

# WILLIS HALL HERALD



## BACK 2 KERRIGAN CAB HANEV

P. 21

P. 22



## STATE CHAMPIONS

P. 23

# Editorial Willis Hall never rests

Whether attending club meetings, practicing for the winter play, or preparing for exams, there is always something going on amongst our community. Through our athletes winning state championships to students making All District Choir, our students are always involved on and off campus. Although we take pride in being such an active and lively community, we all can feel some degree of pressure or stress at times. Seniors especially have been hit by this wave of stress the most with things like college applications and senior speeches.

“I’m stressed about college applications and maintaining grades,” said Cate Cook ‘24, “and I don’t want to get senioritis.”

Other seniors find their main source of stress coming from themselves.

“I put a lot of stress on myself to perform,” said Paul Schueler ‘24, “and set myself up well for the future, which is overwhelming.”

As seniors go through the college admissions process, some are starting to really feel a whole new level of responsibility.

“I’m stressed because of the heavy workload I have and how, being a senior, I’m faced with the idea that I will be an adult very soon,” said Helen Hertz ‘24.

“Going to be an adult is stressful,” agreed Isabelle Onufer ‘24.

These things can be extremely overwhelming, but luckily for seniors and other students, we don’t have to handle this stress alone.

Through ups and downs, our school community offers support and encouragement when we need it. We can always count on one another to lend a helping hand or help us work through stressful times. This unity and close bond we share brings us together. It is something truly special at North Cross that we should appreciate.

Attending the Thanksgiving Assembly really gave students and faculty a time to reflect on all the things we are grateful for. From our many academic and athletic opportunities to our strong and intertwined community, we all can be thankful for many different aspects of North Cross. Our school is flourishing more than ever, and every day we look to make improvements and make impacts on our community. But while keeping focus on our school community, we make sure that we do not lose sight of our community beyond North Cross. In the spirit of gratitude, our school holds great importance to giving back.

Willis Hall has been doing just that by making positive efforts toward helping others in need. From the beginning of the school year, we started by raising money for Maui to help those affected by hurricanes. Green Club has been working on collecting plastic for Trex Recycling. Recently, the SCA collected coats to send to the Rescue Mission, and students held a dodgeball tournament to raise money for juvenile diabetes research. In the coming weeks, we are collecting more items, toys, and necessities to send to the Rescue Mission. Additionally, in the spring, we have more efforts coming like our school wide Rise Against Hunger event. But this is only the beginning, and our students, faculty, staff, and community will continue to give back.



**STRESS?** Editor-in-Chief Paul Schueler and Copy Editor Ashton Cornett edit yearbook pages in room 16. Along with sports, finals, college applications, Senior Speeches, clubs, and APs, the Compass yearbook staff work to complete 40 pages for a Dec. 15 deadline. Photo by Eason Zhou

## HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE 2:

- + MVP OPINION ON PAGE 4
- + TILDEN AYERS FISHES ON PAGE 5
- + DODGEBALL ON PAGE 6



- + THANKSGIVING ON PAGE 7
- + HOMECOMING DANCE FASH-ION ON PAGE 10
- + LIVING IN A SWIFTIE WORLD ON PAGES 11-13
- + COACH CARTER HELPS FIELD HOCKEY IMPROVE ON 14
- + JADYN RHODES’ BUSY FALL ON PAGE 15
- + PARALLEL LIVES OF SELDEN BURNS AND CATE COOK 17
- + KERRIGAN WINS AGAIN: 21
- + BOYS CROSS COUNTRY WINS FIRST STATE TITLE ON 22
- + KAM JOHNSON HELPS FOOTBALL GO BACK TO BACK ON 23
- + THANK YOU TO RYAN HUNT FOR PROVIDING SWIFTIE PHOTOS

**CHAMPS:** Eason Zhou ‘24 raises the trophy right after the championship dedication. He said, “I finally finished my job here, I feel relieved.” Photo by Blake Shaner

# The Willis Hall Herald

Founded in 2010, and based in the Journalism elective, The Willis Hall Herald is the official student-led publication of the Upper School at North Cross School in Roanoke, VA. The Herald may be published in magazine form three or more times per year. GeoPrism: The Global Studies Journal may be published in magazine form once per year. The Herald welcomes letters, commentary and submissions of original content that adhere to the Herald’s dedication to factual journalism. Letters and other content must be signed and may be edited for length and Herald style. The Herald does not guarantee publication of outside submissions. The Herald won Gold Medals from Columbia Scholastic Press Association in 2012 and 2015. Submit letters to willishallherald@northcross.org

**Vol. XIII  
No. 2  
November 2023**

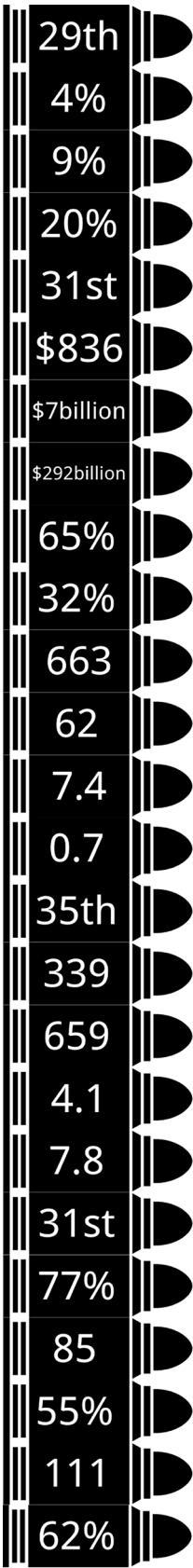
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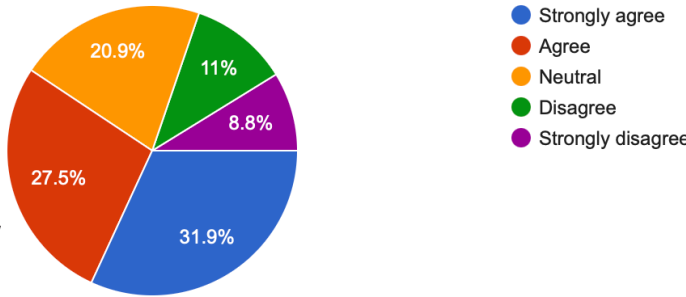
# My thoughts about gun control in Virginia

Are the state’s leaders actually doing a great job?



## Guns ownership should be controlled more by government

91 responses



In a Google Forms survey of students via email on Nov. 2, almost 60% of students agreed that guns should be regulated more by government.

By Eason Zhou

Virginia has a reputation for having historically lax gun laws, which has generated discussion and attention frequently. Despite the state’s long history of hunting and gun ownership, its lax gun regulations have made it possible to openly carry firearms in public areas and have few background checks for private sales. Concerns about gun crime and public safety have been raised by this laxity, which has prompted calls for tougher laws and background checks.

Is Virginia genuinely effective in reducing gun violence through firearms restrictions? No, is the response. The U.S. state with the 29th-highest rate of gun violence is Virginia. Between 2010 and 2019, there was a 9 percent increase in gun-related deaths, a 4 percent increase in gun-related suicides, and a 20 percent increase in gun-related homicides in Virginia. At \$836 per person annually, Virginia is rated 31st in the U.S. for the highest social cost of gun violence. Virginia spends \$7 billion on gun-related deaths and injuries, of which \$292 million is covered by tax dollars. Of gun-related deaths, 32% are homicides and 65% are suicides. Virginia averages 7.4 suicides and 0.7 suicide attempts per 100,000 people, or 663 gun-related fatalities and 62 gun-related injuries annually. Virginia has the 35th-highest rate of attempted and actual firearm suicides in the US. In Virginia, the average annual number of gun-related homicides and assaults is 339 for every 100,000 people, or 4.1 homicides and 7.8 assaults per 100,000 people. In the U.S., Virginia has the 31st-highest rate of gun-related killings and assaults. In 77 percent of all killings, a gun is used. The primary cause of death for kids and teenagers is firearms. In Virginia, firearms claim the lives of 85 adolescents

and teenagers on average each year; homicides account for 55 percent of these deaths. 111 women were shot dead by an intimate partner between 2015 and 2019, and 62 percent of victims of female intimate relationship homicide died with a gun in their hands.

It’s important to note that the effectiveness of gun control measures can vary depending on the cultural, social, and economic factors of each country. Additionally, correlation does not always imply causation, and other factors may contribute to the observed outcomes. But I believe that regardless of the cultural and economic differences between countries, no country’s people hope that more people will die from gunfire. The United States ranks among the top in the world in terms of various data related to shootings, and there is still a lot of room for progress on the gun control front. The effectiveness of gun restrictions has been well demonstrated in some countries, so why hasn’t the United States taken action to reach a collective consensus on limiting firearms in order to create a more harmonious living environment?

While some may claim that owning a gun gives them the opportunity to protect themselves, the simple truth is that guns are more often used to cause harm than to protect. The data shows that loose gun restrictions lead to more firearm deaths. There are many people involved in the process of determining new laws, whether it is organizations like the NRA or individual citizens. To change the situation, we can only speak out in hopes of changing the minds of more people. As more and more people join, those who truly have the ability to change policies will take action. I hope this day will come soon and make our society better.

# Euphemistic MVP could contaminate Bottom Creek Gorge

By Caroline Welfare

The settlement started only 30 minutes from where Roanoke is now, back when that land was deemed inhospitable due to the lack of good ground for building houses, and it has been a beautiful farmland since the first families settled there. Those families might not be there for much longer, and the beauty of the valley would go with them.

