

# The Indy Insider

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## Game On: Girls Flag Football Season 1 Underway



*Photo by Alex Le. For more Flag Football photos, see page 12*

*By Sinthe Tran,*

CCS has approved Girls Flag Football to be an official sport, and now, Independence has our own inaugural Girls Flag Football team!

When asked about goals for the girls and their games, Coach Nelson states, “Definitely a big goal is to win every single game, but other than that, I think the biggest goal is just to give everyone a chance to play. To do that, we all have to show up to practice everyday and get better.”

Tryouts for Girls Flag Football went extremely well, considering that many of the girls who turned up have been or are involved in other sports or participate in flag football teams outside of school. Due to this being the first year Independence held this sport, nobody was cut from the team during tryouts as Coach Nelson and Coach Baker wanted everyone to be involved without splitting them into JV and Varsity.

“As of now, the first year, we’re just one big varsity team. There will be no cuts this year because we want everyone to be

a part of this special moment. In the future, there will be a JV team, we just need to find the coaches for it,” Coach Nelson commented.

It might be a little difficult to differentiate Girls Flag Football from normal Football and maybe some other sports, here’s what Coach Nelson and the girls have to say about the differences.

“Definitely the aspect that it’s football and it’s non-contact. Part of the rules, there’s no blocking involved so it makes it hard on the offense to make plays where everything is solely on how good we can throw and catch.” Coach Nelson said, “And another thing, it’s 7 on 7, we don’t use the full football field, we cut down part of it.”

Every team has their strengths and weaknesses, including our Girls Flag Football team, but they should always work together towards improvement and these girls do exactly that!

“Their strength is that they’re relentless, resilient no matter what... The 1st or 2nd day of tryouts, that’s when Hurricane

Hillary was supposed to hit us and we actually got a little bit of rain, but the girls still came out during that... I give props for them coming out here being relentless and resilient,” Coach Nelson added on, “A weakness I would say, it’s just based on no experience because this is a new sport, not a lot of the girls know what the rules are or how to move like a football player, and so we’re all taking it from step one and building off from there.”

The Girls Flag Football team has their first game on September 13th against Notre Dame High School at Watson Park, come and support the new team simply by being there and cheering them on or by making a donation to their fundraiser on their Instagram!

“I’ve taken the liberty to do all the scheduling and I’ve scheduled 9 games so far,” said Coach Nelson, “they will all be in the months of September and October. Usually on weekdays, so these are Monday-Thursday games.”

## IHSCRUSH: entertaining or "stalkerish?"

*By Sinthe Tran*

Students are no strangers to this one account and its content, IHSCRUSH has undoubtedly secured its status as one of the most renowned Instagram accounts on our campus. Now the time has come to talk about the intentions behind this private yet entertaining confessions page.

IHSCRUSH is not only an account made for entertainment, gossip, and crushes but it also seems like the idea behind the account has turned more general as students have started sharing criticism and asking for advice through its anonymous confession system.

When asked about their thoughts and opinions on IHSCRUSH, senior Dhestinie (Ace) Secreto responded, “IHSCRUSH could be a good and bad thing, as some people can send really uncomfortable confessions, but could also find out things about their crush in a way. [I] personally think that IHSCRUSH confessions are kind of weird and stalkerish, but at the same time, I understand how people are scared to just confront the person the confession is about.”

The admin(s) were asked about what they believed was being achieved with the confessions and anonymity, they stated, “The account was originally created with

the intention for students to share their crushes/appreciation for other people. However, this idea has deviated into students

sharing whatever is on their mind from advice to criticism. Generally, [I] see this account as a space and voice for people to share their secrets (crushes, etc.) and receive advice.”

IHSCRUSH has been a big part of student gossip and life on campus, there are so many different opinions regarding the account and its confessions. Causing the narrowing down of the general opinion on the content harder than it seems to be.

“As a student, [I] personally don’t like it since it’s a place where a lot of drama originated from (e.g., CO 2024 shirt incident) and since it’s an anonymous source, a lot of weird and obvious bait about weird situations gets posted and it’s obvious some are posted just to gain attention so it’s frustrating to see students get worked up over things that shouldn’t have a light shone upon it,” senior Ysabel Cano shares, “I understand that IHSCRUSH is just for fun and games, but a lot of situations can be interpreted the wrong way which can turn into unnecessary drama.”

Now, if you’ve submitted confessions or

have taken a look at the form they use, there has always been a list called the “Articles of Confessions.” This shouldn’t come as a surprise because although the account itself is non-school affiliated, the admins need to set guidelines in place to make sure nothing is disrespectful, or harmful.

“The “Articles of Confessions” are general guidelines for what may be posted on our account. We try our best to abide by them, however it is a non school-affiliated account, so ultimately what gets posted is up to each admin’s discretion (which is listed under our amendments),” the admin(s) said.

So, students are probably wondering how the filtering works when it comes to abiding by the “Articles of Confessions” and basic guidelines. Considering how humor is very subjective, there are many different ways to interpret a confession through a screen.

“Typically we filter out confessions that are uncomfortable, extremely sexual, or off topic. It is somewhat hard to gauge if some confessions are jokes or not, but we try our best to make the correct judgment.” The admin(s) commented, “People may request confessions to be taken down too!”



# Maui Fires Devastate

By Jannissa Le

One of the most devastating wildfires in the US left towns in the island of Maui in ruins. Beginning in early August, the wildfires broke out in Maui, its rapid spread due to hurricane winds and its drought. On August 8th, a large wildfire started in the historic town of Lahaina and within a few days, the town completely burnt down. Videos show footage of residents fleeing the town, the town covered in fire and smoke. Some seeked refuge in the ocean.

“I am sad for the Hawaiian community, there has not been a lot of support from the government,” Ms. Roberts, a PE teacher, was born in Hawaii and has family there. However, she is not the only one with family in Hawaii.

“My relatives and family friends living in Maui are the ones being affected the most as a portion of them (the ones living in Lahaina) lost their homes and had to be relocated,” stated a student who wishes to remain anonymous.

“My parents often talked to me about Maui, especially Lahaina (where they would often go when they were free) and Wailuku (where I was born). They also knew a lot of the residents there and would often talk about them.”



The Aftereffect of the Maui Fires

Lahaina’s history dated back hundreds of years, being the capital of the Kingdom of Hawaii from 1820 to 1845. Many historic sites reflected the town’s culture, such as the Lahaina Banyan tree planted in 1873, its 150th birthday celebrated in April.

“My parents were planning to take my family over there so I could see my birthplace and visit my relatives and their friends,” said the student. “Now, it is unlikely for me to go over there due to those events. Additionally, I will never see some of the sights or people my parents mentioned.”

If students and staff at IHS wish to assist in the efforts to help recover Lahaina, the website [www.mauinuistrong.info](http://www.mauinuistrong.info) provides further information on relief programs and organizations to provide support to the fire’s victims.

