year, Lawsky feels encouraged to

support her teammates because of the team's strong bonds, she said. "I always try to come in to practice being as positive as possible, no matter how I'm feeling that day, and try to be there for everyone and make sure they are being positive as well," she said. Beyond the track, BVXC and GVXC often go on team dinners together and get to know one another during the school day.

GVT remains undefeated after Scarsdale match

ANOUSHKA PARAKH
Staff Writer

"We knew [Scarsdale] was going to be a tough match, but we focused and everyone stepped up and rose to the challenge," Kate Komaroff (11) said. Girls Varsity Tennis (GVT) continued their undefeated season through a two game stretch, defeating Scarsdale in a tight 4-3 match on Monday and Trevor 5-0 in a dominant match on Tuesday.

Powering through a difficult matchup, Tessa Siegel (10) stood out as the standout player from the Scarsdale match, Emmy Odell (11) said. Siegel's match was the deciding factor for the Lions' win and it even went into a tiebreaker, Odell said. "She stayed very mentally strong even when it was 7pm and pitch black," she said.

Going into the Scarsdale match, the team's lineup looked somewhat different than usual as they were missing two key players due to sickness: Captains Gabrielle Hayden (12) and Emma Chang (12).

Additionally, the team switched

from their usual two doubles matches format to four doubles matches, meaning more players had the opportunity to play in more competitive matches, Celia Aizer (11) said. While several players often play exhibition matches not factored into the teams overall score, this format switch meant every match played counted, she said.

Even more daunting is the fact that Scarsdale is one of the best teams in Westchester, playing outside GVT's usual league, Head Coach Patric Westoo said. "They have always been a very good team, and we always have very close matches," he said. "We are a tough team though and if someone is going to beat us, they have to win four matches, and it is hard to do because we are consistently strong at every position."

Due to the tense nature of closer matches, Westoo found it harder to motivate the team, he said. "We try to tell the girls to just be self-reliant and always do their thing and not look at the opponent," he said. "Don't play up or down to the opponent's level, just play your game. It is

a cliché, but it is important."

Despite their initial worries, the team prevailed, and held different feelings leading up to the Tuesday match, Hayden said. GVT had already beaten Trevor Day, one of their weaker opponents, earlier in the season, making the match-up more of a "giveaway" match for the team, Hayden said. "Going into the game, [Westoo] told us to 'play Trevor like we played them before,' and to take this game pretty easy," she said.

The team felt they could embrace both games with less pressure, as they were both out of league games and thus did not count toward their Ivy Preparatory League placement, Odell said. "Oftentimes we are cautious during our league matches and take a step back, but in these games, we took the risks and I really went for it on my serves," she said.

GVT also had the benefit of playing both matches at the Andrew Feinberg '96 Tennis Center, offering them a home-court advantage. Many team member's friends and parents, and even Head of Upper Division (UD) Dr. Jessica Levenstein

came out to support the team, she said. Though the crowd's support was not the only advantage the tennis courts offered, as the team's affinity for the court surfaces was also instrumental. "It always takes other people more time to adjust to new courts, so it is definitely a huge advantage for us," she said.

The team's chemistry and communication have also been a huge booster for team morale and playstyle, Komaroff said. "The team is very filled with love and camaraderie, and we all really lift each other up,

the Komaroff said. "In this aspect, it really helps motivate the entire team because everyone is working their hardest."

Since the start of the season, the team has improved tremendously, but Westoo still feels there is room for growth, he said. "We haven't peaked at any of our positions yet, so there is still room at each position to improve. But we are hoping and are confident that we are going to hit our stride come playoffs."