The government itself is ordering and forcibly obtaining farm and forested land for the 42-inch fracked gas pipeline that not only disrupts the community, but also damages the pristine waterways connected to Virginia's second tallest waterfall, Bent Mountain Falls and Camp Creek, both of which are home to 10% of freshwater organisms in both Virginia and the Blue Ridge.

The Nature Conservancy owns the family-friendly and popular hiking trails known collectively as Bottom Creek Gorge, but not the land that has been claimed for the pipeline.

And runoff from the nearby pipeline is not their only concern.

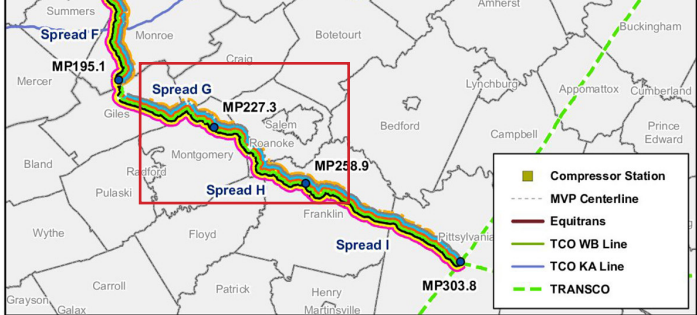
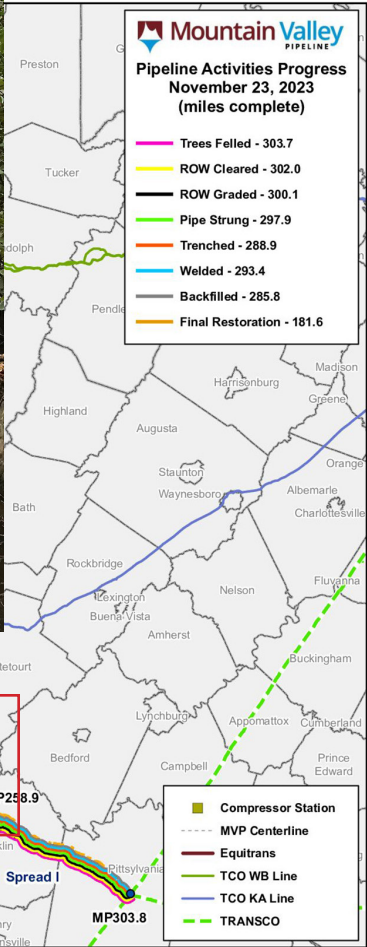
Families old to the area are afraid of having their land claimed without them having committed a slight against the people, despite Virginia having strict laws about eminent domain. This is not a common problem, but the U.S. government has been known to claim land already owned for resources. Several signs of protest are hung on fences, the closest one to the paused construction says boldly: "THIS IS THEFT!"

According to reporting in Cardinal News judges have ignored several emergency pleas. After a four-month-long pause in construction, the Supreme Court has once again given the project a green light.

According to the Appalachian Voice runoff is not the only environmental concern. When the pipe inevitably breaks, the fracked gas will spread and ruin the surround-



The pristine creek could be contaminated if the pipeline leaks. Photo of Bottom Creek Gorge by Caroline Welfare



Map from Mountain Valley Pipeline's website dated Nov. 23 shows extensive growth.

*The Mountain Valley Pipeline, as innocent as it sounds, is ripping the proverbial rug from beneath farming families that have been living by Bottom Creek Gorge since colonial times.*

ing waterways, endangering species that were threatened already.

From above or from distant overlooks, the pipeline looks like a scar on the lush mountainside.

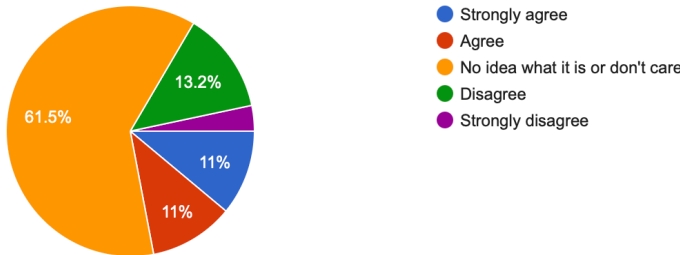
The Mountain Valley Pipeline threatens both the environment and farming families who have been there so long that they may not have another place to go. Not only are homes that have been legally owned for decades being claimed by the order for the pipeline, but when it unavoidably breaks, we will have a wholly different, water-poisoning problem on our hands.

"U.S. Supreme Court gives Mountain Valley Pipeline the OK to resume construction as 4th Circuit hears arguments," according to Cardinal News. A photo on their site shows the construction - but conveniently hides the "THIS IS THEFT!" sign on a through road.

Survey conducted on Nov. 2 using Google

The Mountain Valley Pipeline should not run through Virginia.

91 responses



# 5 tips to get you that fish! How-to guide from Tilden Ayers

By Anna Ciccozzi

Plop! Splash! Reel it in! Ayers's is on his fourth catch of the night and he's just getting started!

Hidden among the North Cross Community, lies a large portion of students and faculty who all share one love: fishing. In our school's fishing community, these fishers range from people fishing recreationally, to fishing 'experts' who fish every chance they get. Tilden Ayers '26 falls into the experts category, and is one of the most avid fishermen at our school.

"I've been fishing all my life, ever since I was a little kid, said Ayers, "and I've been loving it all my life."

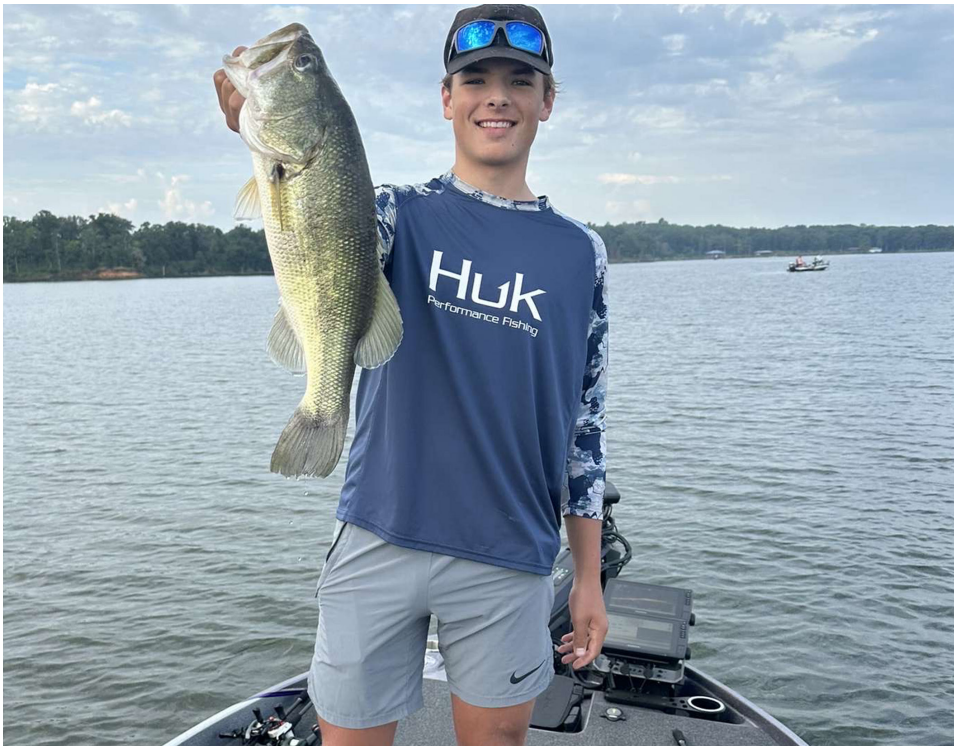
Ayers has many different go-to fishing spots, and he is not afraid to travel far distances to get there. Whenever he visits his grandparents house in South Carolina, he fishes there. Other times, Ayers fishes at a few private ponds owned by people he knows in the area.

"Sometimes my dad and I travel out to like Texas and other places to go on fishing trips," said Ayers.

I've gotten the chance to fish with Tilden in the past at the Hunting Hills Pond, and I can confidently say that Tilden is a really good fisher. I know some things about fishing, but not nearly as much as Tilden. He's taught me new things and helped me to catch more fish. To help share his experience and knowledge about fishing, here are Tilden's five tips for fishing.

## #1 "Match the Hatch"

Ayers' first tip 'matching the hatch' means " whatever lure



Big Reels, Happy Feels: Tilden Ayers '26 catches a 5lb largemouth bass while fishing with his dad at Lake Fork, Texas on July 3. Photo by Patrick Ayers

you're throwing, you want to match what the fish are eating," said Ayers.

For example, "if you're in a lake around April you want to throw like a swim bait. Cuz it's shad spawn, which is a bait fish, so you want to match what they are eating"

## #2 "Never Use Mono"

"Mono" short for monofilament, is something Ayers avoids when fishing. "It's the

worst type of line to use," said Ayers. "It stretches and is meant for saltwater fishing, not freshwater."

## #3 "Use Top Water"

According to Ayers, top-water fishing is when you use a lure that floats on top of the water. "Topwater can be frowned upon because it can be called unreliable," said Ayers, but it can actually turn out pretty useful in morning or at night.". Despite some skepticism with using top water, Ayers believes it is still worth a shot. "When used at the right times, it can be very beneficial," he said.

## #4 "Order Online"

Tilden's fourth tip is to buy all your fishing equipment online. "When ordering online, you know exactly what you're gonna get," said Ayers, "And you have the specific sizes and weights for everything rather than going in person." "It can get overwhelming," said Ayers, so he recommends sticking to the internet for purchases instead.

## #5 "Three F's"

Tilden's final and most important fishing tip deals with the 3 F's: Fish, Fun, and Friends. With fishing and trying different techniques, it's always important to have fun. Above all, fishing should be something that is enjoyable and where you can have fun and connect with the people around you. In other words, "Fish with friends, spread the community," said Ayers.