“To help, I think the students and staff at IHS can fundraise to support the residents of Maui. From what I heard from my cousins, ACHS (Adolfo Camarillo HIGh School) in Los Angeles has already started fundraising,” the student mentioned.

By early September, the fires were 100% contained. It will take years for the town to recover, but according to the website LahainaTown.com, they are not deterred.

“Lahaina town still exists in its people. So long as we can collect ourselves, clean up, and rebuild, Lahaina will never perish.”

# Heatwave Strikes First Weeks of School

By Sarahi Campos & Anamaly Guzman Perez

The year 2023 has brought many challenges and heatwaves just so happened to be one of them. A major heat wave took place from August 3-18, around the same time Independence High School started the new school year. The heatwave affected many students and staff members at Independence High School.

The excessive heat has had many effects on students' mental and physical health. Some of the most affected are students who take physical education class and those who are involved in sports as they have to move around a lot in hot weather. Many students feel that the heat drains their energy very quickly and makes them feel overwhelmed.

“As soon as it starts to feel hot I wanna go home. It sucks all my energy out of me and makes me feel very frustrated.” said Wendy Soria, grade 11.

While Independence High School has a college-like campus, it doesn't have many places for students to shield themselves from the heat, mostly depending on teacher classrooms or trees for a moment of relief. Consequently, many students and staff believe that there should be more places on campus where they can escape the heat.

“Short of teacher

classrooms, there aren't many places to get away from the heat and even teacher classrooms are required by the district that thermostats don't go below 70 degrees, which is ridiculous in my opinion. I wish there were cooler spots on campus, there's shade, but even in the shade there's not a lot of spots to sit.” said Mr.Logan.

Many students feel like the heatwaves get hotter every year. They recall that a couple of years ago, it would never feel as hot as it does now.

“Several days this year have felt like it’s above 100 degrees which is very weird because it never felt this hot. I feel like a couple years ago it was rare for it to reach above 100 but now I think it's a lot more common.” said Nicole Albornoz, grade 11.

Multiple people have expressed concern for rising temperatures. They point out that our planet is definitely changing due to climate change and global warming.

“Um, it seems to me that August and September are getting hotter and hotter and as somebody who's grown up here for a long time, it's kinda bizarre. So obviously things are changing on this planet and it scares me.” said Mr.Logan.



# The Sunrise That Wasn't. Senior Sunrise Fogged In

By Sarah Clarke



Senior Sunrise is a tradition that has been carried by many senior classes nationally. Senior sunrise was meant to be held inside of IHS football stadium, but of course, this comes with an obligation to fix up the scenery. The stadium is littered

with plastic wrappers, plastic bottles, lost items and more.

“I woke up at 4 in the morning to open up the gates and basically told them to clean up!” said Mr. Logan on the day of Senior Sunrise.

This event brought many of the IHS seniors together. From

going to get breakfast together to capturing digital memories by snapping photos. Friends came together to experience their first and last senior sunrise.

“I attended senior sunrise because I wanted to make long lasting memories with my friends.” said Rebecca Marcelina.

People woke up as early as 4 in the morning just to experience the event. Having to wake up extremely early to get ready to attend the event, some even struggling.

“I woke up at 4:30 A.M, I was so tired. I arrived at the stadium at 5:50 A.M.” said senior Angie Hyuhn.

Merchandise such as senior bows were sold and the merchandise sold out quickly.

“I spent no money at the event because the line was too long and then the ribbons sold out, but the pancakes were free!” said Angie Hyuhn.

When asked about the cloudy weather, Rebecca Marcelina said “Yeah, a senior sunrise with no sunrise.”



# Are College Admissions Too Competitive?

By Vivian Huynh

College applications season has finally arrived for the Class of 2024, but some students seem to have mixed feelings about their chances of getting into their favorite colleges and universities as acceptance rates gradually decrease. This would bring in speculations and questions as to whether or not college admissions are starting to become too competitive or difficult to get into. Depending on what colleges or universities students are applying to, though, views on its general competitiveness may vary.

“I think for certain schools, getting in will always be hard because they want the best of the best,” high school senior Chelsea Tran explained. “But recently, education has become more accessible and I think that’s also very important, so I think colleges have been easier to get into...”

The college admissions process can be a pivotal part in a high school senior’s life, but the chances of getting accepted can get tough as trends of increased application volumes and deferrals occur according to Forbes. Longer college waitlists have also been rolling out as of the 2022-23

admissions cycle. These trends could deter an individual from wanting to apply to their dream school as they wonder about their own chances of getting accepted or what they should do to better them.



“I can see how stressed out students are if they’re looking for getting into colleges that aren’t easy to get into, but try not to stress out too much,” high school senior Liberty Felix reassured. “Everyone has a different story for how they want to go to

college, and their approach to getting there...”

I believe that as admission rates decrease and the number of applicants for a certain college or university increase, it’s going to be difficult for an individual’s application to stand out a lot or catch attention. That doesn’t mean all hope is lost and all your efforts preparing for it are for nothing. There are still things you can do in high school to best prepare for college and strengthen your application such as taking AP (Advanced Placement) classes or getting involved in school clubs. Many opportunities exist; take advantage of them, for you could find that missing piece on your application that would put everything together.

“I feel like even though taking AP classes is a way that most people try to show that you’re challenging yourself to a harder class...” high school senior Kim Dinh explained, “the most important thing should be having a passion for what you want to do and showing commitment, and that will show colleges how you’re committing your time to them...”

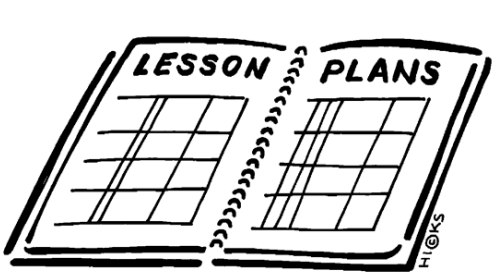
# Are School-wide Lessons Effective?

By Rithychey Yun

As the school years go on, we continue to have these school wide lessons at the start of each year. That erects the question, are they really necessary or even effective?

Many students have expressed their slight dissatisfaction . A senior, Karandeep Singh explains that “The lessons are used to convey the six SIXERS values: Spirited, Innovative, eXtraordinary, Engaged, and Respectful [...] which are already shown in every classroom the minute you walk in[...] While I appreciate the work the ASB and others put into making the videos and sharing them with each classroom, I feel that many students do not look at the videos as anything else besides an excuse not to do work.”

While on the other hand the staff, such as Ms. Lamontagne, “wholeheartedly believe that our lessons can affect students and our campus community in a positive way. Building a community based on respect starts with teachers connecting with students and students building respect for each other through shared experiences, values, challenges, and accomplishments.”



# Golf Carts Abound

By Rithychey Yun

Recently for this new school year, there has been a slight increase in golf cart activity to prevent students from doing things such as leaving campus and doordashing food during school hours.