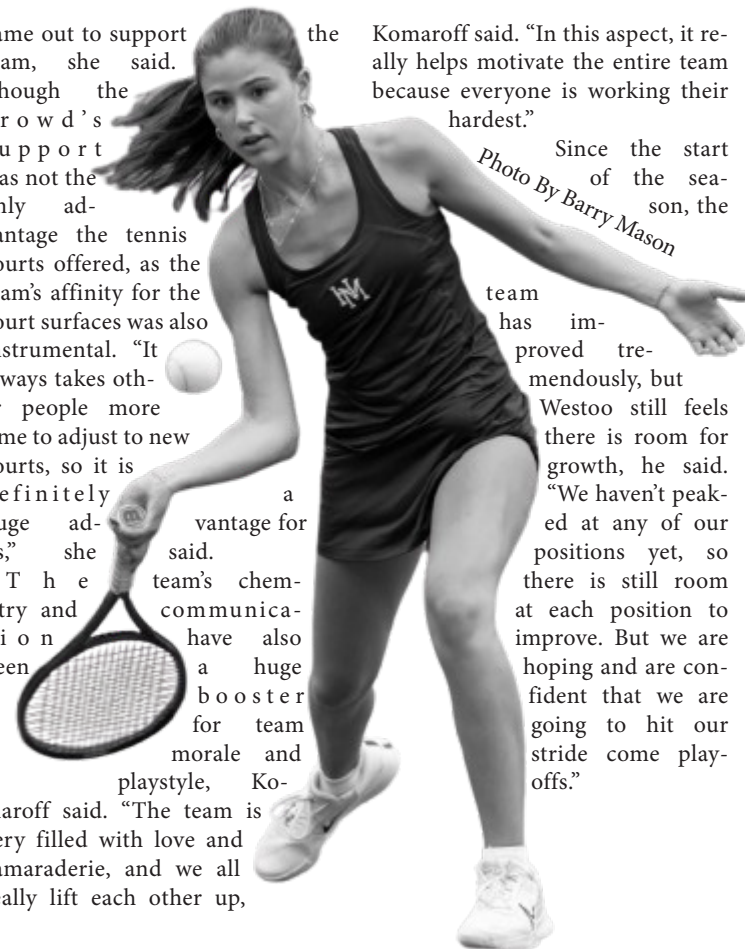


Photo By Barry Mason

Varsity Football falls short against Dalton

TEDDY SPENCER
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, the Varsity Football Team (VFT) lost to Dalton in a close 14-6 back-and-forth game on Alumni Field.

The game got off to a slow start, with Dalton and the Lions exchanging turnovers for the first quarter. BVF thrived off of their designed run plays, most of which were intended for runs by the running backs and Captain Oliver Guyer (12), or sneaks by quarterback Cooper Winter (11). "Especially in the first

quarter, we came out a little flat, everyone including myself, were moving just a little too slow," Guyer said.

However, early in the second quarter, after some built-up defensive momentum, Dalton's quarterback threw a long pass for 30 yards bringing them to the 25-yard line. Followed by another 25-yard run from Dalton, Dalton scored the first touchdown in the game three minutes into the second quarter. Despite their momentum, Dalton's extra point attempt was blocked by Oliver Guyer.

Dalton, leading by 6 points, kept the pressure on the Lions throughout the second

quarter with a string of short passes, slowly backing the team to their endzone. A 10-yard pass from Dalton left them on BVF's 5-yard line with a first down. BVF's defense denied Dalton of a touchdown three consecutive plays in a row, until fourth down when another 5-yard pass, threaded through the team's defense, gave Dalton their second touchdown. After converting on a two-point conversion, they went up 14-0 halfway into the second quarter. "After the second touchdown happened, it definitely took a toll on our morale, but we had to stay strong, which we did, not letting up a single point for the rest of the game," Guyer said.

The 10-minute halftime break gave the team a chance to regroup. "We were able to keep motivated and compete in the 2nd half a whole lot better than the first half because we were motivated to defend our home field and play even harder for each other," BVF Coach Ron Beller said.

Immediately after the break, BVF came out firing at Dalton. "After halftime, the first play we ran was we put 11 players into the middle of the field and decided to run the ball and pounded the rock," Guyer said. That 8-yard run was the longest play that the team had in the entire game so far.

With 4 minutes left in the third quarter BVF finally broke through Dalton's defense, following an interception from Guyer. From the team's 15-yard line, Winter threw a short pass to James Moore (11) who carried the

ball all the way to the endzone for an 85-yard touchdown pass to cut the deficit to eight with 15 minutes left.

However, even with the late surge in energy, the team could not make a comeback, as the fourth quarter was headlined by both teams' defenses making stop after stop until the game ended 14-6 Dalton.

BVF came into their game against Dalton with a 2-1 record. Although they beat Newark Academy in their third game, the Lions still had much to prove following their loss in their second game against Riverdale, Jai Srinivasan (11) said. "Following Riverdale, we had a lot of stuff to work on defense, but also on offense," Srinivasan said. "We kind of just hit a wall against them [Riverdale], but against Newark, it seemed like we were able to break through their defense more easily."

However, their loss to Riverdale only motivated the team to work harder, Moore said. "Our coaches constantly remind us that we are better than a 43-0 loss to Riverdale, and it's something that we too believe as a team," Moore said. "All we have to do is be focused and practice hard and we will bounce back."

Regardless of the loss to Dalton, the team's coaches were pleased with their strong effort. "The end result wasn't what we wanted as coaches. I was proud of our players' efforts, they never quit, we competed every snap, and we didn't point the finger at each other," Beller said. "Good teams pick each other up. We were able to do that."



GAME DAY GRIT

Photo by Kader Kane (11)