*"Fish with friends, spread the community," said Ayers.*



Fishing Cousins: Winni Ferguson '26 takes a fish of the hook while fishing with Catherine Ferguson '26 at Garst Lake on October 28. Photo by Catherine Ferguson.

# Dodgeball contest and cookies raise money



**PJ PARTY:** The “PJ” team flashes W’s after winning the dodgeball tournament to support the Juvenile Diabetes Society. Kneeling left to right: Kam Johnson ‘24, J2 Rhodes ‘24, Jase Rhodes ‘26, Dajah Garrison ‘24. Standing left to right: Cate Overton ‘24, Nate Bonds ‘26, Tristan Lange ‘26, J2 Rhodes ‘24, Nate Bonds ‘26, Scout Kappes ‘26, Ava Dalaski ‘25, Julia Corliss ‘25, Julia Corliss ‘25, Cate Overton ‘24. Photo by Eason Zhou

By Anna Ciccozzi

**Scout Kappes ‘26 and her teammates proudly hold up W’s in the air following their win in this year’s Dodgeball Tournament.** This November is National Diabetes Month. With the help of Leyton Sturm ‘25, Asst. Athletic Director Christopher Pollock, and the SCA, the Upper

School was able to bring back last year’s dodgeball tournament to raise money to combat juvenile diabetes. “It was a good way to raise money for diabetes,” said Kappes. “There was lots of good sportsmanship going around and it was just really fun.” Kappes’ team consisted of five girls and five guys, who all worked together to secure victories round

## Ellett bakes cookies to boost donations

**By Maeve Parker**  
**For this year’s JDRF dodgeball fundraiser, student Lucy Paige Ellett ‘26 decided to bring a new level of excitement to the event with her delicious homemade chocolate chip cookies.**

Lucy Paige got this brilliant idea because she wanted to find a way to bring more people into the tournament and encourage donations from our school’s community. The night before the event, Lucy Paige spent the entire afternoon making over 150 cookies to put in 50 Ziploc bags, to make sure her cookies would be the highlight of the event. She ended up selling every single one of the

cookies with the help of Anna Ciccozzi ‘26 and Suvi Hansen ‘26. Lucy Paige was extremely excited about the community’s support during the fundraiser. “The tournament had a really good energy and competitive atmosphere,” she said. “It was such a fun thing to do for such a good cause!” Events like these are what bring our school closer and make everyone feel like they are a part of something special. Lucy Paige summed up this school spirit. by saying, “Things like this are super fun to be a part of because they remind me of how much of a family our school is.”

after round. When it came to Kappes’ strategy for the game, she took a more cautious approach that helped her stay in the game. “I just hid behind everyone until there was a couple people left and then I finally got out there,” said Kappes. Scout will “absolutely play again next year,” as she tries to defend her team’s winning title.



Photo by Lucy Paige Ellett

Worth another look:

# Helen Hertz’s Thanksgiving speech

I will be the first to admit that I have many days where I wish I was living a different life. I have days where I wish I was smarter, or prettier, or more personable. On those days I do not think of how lucky I am to possess the capacity to learn, I don’t think about how bright my smile is, and I don’t think about how quickly I found a group of friends when I came to this school in late 2020. I use myself as an example, not to shower myself with praise, but because I know that I am not the only upper schooler that sometimes feels this way, I was not the only middle schooler or lower schooler who felt this way, and I will not be the only adult that will feel this way. On days like today, I am grateful for everything. I am grateful for the way the leaves fall from the trees, I am grateful for the pencil I wrote with today, and I am grateful for every bristle on my toothbrush. But the majority of my days are in between days. Days where I am grateful for my health but not necessarily the availability of food to me. Days where I am thankful for my mothers kindness, but I take for granted the way she keeps our house running. And days where I am thankful for my education, but not the opportunity to learn that is a study guide or an essay. On in-between days I feel bad for not being constantly aware of all I have to be thankful for, while also wondering ‘why do I have to be thankful for every single aspect of my life, when there are so many things I wish were different.’ It is only natural for humans to exist in a space between these feelings.



**NO WOBBLE:** Head of School Armistead Lemon gets in sync with SCA member Vivian Pickeral ‘24 during the “Gobble Gobble Turkey Wobble” dance. This is the second year North Cross School had a Thanksgiving assembly. One of the Uppper Sschool students in the dance was Carter Levan ‘(27). He said, “I am thankful for my mom, my dad, my brothers, and Sprite.” Caption by William Frederickson Photo by Blake Shaner



The actions of the humans around us are the things that make us feel grateful, and turn our inbetween days into days when we are aware of how loved we are. I do not wake up everyday filled to the brim with gratitude, but when I think of what positive things my loved ones do for me, I can find gratitude in their kindness. My greatest experience with gratitude happened at this very campus when I was a new student after the first trimester of freshman year and it was an inbetween day. Then, on my second day here, I was introduced to a then 14 year old Kaeleigh Howlett, who after about 30 seconds asked what my favorite Broadway Musical was, and proceeded to accidentally dump her entire lunch box onto the ground and we shared a laugh. When I got home from school that day, I knew I had made a lifelong friend in Kaeleigh. Even now, I feel an immense amount of thankfulness towards her, if it wasn’t for her, I wouldn’t have spent the rest of my high school years at this school, I never would have met my other wonderful friends, tons of supportive teachers, and found creative outlets.

It is people like Kaeleigh who make our lives full of things to be thankful for and who fill our lives with love, even when we are struggling to find things to be grateful for within ourselves. This Thanksgiving, even if you are just treating it as the 23rd of November, I encourage you to think about someone you love or appreciate, and what they might have done for you. Whether that person be your mom, your dad, a friend, or the person sitting next to you, or even the mailman that says hi to you twice a week. And if you can, I encourage you to give them a thank you. Whether it be for cooking your meals, helping you with your homework, or delivering your mail on time. Let’s practice, everyone please turn to the person next to you, or behind you, and say, THANK YOU. This may seem cheesy or cliché, but so many of the greatest things in life are. And if we can turn our in-between days into days where we have acknowledged the positive actions of our fellow human beings, then maybe we can make this world and community a kinder and more appreciative place. Thank you and Happy Thanksgiving.

# Maggie Bibby flourishes on flute

By mia starr

**Maggie Bibby ‘26 is a band member who plays the flute in her free time and on the stage.**

She is very passionate about her flute and rehearses a lot for her concerts.

“A hard worker is something that you earn the title of,” Maggie said. “A bad worker is something you develop over time from laziness.”

Maggie’s daily routine involves practicing three times a week for an hour she never misses a day and if she does she makes it up to later in the week,for her playing is very important to her.

Maggie has been playing the flute since she was in fourth grade and desires to pursue this throughout college as well as an academic career.

One thing most people don’t know about Maggie is that she has also been playing the piano for as long as she has been playing the

flute. Maggie is a very talented band member and one of the top players in the class.

Although Maggie is one of the best in the class, she sometimes has her doubts and says she often feels discouraged.

Her

parents

help Maggie

feel better about her playing

when she feels discouraged,

Maggie’s mom and dad have

been to every concert and have

helped her through her toughest

times during her career.

Maggie knew from a very young

age she discovered her love of music

through her church; she was so fas-



**READY:** Maggie Bibby shows her form in preparation for the Band Concert on Dec. 6. She says her favorite song to play is “Sleigh Ride.” Photo by Eason Zhou

*“Band has truly had a positive impact on my life with the people and getting to play my favorite instrument.”  
- Maggie Bibby*

self paced and very patient with her music and learning new songs on her instrument the flute. She is a self taught player who has come very far to where she is now.

“Band has truly had a positive impact on my life with the people and getting to play my favorite instrument,” says Maggie.

On Dec. 6 the band will play their holiday concert in Fishburn Auditorium where they will perform for everyone.

# Szilagyi organizes Red Cross blood drive

By Anna Ciccozzi

**“Who doesn’t want to help people right?” said Konur Onufer ‘24, as he waits in line to donate blood.**

The blood drive happens at least once every year, and it is a great opportunity for the North Cross community to give back and help those in need. For each person who donates blood, they can play a huge role in positively impacting someone’s life and health.



Photo by Anna Ciccozzi

This factor is the leading reason for students and faculty donating blood in the first place. Although donating blood saves lives, many people are ineligible to do so. Some simply do not meet the criteria for donating, while others find the task too overwhelming and scary.

“Needles are not fun for anybody really,” said Onofer. “I don’t think anyone actually likes needles.”

Along with being scared of needles, some people also fear the moments right before donating.

“I was a little scared because I saw everyone else like passing out and freaking out,” said Nadia Hosny ‘24.

Although many found a challenge overcoming

their fear of donating blood, they were willing to get over this fear if it meant making a difference on others.

“I wanted to do a good thing and I knew that people could benefit from it,” said Nadia, who ultimately decided to donate despite feeling nervous.

In order to increase the number of donors, Grayson Szilagyi ‘24 put flyers up and convinced more people to donate. When Wednesday finally came around, the Blood Drive turned out to be a success.

“It went really well! We got 18 people who were completely able to

donate,” said Szilagyi, “and we had a couple little hiccups with people having some issues donating, but overall it went really well.”

*“I was a little scared because I saw everyone else like passing out and freaking out.”  
- Nadia Hosny*

Before the school year ends, the blood drive will come again, and donors will continue saving more lives.

# Green Club collects plastic bags and TReX rewards

By Caroline Welfare

**Every year, this school crushes other schools in the Trex recycling competition. In return, we get eternal glory for a year, and a bench made from recycled plastic. And the Green Club is up front each year to collect the Trex.**

Green Club is headed up by science teacher Mistie Dickenson, affectionately known by the homophone “Ms. D.” and President Jackson Parker ‘24 in room 19.