One golf cart driver, Coach D explains that, “There has been an increase in golf carts this year. Last year we were always running on three or four vehicles due to equipment failure and lack of funding for tires or batteries. But this year we’re running on seven which are being managed by three campus monitors and four advisors, so they’re all on them.” Coach D goes on to say that “For our school with a size of 100+ acres, we need seven golf carts and could probably use even more because our school is so open with a variety of exit and entry points. Our goal is to make sure people stay in and make sure the people outside of campus stay off of campus.” Coach D says that “Our community right now, to me, is in crisis. Whether it be kids or young adults, they seem to be coming on and off campus where they don’t belong. So it makes us more at ease having these golf carts.”



While some staff express their concern, there are some students who are slightly troubled by it. A senior, Isha Tu explains that “It is useless, it doesn't help at all. Instead what I think the school

can do is to set alarms around the campus, so if some students attempt to leave it will go off. Not only will it decrease a lot of manpower used but also its more efficient”



# WELCOME BACK RALLY 2023!!!

## An Action-Packed Day

By Jannissa Le and Sarahi Campos

This year's Welcome Back Rally was filled with many activities including dance performances and games. The rally took place in the gym which was decked out with colorful streamers, balloons, and posters in red, white, and blue. Many students dressed out in the school's colors according to their grade level to show spirit and support for their classmates.

The rally started off with a performance from the school's cheerleaders, the Spirit Squad, who performed to recent hit songs. Their performance was filled with elaborate moves and flips.

"I really enjoyed watching the cheerleaders because their choreography is always well put together and filled with energy. They set the mood for the rest of the rally," said Wendy Soria, a junior and one of the audience member.

Afterwards, junior Kayliene, sang the National Anthem before the rest of the activities followed. Then, there was a game of students versus staff basketball, where staff members like P.E teacher, Mr. Goldsmith, played. Students also competed in games like Hungry Hippos and Hoop Hop Showdown.

"I liked the basketball game where we

beat the teachers, that was cool," said Matthew Cacdac, a senior.

There were also cultural dance performances by LSU (Latinx Student Union) and VSA (Vietnamese Student Association). Another performance was by C.L.U.B. who brought some hip-hop moves into the mix. More performances



LSU's folklorico performance at the Welcome Back Rally.

happened after the rally during lunch with clubs like Mabuhay performing on the Senior Stage.

"Although I didn't perform in this year's LSU dance, I was excited to cheer on my friends who did perform," said Isela Monge Cruz, member of LSU.

Keyra Aguilera, a senior and the ASB treasurer, helped set up the first rally of the year.

"We were a little bit scared of the timing, since we had a lot of things going on. We

had a lot of performances that we needed to squeeze in, and we were a little bit worried that we wouldn't be able to clean up the games fast enough but we did it," said Keyra Aguilera.



Students playing hungry-hungry hippo at the Welcome Back Rally

Although many people who helped organize the rally felt like things didn't go as smoothly as planned, the rally was enjoyed by many

Independence High School students and staff. It showcased all the talent and diversity our school has to offer and allowed the school to come together and show our sixer spirit.

"It was a little bit messy, especially during the class chant, but it's ok because it's the beginning of the year and things will only get better because we're going to win BOTC," said Keyra Aguilera.

## Spirit Week Outfits

By Bryant Sumano



Spirit Week Flyer, from @indyactivities

A new school year has officially begun at Independence High School, and all the students showed off their Sixer spirit throughout the entire week! 5 days of spirit, and fun were fulfilled at Indy!

Monday we kicked off "Welcome Back Spirit Week" with Extracurricular Day, we saw lots of students and teachers wearing their sports jerseys of their favorite team, not that many San Francisco Giants jerseys unfortunately, mostly Oakland Athletics jerseys.

"Even though the A's got swept by the Orioles, I gotta represent my team," said Ryan Pryor, a Government/Economy teacher at Independence, who's a big Oakland A's fan, despite the team being the worst in baseball with almost 100 losses, but he surely loves showing his A's pride with his Dennis Eckersley jersey.

Tuesday was a battle between Barbie and Oppenheimer, where we saw lots of pink in the campus apart from black, all in a feeling of life in plastic, which indeed is fantastic! Wednesday we entered the Taylor Swift Era! Everyone dressed up to represent their favorite Taylor Swift album as she continues her Eras tour. Thursday we went back in time and in middle school mode as students wore their middle school gear and how they looked back then.

To conclude spirit week, it was the best for last! Friday all the students at Independence showed off their Sixer Pride wearing red, white, and or blue which followed the Welcome Back Rally where the spirit was up and in the air.

Multiple IHS teachers said "We love seeing sixer pride everywhere on campus," which surely made them feel proud of being a SIXER.

## C/O 24 T-Shirt Drama

Seniors claim t-shirt voting was "rigged", calling out class cabinet.

By Ethan Nguyen & Gavin Tulio



Official T-Shirt design for C/O 24, courtesy via IG @ihs.co2024

Accusations of favoritism and corruption erupted due to students speculating that the voting of the official class of 2024 T-Shirt design was "rigged." Several people voiced their critiques of the selection process, expressing their frustration about how there were two options available for practically the same design.

"I first thought it was confusing because there were two shirts with the same design," stated senior, Anna Tran. "I didn't have any problem with it as I thought they looked pretty nice, but I also thought it was unfair how both shirts that were supposed to be 'different' was able to combine votes."

The design was immediately controversial, with some deeming it visually unappealing while others believed the hate was undeserved.

"I personally did not like the bird design because I feel like it didn't really at first look like a bird," said senior, Dhestinie Secreto. "It didn't really show our whole class, as everyone has different style and it was really only showing a small group of people's style."

On the contrary, Nathan Le, senior, says, "I think they're just hating to hate. I

think they just bandwagoned and had no real reason to hate on the design."

Despite the designs facing extremely mixed reactions at the hands of the student body, it was later revealed to be the winner, causing many to retaliate by sending confessions to IHSCrush, an Instagram page where students can anonymously send in confessions, both related and unrelated to their crushes.

Later on, a student associated with the class cabinet exposed that the winning design was made by the class office president, Katelyn Le, causing an outpour of allegations of bias and favoritism. This escalation also caused some students to question the success of prom.

"Yeah class of 2024 is gonna have prom in the big gym," stated Kevin Le, current senior.

To accommodate for the amount of public scrutiny, the class cabinet issued an apology to take accountability for their actions and decided to host a revote where students can send in new designs. Ultimately, the winning shirt design was made by student Emily Kung.

"I'm very surprised that I won," she stated. "When making the design, my primary goal was to create something that would look good and embody the school spirit. The back design, which I believe was the main reason for its success, is my favorite. For those who plan to submit a design in the future, keep it simple yet always incorporate senior spirit!"

After the incident, Katelyn sought to ease some students' confusion regarding the voting process, stating "I made [the designs] two separate options because before I publicized it, I did have my friends give opinions on how I should do it and they said to just include both because people do have different opinions on whether they want a full front or a pocket design. It was the only reason."

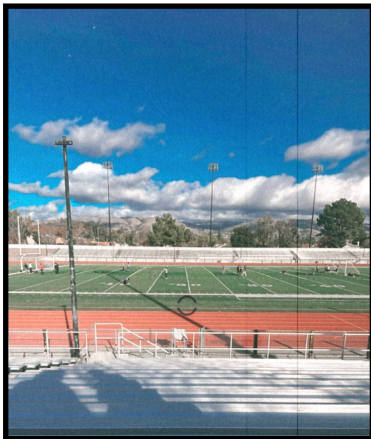
She and fellow cabinet member, Keyra Aguilera, understand the criticism they faced, but insist that their intentions were pure and they did not seek to rig the votes.



# Should Indy Stadium Be Open During Break & Lunch?

By Carden Dang

With such a large, private, and nicely built football stadium intended specifically for those at Independence High School, it begs the question as to why it isn't open for students to hangout and play in during lunch and break? Personally, I would like for it to be open because it gives students a space to play sports in during lunch instead of random spots around the school. Students could utilize the big and open football field to play soccer, football, volleyball, and other sports. However, many others disagree.



Empty Indy Stadium with Students playing soccer

Duong Nguyen, senior, stated, "I don't think we should [open the stadium] because the stadium will probably get trashed up and that's a huge inconvenience to the P.E. classes that will come later to use the stadium for

exercises and the sports that also use the stadium to do their thing."

Duong is not the only one to voice concerns about opening the football stadium. It seems that many believe that doing so will result in various and multiple repercussions. Although this decision might be beneficial to the students, it isn't for the rest of the staff at Independence.

Derek Doan, senior, stated, "I think opening the football field is a choice that'd be very good for the students, but again, there's repercussions with it. A lot of cleaning up to do because it will get trashed especially with the amount of seagulls at the school. But yeah, I'd say opening it is fine, but it has to come with a lot of responsibility."

Speaking of responsibility, would students be responsible enough with this decision?

Roy Arcena, senior, voiced his opinion, "I'm not sure about during lunch because the track, field, and football stadium are pretty far [from the classes] and there's also a lot of places that people can hide around and that means more staff around the campus."

Although I am in favor of allowing the

football stadium to be open during lunch and break, the students interviewed at Independence concerning this question have seemed to come to a general consensus that opening the football stadium would most likely result in various consequences.



Indy Stadium packed with students at the 2021 Hoco Rally while in the middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

# Are Seniors Losing Their Sixer Spirit?

Or are they ready to leave?

By Kelly Tran & Justin Reyes



As the new school year begins at Independence High School, a number of the class of 2024 seniors are voicing their concerns about the decline of school spirit, signifying they believe that their involvement in showing school excitement throughout the years hasn't been the most outstanding.

Although some of this year's seniors at Independence High School show their participation in the school's spirit week, others believe that the class of 2024 is considered to be looked down upon.

"I think the class of 2024 is looked down upon because normally we don't show participation", says Katelyn Le, a senior, and the class president of the class of '24.

Comparing the senior class of 2024 to last year's senior class of 2023, there is a significant difference spirit-wise. Senior, Katelyn Le, adds, "Because they started freshman year together so I do see a big difference which is why I believe that the reason why we're different from them is because we had ours [freshman year] online."

As the years have gone by, has class of 2024's spirit fallen? The class of '24's spirit has declined throughout the years because they've lost consecutively in 2022-2023. Creating a controversy on whether the class of 2024 lacks in liveliness and teamwork compared to the junior class of 2025. Last year, the Class of 2024 lost to the Juniors (class of 25') in

a wide school event, BOTC, a.k.a Battle of the Classes.

What do seniors at Independence think about this? Senior Kassy Viernes voices her opinion saying, "I think for us to be more spirited... is that we should dress up for the other generation for the class of 2027 to dress up because they're new and think everyone should have fun and create a more positive environment for everyone else."

History, Government, and Economics Teacher, Mr. Pryor, says, "I think seniors naturally lose spirit ... when you're a senior, you're kind of like ready to move on... and I think that it's natural and normal." Considering that the school year here at Independence has just started, there really isn't a concrete answer to our question. Perhaps, with the publication of this article, the senior class of 2024 will begin to recognize their lack of involvement and engage more in school activities, or it could be valid to say there could be valid reasons why they lack that spirit.

# ASB: Behind The Scenes

By Davian Opilas and Chris Vazquez

Addressing the misconceptions about ASB functions, finances, and participation, ASB finances have been misunderstood throughout the school years, from club taxes to how they regulate their spending. Rumors circulating within Independence High School have set off some uncertainty on ASB and whether their finances are being spent for personal use, if club funding is being misappropriated, or overall finance mismanagement.

Mr. Logan, the activities director at Independence states, "I think there's this misconception about what ASB is. ASB is everybody. So every organization at our school. So athletics, clubs, asset



programs... and any kind of student group is ASB."

It seems as though students don't necessarily understand how ASB functions, what their purpose is, or even the standards

directed by the district that ASB needs to follow.

"People oftentimes think ASB is in charge of the money – they're not, they're in charge of making sure people spend their money correctly."

"So the district says, 'If you guys want to charge students, you need to spend a minimum of 80% of that money on the students that paid.'" Mr. Logan adds.

Strictly listening to conspiracies regarding ASB finances doesn't provide much insight into what actually happens behind closed doors and what their money goes towards.

Amy Tran, the ASB vice president of student outreach states, "ASB does a lot of behind-the-scenes work from organizing the schedule for events, to getting contracts signed, to all the work that needs to be done in preparation of the

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# HOCO '23 Nominations

Should clubs be required to nominate members for the HOCO court?

By Eric Wang

There has been a new change in this year’s upcoming HOCO (Homecoming) during the first ICC (Inter-Club Council) Meeting on August 11, 2023. All clubs and other organizations in school are now required to nominate members for the homecoming court. Being part of the meeting, people seemed surprised about this news. As a result, there was a mix of reactions and people now wonder what would be different for this homecoming dance.

The ICC is a school organization that manages and observes all clubs, programs, and other extracurricular activities throughout the campus. People have to follow the rules set by the ICC for the club to exist or else the entire club might be placed on probation which is something clubs do not want to get into. However, learning about the HOCO court nominations created a lot of confusing reactions from everyone rather than something positive or negative.

“I do see how the nomination process can be more reliable as club officers are seen to be more “responsible” you could say, and maybe taking nominations from ANYONE could mean biased or joke

HOMECOMING



KING & QUEEN

responses too,” said Katelyn Le (12), CO24 Class President. “Personally, I don’t see a problem with it and don’t really have a say on whether it’s “better” or not. It would just mean fewer nominations overall.”