“Green Club doesn’t meet often because everyone knows what to do and I don’t have to tell them,” Ms. D said. Members of Green Club get an email if it is their week to pick up and then lug bags of plastic across campus.

What makes it difficult is that we will get a build up of Trex and then we can’t finish the job during lunch, members say.

The piles of piles of Trex that accumulate are transported in giant gray bags across campus to the prep room in Room 19 during lunch.

“If there is a lot of Trex, I’ll get someone with a car to get it for me,” Ms. D. reveals. “And when the prep room is full, I’ll drive the bags to Kroger, where they’ll send them to the Trex place.”

Sometimes,

however, something will be in the Trex bags that can’t be processed. “There will be food in one bag and I’ll have to throw it all out because I can’t know how much is actually in there,” Ms. D.

The only plastics Trex can use are film plastics, and despite bubble wrap being a plastic film, it takes up so much space that it is often left out of the Trex collection bags. Any



**LEFT OUT:** The overflow of Trex in the Willis Hall foyer. This is what the Trex stations around school look like. Above, a close-up of a non-Trex item -- unpopped bubble wrap in the Ellis Hall entrance Nov. 15. Photos by Caroline Welfare

bag that has a non-approved object in it has to be thrown out because people can’t tell how much of the non-Trex is in the bag.

“We know where to send people depending on the emails we get from the offices. But sometimes they don’t email us and we have to lug a mountain of Trex across campus.” Ms. D. shares.

On a good day, Green Club members can easily manage the

piles with one or two bags. On a bad day, upwards of six bags could be used and still have Trex left over.

Members of Green Club do not get Community Service hours for their work, and simply do it because they know it will help others around them. This is why Green Club is among the greatest, unsung clubs at NCS.

**HSNG:** Dami Bankole leads a Help Save the Next Girl meeting at lunch on Dec. 1. Photo by Aadeetri Pandey

# Willis Hall continues to Help Save the Next Girl

By Aadeetri Pandey

**Morgan Dana Harrington was a 20-year-old girl, Virginia Tech student, when she was abducted and murdered in 2009.**

Help Save the Next Girl is a national non-profit organization that formed in honor of Harrington. Its main purpose is to alert campuses of predators and keep young women safe from predatory behavior. They also work with law enforcement and help the victims’ families.

The North Cross Help Save the Next Girl club meets every other Friday. The club goes over prompts and current events. The club president, Dami Bankole ‘24, comes up with the prompts herself and discusses them with the club mem-

bers. She goes over a plethora of topics like self defense, healthy relationships, current events.

“I like that we’ve covered self defense,” said Catherine Ferguson ‘26. “That one was good.”

This year the club went to the middle school to discuss healthy relationships. Their goal was to inform the girls and make them think about their relationships with other people.

“I think the best thing that we’ve done so far this school year,” Middle and Upper School Counselor Sara Cocowitch said, “was the presentation to the Middle School students about healthy relationships.”

Some of the middle school girls later talked to Cocowitch about friendships after the presentation.



# Suits, ties, dresses, Oxfords and heels!

By Lauren Boone

The highly anticipated Homecoming dance usually inspires students to dress up for a night in October. Formal attire varies for each student; although most guys wear the same button up shirt and pants, girls choose their own unique dress. Catherine Ferguson '26 said, "I picked out a dress first from the online store Revolve. It was black, covered in rhinestones and asymmetrical on the shoulder. For jewelry I wore my favorite Cartier bracelet and my dainty Enewton bracelet. My Prada bag was black to match my black heels. My date got me a pink and white rose corsage surrounded by baby's breath flowers. I got him a white rose boutonniere."

For those who have dates, matching colors of their dresses, ties or bowties is expected. Dressing for Homecoming depends on the person. Some dress down, and wear tennis shoes, but some dress up and wear heels or Oxfords. Girls typically change into slippers prior to stepping on the dance floor for comfort. Guys often wear preppy white, blue, pink or plaid button up shirts. They pair them with colored ties or bowties. Some wear khakis and some wear slacks. Girls' dresses vary from what color they are and what style from whatever store they like, whether online or in-store. Senior girls often wear white dresses.

"I wanted to wear a lighter suit this year and have a darker tie to match my date's dress. It contrasted with my light suit. It was one of my favorites I've ever worn, and I got it from Suit City. I think it was around \$299," said Ethan Grigas '26. His date wore a black dress with a pink bow.

The week before the Homecoming dance is one of the most fun and important weeks of the school year. Spirit week is full of events, dressing up, games and celebrations. It began with Western attire for Monday, "Barbieheimer" day for Tuesday, Jersey day for Wednesday, Top Gun theme for Thursday and Roman Empire day for Friday. Students competed in a costume com-

petition at break. Following the first few days of the memorable week, Students came together to put on the Powderpuff game, recognize the Homecoming Court at a soccer instead of football game, and ended the week with the Homecoming dance on Saturday.

"Once I entered the room, I saw everyone jumping and the floor shaking," said Carter Levan '27. "I got so excited. I jumped with them too. For my first Homecoming, everything was amazing overall. The week was so much fun, and I loved dressing up."

*"For my first Homecoming, everything was amazing overall. The week was so much fun, and I loved dressing up."*



Carter Levan '27, Walker Reel '27 and Catherine Ferguson '26 look tough at the dance. Photo by Sarah Sledd



STYLE COUNCIL: Ethan Grigas '27, Brandon Carey '27, Carter Krzeminski '26, Tilden Ayers '26.

# Reflecting on the impact of Taylor Swift Eras

By mia starr

My generation has listened to many artists, although none as much as we have streamed Taylor Swift.

Swift has had as many as eight billion streams just for one song called "Lover". All of her music hits the top streamed or most listened to in just a week of a new song or album being dropped.

Her career started when she was just 12 years old with a guitar and a dream. She later made that dream into a reality with her first album, which got 900 million streams. It was very different from her current music, because she used to sing in a country style.

Taylor Swift was from another state? Well yes, she was born and raised in Pennsylvania before the family moved to Tennessee. But, no. Swift moved to Hendersonville, Tennessee early, where she developed a strong country accent that began to fade during the release of her many other albums.

Swift is a 12-Grammy winner including three album-of-the-year records.

More importantly, Swift is a big part of many young girls' childhoods all over the world. Her music has helped many children not only girls. You would be shocked to know how men do enjoy listening to her music as well.

Not only do we stream her music, we also go to see her live in concert. I went to see her in Pittsburgh.

From a survey we took on Nov. 3 (see p. 12) you can see that of 91 kids who answered the survey, 11 percent had seen Taylor Swift in concert. Some people who had seen her in concert spent over a \$1000 just to make this happen. Not everyone can afford her concerts or her merchandise or even like her enough to purchase her music.

Swift is so worldwide she has come out with shows and movies just to describe her life, like the Eras Tour show, which can still be seen in some theaters. Her Reputation show along with a Folklore show were based on some of the names of her albums she has created. In the movie she made about "The Eras Tour" she performs songs from all of her albums and the different eras they represent.

Many may be thinking "why would we go see a movie about Taylor Swift?" Only 12 percent of students reported that they saw the movie.

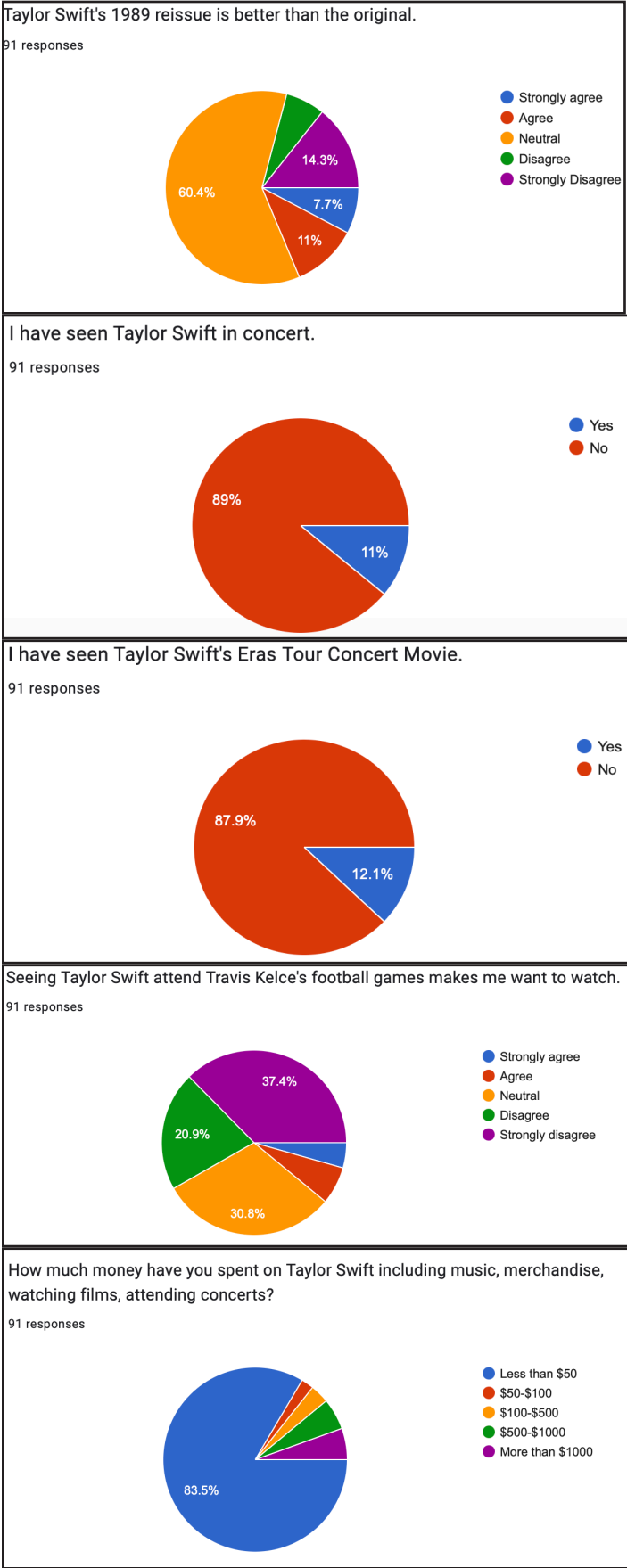
*Swift is a big part of many young girls' childhoods all over the world.*



## Alum gets gig taking photos of Taylor Swift in concert

All Taylor Swift photos taken by Ryan Hunt '14 on May 12 in Philadelphia. "So, I had a photo credential for the first 3 songs per usual, photographing for an online music publication in London I reached out to prior to the concert and they got me credentialed. However, after the 3 songs I exited the venue (as they make you do) and put my gear in my car, and brought back one of my cameras in the arena and security let me in somehow." Ryan Hunt '14 See more of Ryan's photos at wiillishallherald.org or <http://ryanhuntphoto.com>





Survey conducted by email on Nov. 2 using Google Forms.

# After seeing Taylor twice, I'm hoping to see more of Swift and Kelce

By Nola Daninger

Taylor Swift has had many relationships in the past. Taylor is unfortunately “known” for the relationships that have not lasted. One of her songs even has the lyrics

“I go on too many dates/  
But I can't make them stay/  
At least that's what people say.”

This is from the song Shake It Off which is about ignoring the haters to and just keep dancing.

Putting this into account, fans of Taylor are very invested in her relationships... so are haters. Taylor is dating Travis Kelce. I think they are very cute. He makes friendship bracelets for her concerts, and she wears a bracelet with his football number on it. Although this is my opinion, it is a very controversial topic. A lot of people are saying that Taylor will “break his heart” and that it won't last because of her past relationships. For some reason, I think this relationship might be different. Their love seems genuine and both of them are putting a lot of work in to ensure that the relationship will last. A lot of people are also saying they are taking it too slow, but I think that is a good thing. I believe that the faster you take things, the faster the relationship will end.

Although the only thing I am worried about is how overly obsessed everyone is. I get it if you want to be kept in the loop of Taylor Swift's relationships, but the constant pictures and narration of her life is kind of extra. I hope the couple doesn't let any fake rumors or rude comments get to them. Although knowing everything about Taylor, it takes a lot to get to her, so I think she will be fine... and that maybe she and Kelce will last.

Is that Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce?! Lydia Horner '25 and Nikheel Sherrigar '26 show off their matching Chiefs' jerseys for spirit week. Wanting to add something unique to her outfit, Lydia added the name swift on the back of her jersey in honor of the viral attention of Swift and Kelce's relationship. It's clear their outfits will never go “Out of Style.” Photo by S. Sledd



# New field hockey coach brings new team success

Field hockey underwent changes, a first-year varsity team, a new coach, and even new teammates.

By Maeve Parker

**“Huddle up, everyone!” Coach Andrea Carter yells from the sideline at one of the last practices with the girls field hockey team.**

Their season had been filled with a period of rebuilding and motivation while proving to everyone that they meant business.

For Coach Carter, it is her first year teaching the field hockey team, and she has created a team atmosphere where the girls are committed to taking themselves and the sport seriously.

“In a lot of ways field hockey has brought me real joy,” Coach Carter said with a smile. “I mean, I absolutely love the sport and it has taught me a lot about discipline, teamwork, and learning how to count on other people while being accountable to other people too.”

Although this is Coach Carter’s first year as the NCS field hockey coach, she comes from a lot of experience.

“I started coaching hockey when I was 15,” she said. “I started coach-

ing at summer camps and continued to become involved through Youth Hockey programs in the city I grew up in.”

As this year’s season has progressed, the team’s hard work and discipline in response to the coaching has shown due to their final record of 6-3 in their conference games.

For a team to learn and grow they must endure losses in order to have a starting point of progression. Coach Carter believes that “you learn something in every single loss” and so throughout the season she helped use these losses to motivate the team onto better things.

One loss that sticks out to her as the “turning point of the season” is the team’s 5-1 loss against EC Glass at the very beginning of their season. Coach Carter looks back on the loss.

“I remember sitting in a circle after the game, and I saw all of the players’ faces,” Carter paused and said, “and



**COACH CARTER:** Coach Andrea Carter, alongside Asst. Coach Lisa Barrera-Phillips stares intensely as she watches her team line up for a corner shot in their game against Covenant at home on Sept. 11. This was the team’s second game against Covenant, and they were determined to make a comeback following their previous loss but fell to the BRAC champions. Photo by Eason Zhou

I could tell in that moment as we all looked around that we realized, we are a better team than this, we can work hard and win.”

And that is just what the team did.

*“We just dug really deep, and that’s what high level teams do.”*  
- Coach Andrea Carter

After weeks of preparation and hard work, when the time came to face EC Glass again, the girls were confident and ready. They

went on to win the game 5-2, shocking EC Glass.

“We controlled the game from beginning to end,” Coach Carter said. “It was a clear win, and nobody was expecting it.”

After this point, the season continued in a new direction, a winning direction. Coach Carter recalls the game against VES at the end of the season as the team’s best account of their skills. The game went into overtime, and was played as a sudden death in which the Raiders came out victorious with a final score of 3-2.

“We just dug really deep,” Coach Carter said. “And that’s what high level teams do. And we did that.”

As a whole her coaching experience and skills have become obvious when seeing the final result of the season compared to years prior. The

team had a remarkable season, and ended it by traveling to Covenant School to play in the conference championship for the first time in seven years! Although the team lost to Covenant in a well-fought game, one important member still rode home with a very special plaque.

After the game, both teams gathered around the field as the athletic director of Covenant had an important announcement to make . . . Andrea Carter was named the 2023 Conference Coach of the Year! The team heard their coach’s name from the microphone, and they all immediately shrieked in excitement and ran to her side, cheering.

For Coach Carter this moment was more than an individual award but a group effort.

“I’m very flattered, but I think it speaks more to the people that I’m surrounded with,” Carter said. “I have fantastic coaches with me and the team actually makes it really easy to coach. It’s a fantastic willing team.” Despite such a remarkable season, the NCS girls field hockey team is not even close to being finished. With the help of Coach Carter and their other coaches, this first-year varsity team has proven that they are competitors who are looking to go the distance.



**TEAMMATES:** Lucy Paige Ellett '26, Emma Votta '26, Winni Ferguson '26, Fiona Parnell '26, and Sophia Camp '27 walk off of the field in sync following their game against Covenant on Sept. 11. Photo by Eason Zhou

# Jadyn Rhodes’ busy fall of volleyball, DeHart, music



By Nola Daninger and Malaiah Purcell

**Peyton Greer ‘27 is one of the many girls on the volleyball team who is friends with Jadyn. She and Jadyn grew “very close” the entire season and helped each other elevate their volleyball skills. Especially when they mess up.**

“I would say she’s one of the most positive people on the court,” Greer said, “and always has a really good attitude and always brings a laugh to the team.”

Greer continued to praise Jadyn.

“I love how every time she messes up in practice she would say ‘Oh my gosh,’ and laugh it off,” Greer said. “And everytime we’d laugh about it together and it wouldn’t be as upsetting anymore.”

Another person who loved Jadyn and valued her commitment is Varsity Volleyball Coach, Coach Gaston. “Jadyn is a very hard worker,” Coach Gaston said. “She has a lot of positive energy and a great attitude”

Coach Gaston loved coaching Jadyn and mentioned that she was extremely coachable, which **COACHES AWARD:** Jadyn Rhodes ‘24 hits a serve on Senior Night. Photo by Sarah Sledd

made her job easier and more fun. It I might explain why Coach Gaston gave Jadyn the Coaches Award. “Yes, she is very coachable. She asked a lot of really good questions.”

Volleyball is not the only thing Jadyn has a passion for, she also loves singing! Many times, Jadyn sang the national anthem before a varsity game. “I loved when she would sing the national anthem before the game,” Coach Gaston said, “because she always sounded so good.”

Since Jadyn is a wonderful singer and dancer, she also loves participating in musicals. Jadyn was in a musical called Matilda, which brought her voice out too.

On top of everything Jadyn excels in, she is also very good with kids. Jadyn always helped younger players on the volleyball team and never failed to make someone smile. An example of Jadyn being a particularly good role model was when Mr. Eubanks daughter, Zoey, would visit the girls in the gym.

“I also loved how she is with Zoey, Mr. Eubanks’ daughter,” Gaston said, “like when she would have her stretch with us. It was really sweet to see her be like a mentor to her.”

# Max Homa rolls through the PGA tour with putts

By William Hendrickson

Golf is a game of precision and accuracy. The golfer with the least amount of mistakes wins. When lining up to a putt you must think about the degrees of slope and the pace you need to put on the ball.

Someone who is a great putter is Max Homa, currently the sixth best Strokes Gained putter on the PGA tour. Putting is one of his best stats, and putting is the most important thing for golf. After improving his putting Homa has gained more wins this year. He has won the Fortinet Championship and the Farmers Insurance Open this year alone.

Homa has become a better putter because of the aim-point system. The aim point system involves looking at the degrees of loft in the green and using your fingers to locate the aim point. Each finger represents 1-2 degrees of loft. During

the process you also use your feet to figure out which direction the slope is going. Homa is a great user of the aim point system.