Many would similarly share these views as this change could make it fair for

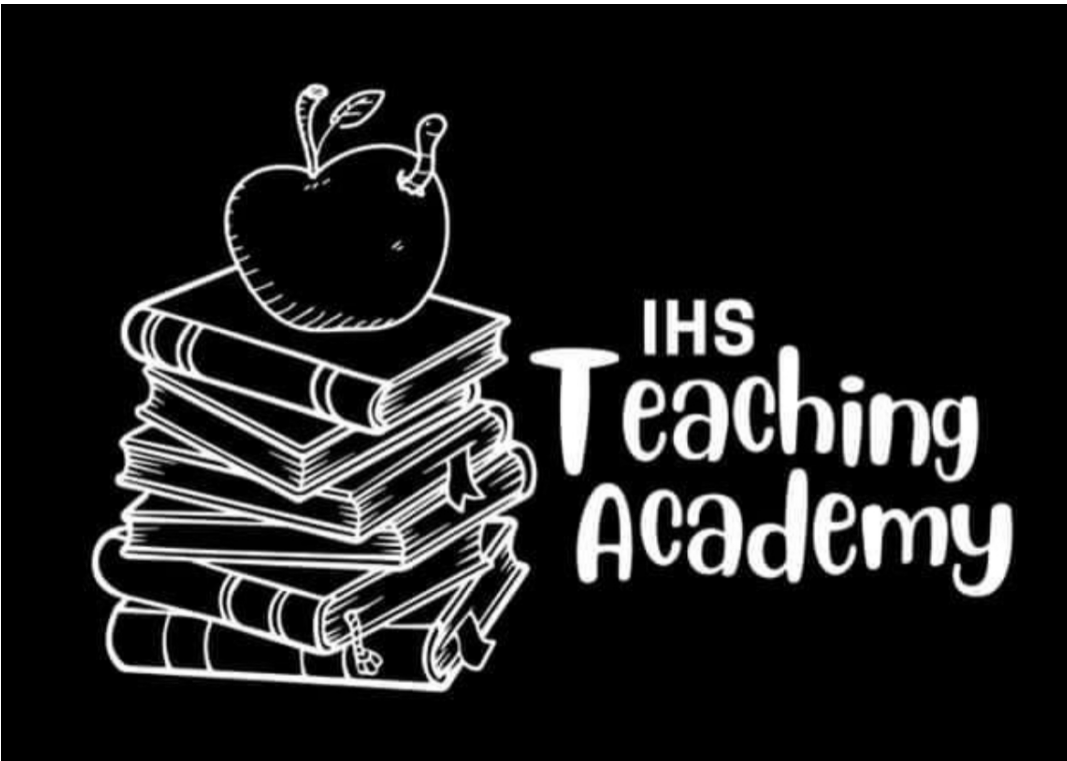
everyone to participate in Homecoming Court while having the entire school community be included in such a festive event. However, some others think the change is not as great as it sounds.

“I think the change is okay, but it is not necessary and this is because they just want to break the traditions of having couples for more people to be included,” said Rithychey Yun, senior and UNICEF Co-President.

To elaborate, clubs must nominate 3 members to participate in the Homecoming Court and it breaks the tradition of people who want to individually participate in the event. This creates an issue where there are students who want to be part of the homecoming court who could not be chosen because they are not part of a club or the club chose other people instead which could create some biases. Despite this, it will be interesting in how HOCO will play out this year and we should expect the unexpected.

## Teaching Academy Club

By Carden Dang



The Teaching Academy Club relaunches and makes their fresh debut for the new year with new class officers after being inactive for a little over 9 months on social media. Teaching Academy’s current Media Director, Nicole Reyes, previewed the club by releasing a post detailing the newly elected class officers as well as a logo competition for the club.

According to @ihs\_teachingacademyclub on Instagram, “We’ll be voting for the winning design in our first general meeting 9/12!” (Room A-303).

As for the purpose of the Teaching Academy Club,

they intend to express and share their passion of teaching and even the potential path of becoming a teacher themselves in the future.

Nicole Reyes states in an interview, “The purpose of Teaching Academy Club is to influence students to become teachers or to have teacher-like skills when they grow into their ideal careers, no matter if they want to be teachers or not.”

The Teaching Academy demonstrated their passion by going to the elementary and middle school, Orchard School District, every week of last year to practice their

teaching skills through teaching little kids. Although it seems like Teaching Academy is starting anew, they’ve been around for a long time.

“Teaching Academy has been an academy for around 20 years now and a lot of your teachers now are from Teaching Academy like Ms. Dang who teaches Psychology and AP Psychology.”

The Teaching Academy Club is a supportive community who share the same interests and provide students a space to learn unique skills that you won’t be able to learn from other classes.

ASB: Behind the Scenes continued from page 5

...events.”

One of the biggest misconceptions when it comes to ASB finances is that they are taking fundraised club money at the end of every academic year. Although they are mandated by the district to take a... percentage of club budgets they choose to allow clubs to have rollover forms and in turn haven't taxed a single club or taken any money in over 10 years.

A number of students tend to criticize ASB when a mistake is involved, but the truth is that the cabinet tries their best with what they’re given. Mistakes are inevitable with any big event, especially considering the immense amount of students here at Independence.





# Balancing APs and Running Clubs

Chloe Truong and Katie Hion

By Chris Vasquez

Imagine taking handfuls of AP's every year, running clubs, participating in competitions and even keeping an active social life, this is Katie Hion's and Chloe Truong everyday reality and they do it all without losing focus in any way, and still making positive impacts in their communities. Their passion for school and the people who inspire them is really an inspiration and they let us know how they try to manage it all.

Hion, currently a Junior taking AP Physics, AP Computer Science, AP language, and even AP Calculus BC, all while being co-president of ModelUN, our SGB representative, and Media Director for Speech and Debate gives us an insight on how she does it. She states that one of her biggest inspirations is her mother, "she has given all the opportunities she can, while showing me I can accomplish anything and always giving me the best advice for school and being my biggest mentor."

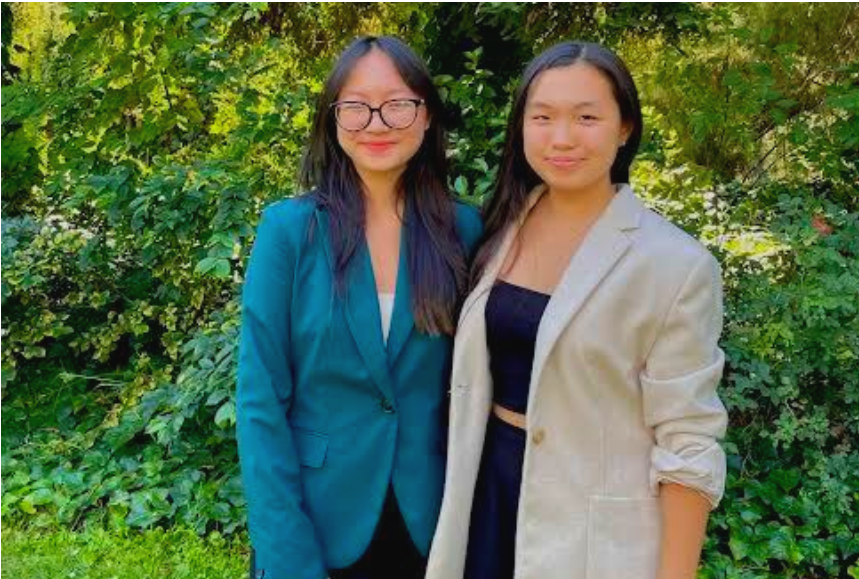
(one of my motivation is wanting to explore the world and make a difference when I grow up) When asked what's the best way to make sure you have time for it all, "I have a schedule, I love to plan ahead and always set aside time for myself, separate from all my academic assignments." Also, when asked how to hold one accountable and if any suggestions she would give someone also interested in being a strong academically she goes on to say, "one big rule I have for myself is to hold myself accountable... is this going to help me get to my goals, and assist me to get where I want to go." Truong, also a Junior taking AP US history, AP Psychology, and AP