Golfing isn’t just putting there is also chipping, irons, and woods. Driving is also a very important skill in golf. Max isn’t the best on tour for strokes gained off the tee. He is currently ranked 40th on tour. This isn’t his best stat but it is good enough for him to not worry about it. His driving accuracy is concerning. He is 83rd in driving accuracy which is a problem. If his driving accuracy keeps getting

worse than this will make it harder for him to score lower.

Strokes gained approach to the green. Max is 26th on tour right now which is a very important stat. This stat shows how consistently the player lands on the green on their approach shot. Max is a very good ball striker which is key for shooting low scores. Like every golfer Max Homa has a pre routine before every shot he takes. He has a different routine for each club.

Every time he hits an iron or a driver he walks back and aligns the club shaft with his target, waits a

couple seconds then goes to hit his shot. Max does this everytime to calm his nerves and make him relaxed. His putting routine is different. Max and his caddie study the green while the other competitor is putting. Max’s caddie Joe Griner uses a greens book to look at the slope in the green. Max looks at this and feels the slope with his feet. After doing this he knows which way the slope is going. Then Max lines the putter to where he wants the put to go and then puts the ball. All of these things are nothing without his mental game. Being mentally strong is the most important thing in golf. Max doesn’t do this by himself though, he has a mental coach. Every professional golfer has a mental coach. Before getting on tour Max did not have the best temper on the golf course. This happens to every golfer. But Max turned his head around and fixed his mental game. Ever since this he has grown his game.

*“In all seriousness, every-one who has played the game of golf, especially if they do it professionally, is always one one bad swing away from considering retirement. They’re also one swing away from thinking they can win the Masters. We’re a wildly psychotic bunch.”*  
-- Max Homa

## Kylie Schaefer '23 shares her experiences playing Div. III tennis at Christopher Newport

Three-sport star athlete chose to play the game both of her parents played in college.

By Anne Bradley Cullen

**Making the transition from high school to collegiate tennis has gone surprisingly well for Kylie Schaefer '23, who recently broke into the No. 6 singles position for the Captains.**

A lot of times, college students struggle learning how to balance academics, athletics, and social life.

"It surprisingly wasn't hard to adjust to college life at all, and I think that's just my own opinion," Kylie said. "It's been so much fun and I've been able to juggle tennis, academics, and social life really well."

Schaefer attended North Cross from kindergarten until she graduated last spring, and never really thought she would play tennis at a collegiate level. She did travel soccer for many years growing up which was considered her main sport,

However, she always was on the tennis team all throughout middle school and high school. By the time she was a junior, she decided to explore playing tennis in college and went on to visit many different schools to find what was best for her.

Former girls varsity tennis coach Amy Bagliani remembers Schaefer as the captain who helped the team win titles.

"Kylie is a great player, she is also a great leader. We won two conference tournaments while she was on the team and she won a conference

singles title."

She ended up choosing to attend CNU.

"I had a drive by the campus and I immediately felt comfortable," she said. "It was just the right size, great location, and it's really pretty. When I decided to look more into it I realized just how much potential CNU had. All the sports teams are amazing and they win a lot, and the extracurriculars are so much fun. I love the classes and my professors, and the people here are wonderful and awesome!"

When asked about her experience so far of playing tennis at CNU she said "Playing at CNU has been one of the greatest opportunities and experiences of my life," Schaefer said. Throughout high school I never thought I would be able to continue my athletic career in tennis at the collegiate level, but it has been wonderful so far. I've gotten super close to my teammates and we are all a big happy family and everyone

gets along great."

So far in the preseason tournaments, Kylie has won a match and lost a match at the No. 6 position in singles. She also began playing No. 3 doubles.

Kylie's biggest advice for an aspiring college athlete is, "to

love the game because college tennis is so much different than high school. It is important to keep loving the sport you play, regardless of the results in matches or even in



**CAPTAIN STYLE:** This is one of the official tennis photos for CNU's tennis webpage. Courtesy of Kylie Schaefer

practice," she said.

"I also recommend listening to your upper class men and respecting them and your coach," she said. "They have been in the same situation as you and have much more experience under their belt and it's super important that you stay a good listener and to want to get better and focus on improving your game."

### Kylie's Schedule:

**Tennis Practice:**  
Monday-Saturday  
12:30 to 3

**Weight Training:**  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
8-9 a.m.

## Fall in the lives of two seniors on tennis team, SCA, Homecoming Court, Media Club, Compass

### Selden Burns '23 shares her experience of being involved



**CAMPUS ROYALTY:** Selden Burns waves to students as she rides along the Homecoming Parade route. Likewise, Cate Cook enjoys the same experience. Photos by Blake Shaner

By Anne Bradley Cullen

**Selden Burns '24 is more involved than ever to make her senior year the best it can be.**

Selden has been on the varsity tennis team and soccer team for all four years of high school.

She is always there to cheer on her teammates and bring great spirit to the team. Selden loved tennis.

"I enjoy tennis much more [than soccer]," Selden said, "because I am a lot better at it."

The highlight was a win at No. 2

doubles this season. Burns played at No. 4, 5 and 6 singles.

Along with sports, Selden is also involved in several clubs such as: Help Save the Next Girl, SCA, Green club, Yearbook and Media club. She is the vice president of help save the next girl and is also the treasurer of sca. She was on Homecoming Court her junior and senior year, and when asked what she enjoyed about it she said, "decorating my car to ride in during the parade."

Next year, Selden plans to attend Wake Forest University.



## Cook keeps family traditions

### No. 2 tennis player earned Coaches Award

By Lauren Boone

**Cate Cook '24 played an important role as No. 2 singles and doubles on the girls' tennis team, and as a third-generation member of North Cross, she keeps the Cook family tradition alive and well.**

On the tennis team for five of her nine years, she earned five varsity letters and was 2nd Team All-Conference the last two years.

In addition to tennis, Cook plays the family sport of soccer.

Beyond sports, she is the secretary of the senior class and has contributed to Media Club, Model UN and Help Save the Next Girl. She has been on Homecoming Court for the past three years (I need to check this fact) The Cook family is considered legendary, because her grandfather taught here for 44 years and her father, mother, uncle, all aunt all

graduated. After Cate, her brother Clay '27 carries on involvement in the school. Now her uncle Ryan '93 is currently teaching world history in the middle school. Cook and her mother coincidentally played No. 4 for the tennis teams, although Cate played as No. 3 for her senior year.

"I have been playing tennis for seven years now. I am inspired by my mother and John Barker, my coach at Hunting Hills Country Club," Cook said, "and of course my doubles partners and teammates, Anne Bradley Cullen '26 and Anna Ciccozzi '26."

Cook is a Global Studies scholar and next year she is planning to attend a four-year college, hopefully somewhere in South Carolina. Cook says she wants to try intramural tennis while she is in college, but doesn't hope to play on her school's tennis team competitively.

# My sailing journey

Sailing camp led me to racing.

By Gracie Munro

In 2019 I was told that I would be attending a one-week camp in North Carolina centered around sailing. The first thought I had was one of fear. I had never sailed before, and wasn't quite sure if I wanted to find out what my mom was getting me into. I later found out, however, that I would be staying in a lake house with one of my best friends named Wilson. I was around 10 at the time, and still a little bit skeptical of this seven-day agony that I was being forced to endure.

After I was finally dragged into the car, the long ride began. Arriving late that night, all I remember was brushing my teeth and going to bed on the top bunk in my new room for the week. The first morning was filled with a lot of registration, frantic typing, and ushering around kids of various ages. Me and my friend were dropped off on the beach of the lake we were sailing on, with a life vest each and no clue what we were supposed to be doing. The first three days were mainly spent teaching our group how to rig out boats, the Optis, small but heavy bathtub shaped boats with one sail and a rudder, perfect for a young kid to operate.

Within the first few minutes of the morning still with no idea what we were doing, we were pushed off of the shore into the daunting span of Lake Norman. Sails flapping into the wind and spinning in circles, we

spent the first half of the day trying to get some 30 kids out onto the water. We played some games, and before we knew it, it was the end of the first day. The rest of the week was spent on teaching rigging, points of sail, and basic racing procedures.

Then came Friday. Kids of all ages and levels in various sailboats lined up next to the race committee boat (meanwhile, the Optis tried their best to follow, but mainly ended up drifting sideways and hitting each other, not on the starting line whatsoever.) The three minute start sped by, and overwhelmed by the sudden change in wind, I started to panic. My sail was flapping around, nearly cracking into the side of my head while I tried to steer straight, holding onto my mainsheet with all of my strength. I, of course, finished in the back half of the fleet with my friend lagging behind me. Coming

back to the shore and promptly collapsing on the beach, I got a sort of good feeling inside of me.

Hey, I survived! Maybe I didn't win, but I made it back with no casualties!

The small sense of pride stemmed into an abundant interest for sailing. In the following

months, I competed with my friend in the Labor Day Regatta. Being the only two Optis on the course, we once again finished in the tail end of the group of the much older and more experienced teens and adults.

After one more year of Optis and approaching the age of twelve, Wilson and I decided to switch to the much more appealing O'pen Bics.