Language also while being co-president for Model UN, President of Speech and Debate, President of VSA, and Secretary for CSF. She says her biggest inspiration is her father, "When things get hard I remember how my father was able to do it all. He has sacrificed so much for our family, while being a student, working three jobs, and being a supportive father. If he was able to do it all, then I believe I can push through as well."

all. Every time you say yes to a practice you are saying no to an assignment. Or if you say yes to a tournament you are saying no to studying for a class. One way I try to handle everything is planning my days to the minute, google calendar is my life...i also write on my hand for small tasks that I don't need to schedule for, I'll probably lose sticky notes but not my hand," wow that's just another level of dedication.

Mental health, an important topic in our school especially with 51% students across the country at least once a month feeling extreme stress or feeling "burnt out." Chloe expresses a personal experience on this, "everyone eventually hits rock bottom or feels like their spark for their passions fizzles out and it does take a toll on one's mental health but I try to remind myself why I love what i do and how eventually I will reach my goal, especially during hard times "

Hion and Truong both say to anyone seeing something at our school that needs improvement or just missing something "Go for it, be proactive and take every opportunity to move forward and never lose focus of what's important while maintaining a good mindset." They would know, they knew going into high school they wanted to be involved in diplomacy and public speaking. So they both started our school ModelUN club, a student-led organization dedicated to teaching students about diplomacy and improving their public speaking skills.



She says that the reason she does it all is because, "From a young age I considered myself to be competitive. Being the only girl in my family I realized how infuriating it was being spoken over. This is the main reason why debate was such a monumental aspect of my life, the fact that I had four entire minutes to feel heard was appealing."

When asked what she would tell someone also striving to be strong academically and socially, she states, "Honestly there is no way to truly do it

# Mask Off or Mask On?

By Sofia Alviar and Ashley Limon Ruzalcaba

Wearing masks has become a common occurrence after the pandemic. They were even required to be worn in certain places, including in schools. However, now that the peak of the Corona Virus has long since passed, many people don't wear their once-trusty masks anymore. Many say it's because the masks are uncomfortable. Others have more personal reasons.

Miyake Marshall, a junior here at Independence, says, "I stopped wearing my mask because I found it really impacted my self image and made me out of touch with myself."

Now that mask mandates have mostly been lifted, some may wonder if we should still be wearing masks anymore. After all, COVID-19 is not nearly as much of a threat as it was two years ago. Why continue to worry over something that is now becoming obsolete?

A student named Mia Alviar replies, "It's a matter of opinion and personal circumstance. If you or someone you've been in contact with has gotten sick, whether it's COVID or not, it is probably helpful to the people around you if you wear a mask. So in the end, it's a personal decision, and not one you should feel pressured to make either way."



Mickaehlah Garcia, sophomore at Independence, says something similar: "Masks aren't that big of a deal and

some students should only wear them when they're sick ... but overall staying at home when you're sick is the best way. Other people wear masks when they feel like it or just wear it to not get others sick. It really depends, but for the most part, if you are at school and you feel bad, then wear a mask!"



Junior Ryan Huynh taking his mask off

However, if you are healthy and don't feel an obligation to wear one, then there's no need to! The mask mandates are gone, after all, and it's become a recommendation rather than a requirement for unaffected ones. Exposed students should be concerned with the health of others and give the idea of wearing a mask careful consideration; or maybe just stay at home.

So, in conclusion, the question should boil down to: "Should you wear a mask?" Your answer depends on your circumstances, and what you believe will be the most beneficial for everyone.

Junior Brandon Nguyen without a mask and Junior Kathlyn Graycochea wearing a mask due to allergies.



# The Stigma Around Math

By Jade Simpson and J. Sevilla

There is an infamous stigma around Math and how it’s difficult to learn– Independence High School is no exception. After asking a multitude of teachers and students alike, the answer is becoming clearer.

Schools around the world deal with the hardships of Math class. Many students believe that the subject is ‘too difficult,’ and often get stuck in the abundance of equations, terms, and the seemingly hundreds of methods to memorize. Not to forget, piles of homework every day that stress students out after school as well. Unlike courses like English, or History, there is a strict boundary to what is right and wrong in math, and that is the pressing issue.

“Because we’re only separated by grade level... I don’t think most people’s level of understanding is the same. If you compare a normal year of math class compared to summer school math classes, I feel like in summer school math classes people like, understand a lot faster... it’s better that the teacher doesn’t have to go back to the same topic and keep on talking about that same topic.” Says an anonymous student.

It can be hard to teach students, especially as a math teacher, when everyone is at a different learning level, when some students don’t understand the topic, a teacher might have to reteach it even though it was already taught in a past grade level. Because of this it can be difficult to teach all students when everyone is at a different level of understanding. It can be a struggle to remember everything in math, even the

most attentive students can have difficulties in certain areas of math. For example an anonymous students says,

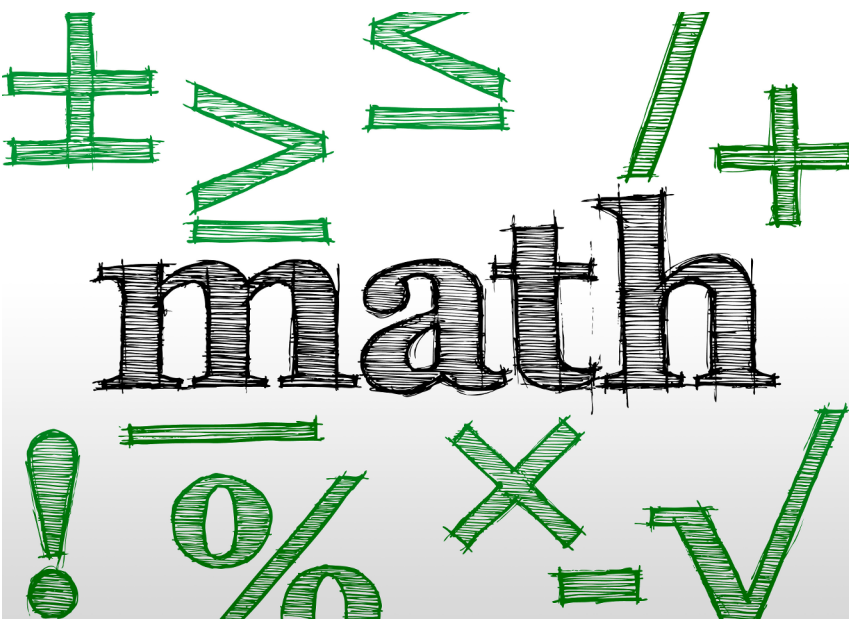
“When we learned the multiplication table... there's like this poem thing you have to remember... when you go into fourth grade you have to be able to do one to ten multiplications perfectly or

Courses such as English and History deal with the same issues with curriculum, but it is much easier to deal with, unlike Math. English and History focus more on retaining information and free response than strict answers and showing how you figured it out. Because of this, Math can seem more daunting than other subjects. Even Chemistry can be easier as it revolves more around puzzling things together. While it does contain math, it’s more loosely formed.