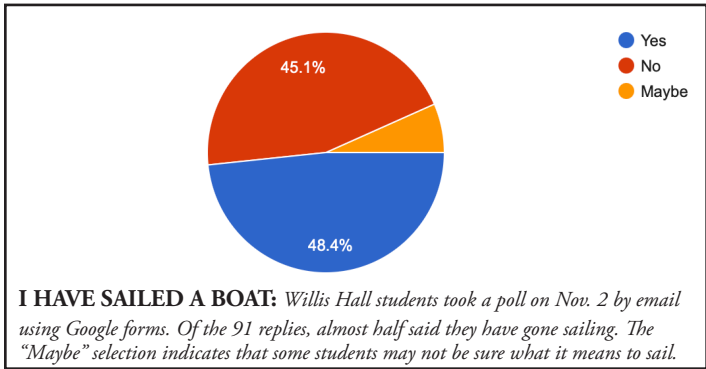


**SETTING SAIL:** This picture is from the last day of camp in 2019. Wilson and I are sitting on the side of my sailboat after the first time we rigged it by ourselves. The events of the week were just the beginning of our sailing adventures in the years to come. Photo by Mr. Munro

These with their sleek, open, single-sailed design proved to be much more effective at moving quickly over the water than the very cumbersome and heavy Optis. Less steps to rig and more fun to sail, the O'pen Bics were a popular choice among campers in the 2022 year. More races, some improvement, and a lot of fun came out of that season.

This year at the age of 14, we once again decided to change our boat. A 420 (C-420) is a long, two person boat with two sails. The crew controls the jib, and warns the skipper of upcoming wind and obstacles.

Wilson was my crew, leaving me to be the skipper. The skipper controls the tiller which is used to steer, and the mainsail (the big one) which is used for general locomotion. This was by far the most fun I have had in any boat, because being with someone else on the water for hours at a time can cure boredom, especially if you bring a water gun to shoot them with. Sailing has been a very prominent and important factor in most of my principal interests at this point in my life, and will continue to be one for as long as I am improving and learning new sailing skills.



# My never ending childhood love for horses

By Alexandra Isabelle Stone

I have always had a deep love for horses. Ever since I was younger I've always wanted one. I remember my very first time being on one. I was around the age of four. My family took me to a place in Bluefield, West Virginia, that did trail rides and that's how I was able to get on a horse.

I remember when we had to go because the trail ride was done, and they were starting to take me off. I started to cry.

I remember the people at the trail ride saying that it was my horse, and my small little kid brain thought "Oh, this means I get to keep the horse." So when they went to take me off I was so sad because I knew I wasn't going to keep it.

Because of my love for horses I started taking horseback riding lessons in Florida. I took horseback riding lessons there for about two years before I moved to Virginia. I was mostly taught how to trot and turn the horse. Trotting means to make the horse go at a slow run, kind of like skipping. But, I was also taught other things like how to groom the horse, how to saddle it up, and how to bathe horses.

During my time learning how to trot and turn, I developed my favorite horses. Their names are Little Prince and Sparkle. Little Prince was a little black horse and Sparkle was an old white horse. Even though Little Prince is one of my favorites I spent a lot more time with Sparkle. I also spent summer camp there in Florida, which mostly consisted of playing games, grooming the horses, and making little arts and crafts. This was years ago when I lived in Florida. Me and



**MY HORSE NAME:** This, but it helps. Photo by

sparkle had become somewhat like a team which is why she is one of my favorites. Even though I want to believe that sparkle is still alive today, when I had left Florida to move to Virginia Sparkle was a really old horse and I think it's safe to say she is probably dead. Though none the less I still miss her and think about her every now and then.

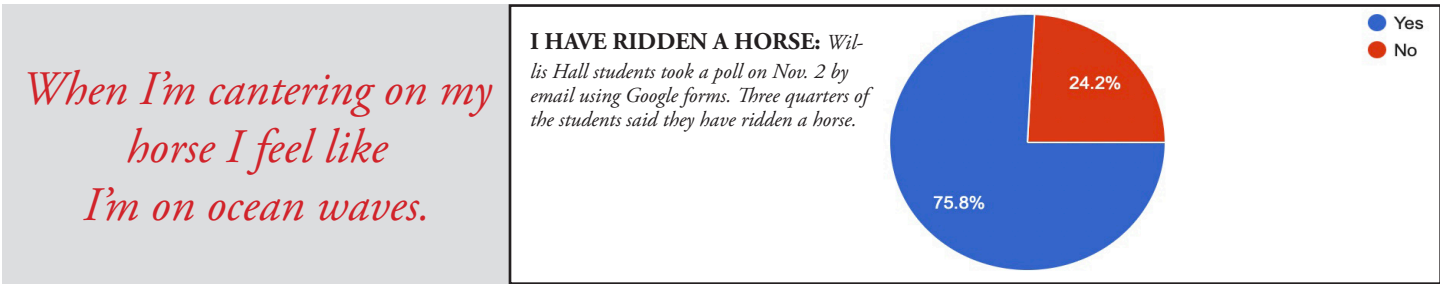
I had summer camp there with my friends, and my family came along when I had my birthday there one year. Eventually I moved to Virginia and it was a little while before I went back into horseback riding. I can also spend summer camp there too. At my new horse

back riding place I am now learning to canter, which means a slow run. I like cantering a lot better than trotting, because when trotting it's really tiring and it's like an actual workout.

I have to always make sure I drink a lot of water whether I want to or not. If I don't I will feel like passing out. When I am cantering, it's a little bit scary but also fun at the same time. On one hand I'm hanging on for dear life and on the other it feels like riding ocean waves.

Summer camp at my new horseback riding place is kind of like the one in Florida except we do a lot more here. They have us do a bunch

of fun activities, which are grooming the horses, saddling them up, arts and crafts, and riding bareback. Riding bareback on a horse is just riding a horse without a saddle, and because of this I truly am always hanging on for dear life. At the end of each week we always do this fun thing where we dress up the horses in some sort of theme, like Toy Story for example: It's just you and your group dressing up the horse and yourselves to look like the Toy Story characters. I usually only stay there for a week or two before I go back to enjoying summertime.



# Haskins helps soccer get to state semifinals



**SO LONG SENIORS:** Twelve seniors are honored earlier in the season. No. 17 Didi Dibetle was named MVP and earned 2nd-Team All-State. No. 23 Blake Shaner, won the Coaches Award. Maddox Haskins is No. 12. Photo by S. Sledd

By Liam Rippel  
**M**addox Haskins ‘24 takes part in a variety of activities: Green Club, Media Club, various AP courses, and varsity soccer, not to mention playing high level travel hockey for a team from Raleigh.

Maddox was a crucial member of the soccer team. Maddox is the epitome of a team player, unselfish, always looking to make a play for the good of the team, rather than filling

up the stat sheet, or performing a flashy move to show-off his skill. This year he represented the team as a captain. Although there was no surprise when Maddox was named as a captain, he was grateful for the opportunity. Maddox was the only senior who played all five years.

Over the last three years, Maddox started nearly every game, missing only for the occasional weekend hockey tournaments, traveling up and down the east coast. Although

Maddox has always been a great player, he left no doubt in anyone’s minds this year as he made the All-Conference 1st team, being one of the only two players on the team who can boast the accomplishment.

However, Maddox’s greatest accomplishment is separate from his athletics or academics. In his sophomore year, he was diagnosed with cancer in his mouth, causing him to undergo surgery that removed his teeth and required some facial

reconstruction done. Although this was horrible, Maddox didn’t let it get in the way of his life. One admirable thing about Maddox was that he expected nobody’s sympathy. He did not want to be treated differently due to what happened. He had no intention of letting this stop him nor receiving special attention.

Maddox is a person that many consider a great friend, approaching life with a beaming smile and a can-do attitude.

## The need for speed: Off-season training gets overlooked by most people

By Jacob Johnson

**On Your Marks, Get Set, BANG!**

Track and field was created in 776 BC by the people of ancient Greece. The sport has had many records set and broken time and time again. From superstars from huge backgrounds like Bruce Jenner, now Caitlyn Jenner, all the way to people from almost nothing like Usian Bolt and Jesse Owens. No matter where you come from you will not be considered great unless you work and train for success. “The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in determination,” the fastest man alive , Usain Bolt, said.

As the channels that aired track increased, so did the popularity of the sport in general. After gaining even more superstars that the younger audience loves, like Usain Bolt and Noah Lyles, even more people were trying to go to live meets, watching it on TV, and even buying merchandise. For instance, eight time gold medalist, Usain Bolt, has a net worth of \$90 million off of his endorsements with companies such as Gatorade and Visa. Bolt also has a few businesses of his own such as Electric scooter firm, Bolt Mobility, and a restaurant chain, Tracks & Records, which bring in around \$10 million a year.

*“The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in determination.”  
-Usain Bolt*

Many student-athletes use track as a sport for conditioning either over the off-season or speed training in their other sport season. While others, like myself, want to put all their effort and passion into track and their event.

A huge part of being a great runner in general is staying in shape. For training outside of track practice, and even outside of the season, I put conditioning over everything. This is how your body gets used to the fast break over longer periods of time than it’s used to. I do this by running my event, the 400 meter, at a slower pace but more reps. For instance, when I went to Roanoke College to begin my preseason training I did four slower pace 400 meter runs and a 200 meter sprint with an altitude mask. An altitude mask restricts the amount of air you can get into your lungs which simulates you running at a higher altitude such as places in Denver. These exercises help me get prepared for a faster pace in this season’s 400 meter races.

I put my whole off-season time into staying in

condition for the 400-meter dash and keeping my leg strength and technique up for the long jump. The only problem with training for running and jumping constantly is it causes some terrible knee pain for some. For people like me, track is like therapy.

Most of the time the runners in the race only see the track and the people they need to catch and hawk down. Hawk down is a term brought into track that means to pass the person who has a decent sized lead on the runner. The only problem with focusing on the other racers also is if one passes you, you begin to slow down and lose track of what’s at task and you sort of lose hope.

Track is one of the hardest sports to excel in, and this is because you have to be strong in all aspects of your event. If you have a bad start out of the blocks keeping pace with the other runners in your heat, and if you have a bad finishing pace at the end everyone will come back and pass you. Also, if you’re not in condition you might as well not even run your race. This all proves to do anything that will catch peoples eyes you’ll need to be strong in all aspects of your event.

I will continue to write more and probably better articles on the great topic of track and field in the future.

# CHANEY REPEATS AS CHAMP

## Watch out for 5k Kerrigan

By Anna Ciccozzi

**GO KERRIGAN! GOO! Yell her teammates as they cheer her on to the finish line.**

Kerrigan Chaney ‘25 has been running cross country since sixth grade, and since that time she has continued to break her personal records time and time again. Being ranked No. 6 in the state, 100th in the country, and having a 5K PR of 17:30:00 (NCS record), it is no surprise that Kerrigan is passionate about running and continuing to reach her goals of improvement.

“I feel like I can always get better,” said Chaney when asked about how she stays motivated to run.

Win after win, Kerrigan is recognized by the North Cross community as a dedicated and hard-working athlete. Not only can others admire her success, but younger teammates can look to her example.

“It’s really inspiring to see a girl that is good at running” said Ainsley Myles ‘24. “She’s just like a really nice person. She’s really humble and it’s just a great experience running with her.”

This November, Kerrigan won first place in the 5K for the VISAA Cross Country State Championships with a time of 19:12:35. But gearing up for this big win, things did not go as planned for Kerrigan. First, the temperature was really high that day and was much hotter than all the runners expected. Second, Kerrigan herself was not feeling her best leading up to the race.

“I felt pretty awful because I’m out of shape because I was sick for two weeks,” said Chaney.

But with being a successful and high performance athlete comes high expectations and pressure to succeed. For Kerrigan, however, this does not bother her and she just focuses on doing her best. Going into competitions, Kerrigan tries to keep a positive mindset, free of nerves.

“I used to get really nervous, but now I don’t,” said Chaney. “I just kind of tell myself like, ‘You know how to run this. You’ve done it before. Just go out there and do your best.’”

According to her head coach, Ed Dickenson, the key to Kerrigan’s success stems from two things. First, “She’s just blessed with a great cardiovascular system,” said Dickenson, and the second comes from her dedication and training.

“She has been training very consistently now since she was in sixth grade training and racing multiple seasons,” said Dickenson, “to the point where form has just grown and grown and grown to where she is now.”

Kerrigan is not the only runner in the Chaney



**ALL STATE:** Kerrigan Chaney ‘25 and Ainsley Myles ‘27 represented the Raiders by earning top-20 finishing times at the VISAA final meet, which qualified both for All-State honors. To the right are their times as posted on Milestat.com. Photo by Lauren Horner

family. Her mom was a track runner who did hurdles, and her brother, Finton Chaney ‘27, also is part of the state-champion boys team.

“My brother is really good at running,” said Chaney. “He’s really fast, and sometimes we run together.”

But along with running on the team or in her free time, some of Kerrigan’s favorite memories come from being with her teammates. Whether setting up unofficial practices to run together or talking between meet events, Kerrigan has grown a close bond with some of her fellow runners.

“I just love hanging out with the team outside of running,” said Chaney, “ike when we’re at Sheetz on the bus, or in our captains’ group chat where we play word games every single day.”

Although the cross country season might seem over for most, Kerrigan kept running -- at practice the next day and at regionals in Maryland on Nov. 25, only two days after Thanksgiving.

Now, she continues training for the indoor track season, where she will focus on the 800, 4x400 relay and mile events.

## STATE MEET TIMES

**1 Kerrigan Chaney 11 North Cross 19:12.35  
7 Ainsley Myles 9 North Cross 21:54.97**



*“I used to get really nervous, but now I don’t. I just kind of tell myself like, ‘You know how to run this. You’ve done it before. Just go out there and do your best.’”  
-- Kerrigan Chaney*

**WALL OF WINS:** A display in Kerrigan’s room holds medals, plaques and trophies she’s won throughout her running career. Photo by Kerrigan Chaney.

# BOYS XC GET 1ST STATE RINGS

By Jacob Johnson

After running a 16.43.00 at the MileStat Invitational on Oct. 14, breaking the school record for the 5k, Alex Dickenson '24 and the cross-country team felt a fire to bring home a new state championship.

As Alex and the rest of the team began to cross the finish line of their season, the coach's son wanted to finish strong.

"I would like our team to become state champions," he said. Nothing like speaking it into existence right? This championship team even surpassed the same team that they lost to the year prior, Trinity Christian School and the Covenant team who beat them in the BRAC championship this year.

To get to be a champion everyone has to carry themselves as such. Even the freshman cut times down drastically. Finton Chaney surpassed his previous best to finish second or third in most races. Paul Schueler who in 2021 ran a 23:15.40 in the 5000 meter, dropped to a 21:30.00. This is even after a season ending knee injury. This shows how committed not just the leaders of the team, but even roll players. These roleplayers all stepped up and gave a huge contribution to the now championship team. "He [Schueler] was a huge part of our team," Josh Miao said, "one of our leaders for sure."

Alex, who earned MVP honors this year, led his team into the cross-country state championship on Nov. 9. They took off to finish business.

"[Alex] was a great leader for the team and got third place," Miao said when asked about Dickenson's contribution to the state championship.

"We weren't sure just after the race was over until we got to the award ceremony," Josh said.

Even though they are a powerhouse of a team who performed great, Milestat didn't even have them predicted to win.

"On Milestat they were predicting results for the race and they predicted that we would finish third," Miao said.

Milestat, an site that shows the stats, ranks, and predictions for the runners in a meet, predicted NCS would finish behind The Covenant School, predicted runner-up to Trinity Christian School. Dylan White had to overcome a foot injury to



## STATE MEET TIMES, PLACES AND POINTS

3 Alex Dickenson	12 North Cross	17:36.40	3
5 Dylan White	12 North Cross	17:52.46	5
6 Finton Chaney	9 North Cross	17:54.64	6
11 Harry Anderson	11 North Cross	18:23.48	11
18 Konur Onufer	12 North Cross	19:04.93	17
NCS Points: 42			
Trinity Christian Points: 46			

finish second at states. Some were sick but still pushed through. Dylan, kept fit by spinning on the stationary bikes with Coach's wife, Mistie Dickenson, who leads spin after school.

How do they train to be a champions in the sport of cross country.

"We started our practices in June and that was just consistent running four or five mile [days] every week. But my dad put me on 40-mile weeks," Alex said when asked about training leading up to the season. "The whole team even would spin. We were in there reg-

ularly during the summer," Miao said. "It works out different muscles than when you are just running. It's a multi-year effort." This statement is supported by the fact that the team, a day after winning the state championship, was right back outside in the chilled, windy weather practicing just as if they had months to go in the season. Konur Onufer missed the main practice, but still did the workout after auditioning for the winter play. Onufer earned the Coaches Award.

"I believe that as a team we can be the first state champions in the school's history," said senior runner Dickenson said two days before making it come true.

**5 ALL-STATE:** Because the Raiders' top-five runners all finished in the top 20, they not only won the meet, but all five also earned All-State honors. Photo by John Chaney

# Kam rams through Blue Ridge defense to lead Raiders' repeat

By William Frederickson

**Burning Blue Ridge for 120 yards and two TDs in the state championship game, Kam Johnson '24 says football is fun because it is a contact sport that he learned from his older brothers.**

"I got into football because of my brothers, when they would go to work-out I would go with them." Kam said. Kam has looked up to his brothers in football.

Since Kam is a running back, he has to go through a different type of practice compared to everyone else.

"I have to be able to run, catch and block," he said. "I also take a lot of contact during practice."

# RAIDERS DOMINATE BARONS 35-7



**DIG PINK:** Senior captains Moritz Mittendorfer, Eason Zhou, Jerel "J2" Rhodes and Moritz Schmoranzner walk to centerfield for the pregame coin toss as captains. Zhou and Pitt commit "Schmo" helped pave the way for J2 to run for 725 yards and 10 TDs this season, including one. For breast cancer awareness, Zhou wears pink. He earned this season's Coaches Award after setting a school record for sacks with 14. Mittendorfer returned to play for the last two games, catching a 64-yard pass in the final game. Photo by CrunchMVP



**BREAKING ARM TACKLES:** At left, Kam Johnson '24 breaks the tackle of Blue Ridge player Taliq Montgomery. He ran for 120 yards and two TDs in the championship game. Photo by Blake Shaner  
**MVP:** At right, Jaziel Hart '26 leaps high to intercept a pass near the endzone that ended one of the Barons' few chances to score. He also scored the first TD against Blue Ridge to even the score. With six interceptions and eight TDs, Hart was named MVP of the team. Jase Rhodes '26 helps Hart prevent the completion. Photo by Jacob Johnson

*"I am mainly just communicating with 'my o-line to make breakaways"*  
-- Kam Johnson

Kam hoped to win the state championship again this year and it happened.

Asked how it feels being a senior on the team, he conveyed humility.

"It is new to me," he said, "and now I have a leadership role."

Since Kam is a senior he really had to cherish these last few games.

"I have really grown as a person and football player," he said, "since I started here at North Cross."

Kam scored 13 touchdowns this season. He talked about how he is able to



accomplish this.

"I watch a lot of film," Kam said, "and I look to see where the d-line is lining up." He led the team with 136 carries for 1223 yards for an average of 111 per game in 11 games this year. He explained what it takes to run use his offensive line to run through the opposing defense.

"I am mainly just communicating with my o-line to make breakaways," he said.

# RYAN HUNT PHOTOGRAPHY

North Cross School '14

PORTRAIT, SENIOR, WEDDING, SPORTS, AERIAL, VIDEO, AND MORE

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