Ms. Ko from Room A-405 says, “We have a priority standard... if it is something that is not continuous from Math 1 to all the way to Calculus, if it's a subject that is isolated and not very popular... then I would tend not to teach it, also there's a priority standard– I try to go to the priority standard.”

A lot of students don’t realize, but Math is a lot more than just ‘figuring out the answer.’ Teachers in general have to follow state requirements and a specific Math curriculum. As well as this, there is also a time limit to how long teachers can spend on teaching a subject. Teachers can sometimes find it difficult as well because they all have different standards of what they believe is more important in the material they teach. Despite all of this, students still struggle to deal with Math class and don’t understand the struggle that teachers also deal with.

Teachers and students alike have to deal with the hardships of Math and its curriculum, and while it is clear that not many students enjoy math, or even know about the curricular.



else you fail... your teacher will call your parents and ask why you haven't learned this.”

Other teachers also play a big role in comparing the differences between Math and everything else.

“Math is sort of layered right? You have to get the skills from the previous year and if you don’t have those skills from the previous year you’re not going to succeed in your next class... whereas with English especially if you look at the standards you know we’re teaching the same, very similar skills throughout freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior year, we’re just diving deeper into those skills.” Says Mr. Haworth from room C-305

## Ate or Hate?

### School Food and its Bad Reputation

By Davian Opilas



Box of "Rice with Sweet Chili Chicken" for lunch

Many students at Independence High School question the quality of school food served during break and lunchtime. Oftentimes, you can visibly see unfinished school foods in the trashcans around campus, so why are students throwing away foods that they willingly grab? Additionally, why does school food in general have such a bad reputation?

Madeline Montoya, a senior at Independence states, “I think people think it has a bad reputation because it’s free food...their expectations for the food will be lower and it won’t be as good.”

Due to the fact that students can just grab their food without having to pay anything, it makes sense for their expectations not to be reached or fulfilled. It seems as though people don’t really consider the fact that not much funding can be put into the school food if the school lunch is free.

“Another problem is that they don’t have enough food–when you get into the lunch line–if you’re not like the first 20 people,



Freshman Mikey Le and Junior Bryana Betancourt with Corndogs

there’s no more spaghetti...you get what’s leftover.” Angie Huynh, a senior at Independence says.

There seems to be a circulating frustration with the lack of availability of specific foods and settling for foods that aren’t necessarily good quality. She talks about another issue at hand, the lunch lines are always packed. It’s a given considering our school population, but it may be frustrating to the majority of students eating school foods on a daily basis.

Rein Gallagher states, “I wouldn’t change anything, I think the menu is pretty assorted, there’s like a lot of options.”

According to the student who currently works at the lunch lines, they have more insight into how they serve the food. While there are some mixed opinions about school food, the overall opinion is that school lunch is not something students would necessarily reach for outside of school.



# Stadium Renovation

## Does the Stadium need Renovations?

By Eric Wang



Graduating class of 2016, on the field



Photo of Independence's Stadium



Final Soccer Game of 2018

The stadium has been used for many purposes by students, teachers, coaches, athletes, and more throughout the years. The stadium was used for rallies during the pandemic, it is used for sports like football and soccer, there is a running track for track and field; cross country, and the list goes on. However, the use of the stadium has raised questions about the current condition of the stadium as years pass and the quality of the stadium has deteriorated.

The stadium went through some repairs such as the stadium lights and turf. However, some students still say it is not enough and the entire turf and some of the lights should be replaced. As for the running track and stands on the side of the stadium, it is still in good condition. Still, some parts of the fences surrounding the fences are broken or cut through which is likely from vandalism. As of now, students are thinking about the extent of renovation for the stadium and what should be done.

“Yes, because in the past they only made small patches to the turf when it was damaged, but it wasn’t enough. I think there should be a complete do-over of the entire turf in the stadium because many sports teams use the turf occasionally,” said Dominic Todd, a senior on the Cross Country team. “As for the

lights at the stadium, some of the lights are out, and replacing the damaged lights would be good enough and they do not need to be entirely replaced like the turf.”

The main concern of students has to be the turf or the football field where many sports like football, and soccer, and where PE [Physical Education] classes go. The turf is full of holes, patches, and damaged artificial grass. Although the turf is all artificial which does not require a lot of maintenance and money as normal grass, it will still have to be maintained or else the turf will be even more ruined. Due to this reason, there are many students who say the turf is fine. A majority of the stadium is still in decent condition and despite the broken fences, damaged turf, and broken stadium lights, repairs would be just fine for now instead of an entire renovation.

"I don't see a problem for lights nor the turf because in the end, I only like to lay down on the turf to relax." states Emmy Nguyen, a freshman PE student.

There are a lot of problems everywhere we see and the stadium is just one place, but because it is used for a lot of school activities there should be some plans for renovation. From that point on, students and staff could have a solid plan to ask for funding for certain concerns people have about the stadium.

# Clean and Accessible Water

## Does Independence need more accessible, clean drinking fountains for its students?

By Ethan Le

As the days rapidly increase in temperature with high heat, it becomes one of the hottest it has ever been in recent years which means frequent water intake is essential. However, it isn't always easy to find a drink of water at school. An ongoing issue of concern is that drinking fountains on campus are dirty and poorly functioning. This is in-ideal as hydration and water access is highly important as students spend a substantial amount of time at school. To sum up, providing water access plays a critical role in maintaining a child's overall health by increasing students' overall water consumption and maintaining hydration. This leads to the question. What do students feel about the drinking fountains on campus?



Dusty C-Commons Water Dispenser

When Junior Fiona Huynh was asked about how she feels about drinking fountains on campus, she explained, “What’s the point of having drinking fountains there if you can’t use them? They should just upgrade it and give us something better like actual working drinking fountains.”

Junior Carly Ann Bundalian added, “I think the drinking fountains are disgusting and nasty, I walk by and I see brown like rust on the tip of the drinking fountain and it looks like a bird poop in it and when I click on the fountain, it’s never working and the water’s cloudy. I believe schools should give out water in different ways like more water bottle fillers.”

“Boy, they’re nasty. They need to wash them or at least upgrade them.” Junior Destiny Jurado said.

Freshman Linda Lizarraga said, “My opinion is that they should clean them up. It’s disgusting. Sometimes, when I want to drink some good water I get disgusted and I’m still thirsty.”

Freshman Gabriella Parra simply stated, “They’re crusty, rusty and musty.”

Many students have numerous complaints regarding the quality of drinking fountains and the water itself. Common criticisms include unhygienic, unsanitary, dirty, and nonfunctional drinking fountains. Students also commonly describe the water as cloudy, metallic, and lukewarm tasting. This led the student body to ask both students and teachers, “Should we get more accessible and clean drinking fountains for students?”

Junior Melanie Gutierrez said, “Yes. There are only two that I know of that work, the one near M-34 and one by the stadium but there should be more provided since Independence is a big school. Also when I drink it, it doesn’t taste good mainly because it’s metallic

and lukewarm tasting. Probably because it’s so dirty and unhygienic because there’s always green algae, rust, or food from lunch thrown in there.”

Teacher Julia Berliner added, “Yes but I actually think we need more water bottle fillers opposed to drinking fountains because it is more accessible for students, but also easier to keep clean.”



Dirty A-Commons Water Fountain

From everyone interviewed, the unanimous consensus seems to be that drinking fountains on campus are either dirty, broken, or both. Furthermore, the water doesn’t taste good because of the water quality due to the rust on the tip where water comes out. Some do work, however, there should be more provided since Independence High School has a big campus. There also seems to be a general agreement that Independence should focus on cleaner and working drinking fountains, or even with alternatives such as more water bottle fillers.



# Swinging to Victory

By Sinthe Tran and Argyle Angulo

Independence High School's Girls Golf Team went to work on September 6 and 7, becoming victorious in their first games of the season against Lincoln High School through their passion and determination for winning and making this season theirs!

The Girls Golf team came into the season prepared for their two games against Lincoln High School, the first game was held at Santa Teresa on the 6th and the second held at the Los Lagos golf course. Independence scored 280 and Lincoln scored 311, the lower the score is, the better it is when it comes to golf. They won their first two matches back to back, these girls are on their way to claiming more wins.

Now, golf may not seem like an extreme or major sport but this team definitely does not lack in power, determination, or confidence in their ability to win. Golf actually requires strategy, mental power, and accepting challenges during the games.

"I feel like golf is a very mental game that takes a lot of strategy and keeping yourself cool under pressure. It's true, golf is a game of calculated misses. I feel fairly confident in my ability to keep calm on course and to factor in my options during

a game," explains junior Ashely Pang, "I've grown comfortable with this through experience with the sport. After playing



Ashely Pang

golf for several years, I eventually began to build a mentality that can accept challenges on course."

The coaches, Coach Yenchik and Coach Carson, motivates and encourages the team to reach their potential and to go even further to improve themselves and the two coaches are always there to help the girls on their swings and strategy. The Girls Golf team is currently made up of 10

amazing athletes who all have a passion for golf.

"I enjoy this sport because there are so many cool people who play golf and I love hanging out with them during practice, they make golf more fun," said junior Hylam Le, "Coach Yenchik motivates me to continuously strive for improvement because he is always pushing me to become my best self."

There are goals to be set for each season for any sports team, the Girls Golf team is more experienced than before and now has a few more people added to the team, this leads them to grow with and learn from each other through setting goals for themselves and the season..

With many goals in mind, here's junior Ashley Pang's thoughts on her own goals for herself and the team, "This season I would like our team to grow and learn from one another, especially since our team is more experienced now and that we have a few new people. A personal goal of mine would be making it to BVAL again in October. I would love for people in our team to be selected for the playoffs as well."

## Step by Step

### A Day in the Life of a Cross Country Athlete

By Dominic Jacob Todd



What does a day of cross country practice really look like, and does this explain why so few try out for the sport? The runners start their practice off with a little bit of static stretching, followed by a one mile warm up jog to wake up the legs, finishing it off with some dynamic stretches. After all of that they begin doing some check-ins with how their body's before doing the upcoming workout. Their workout is a 10 mile trail known to the runners as powerline, a loop guaranteed to leave you sore for a couple of days. This is a well known route to cross country teams all around as the first 3 miles of the route is a constant uphill climb of over 1500 feet. The team meets at this park about 2-3 times a year and it is always a route that makes you question

why you joined cross country in the first place.

Kendrick Yen commented "I enjoyed running powerline and would do it again as long as there are people to run with, all of those uphill without anyone to run with would make the experience worse". Sounds painful right.

Then why do our students continue to run 6 days out of the week. Why do students show up every year to participate in this sport, what makes it all worth it.

Junior Genesis Arroyo answered "I run cross country because the feeling of achievement after a race is priceless. Also, it's hilarious telling people you run for fun."

## Kickoff Time

### Football Season Returns

By Gavin Tulio

The football team is in high spirits for their season this year, as the team is under new coaching staff and filled with experienced players and new talent. The football team has gone through a lot of hardships in the past two seasons with upsetting results and unfortunately not being able to find many wins, however, with an overhaul of new players and coaches, the team sees a bright future for the program and hope to not run into any obstacles.

Patrick Biagtan, senior and new player to the football program, says, "I think I will see a great improvement within the score. Last year didn't go too well, but this season will be better."

As the team continues to practice more and more, the goal of making CCS seems closer and closer.

"From looking throughout the practices I see very enthusiastic people and I feel great pride within our team, and with our motivation and discipline, we'll reach the goal," Biagtan says.

With the vast amount of experienced players, the team aims to have a much better season than those previous, and hope to find success this year.

"For the most part I'd have to say it's a toss

up between two people: Jordan and CJ, Chris.

Both of em are physically dominant people who are capable of learning any new positions. They're a bunch of multi-position athletes and are just dogs on the field and are willing to be flexible in wherever they're at." Said Angel Benevidez, a senior who has been on the team since sophomore year, when asked about which players have the most experience on the team.

Benevidez also shouts out players who he sees have the potential to develop into amazing athletes. He responded with, "for the JV side of the ball, Isaiah, the quarterback for JV. He's coming in with a good amount of arm talent, willing to learn stuff like that. He has a good mind, good arm on the ball. Maybe a few things he could fix but y'know, that's besides the point.

Up and coming players [on varsity], I would say Shawn, Shawn Hamilton. A lot of the secondaries coming up from JV and under good coaching them kids could be ball hogs on the field."

The football team looks to make a run to CCS and are in high hopes of having a great season.

"Despite us being unsuccessful in previous years, under coaching from our new head coach, Coach Braun, I think we have the ability to make a whole CCS run. Once we work as a unit, I think Independence has a good chance for CCS," says Benevidez when asked about the outcome of the team.

With an overhaul of the team's coaching system, the Independence football team hopes to make a great run this season and are filled with confidence.





# Making Waves in the Pool

By Gavin Tulio & Justin Reyes

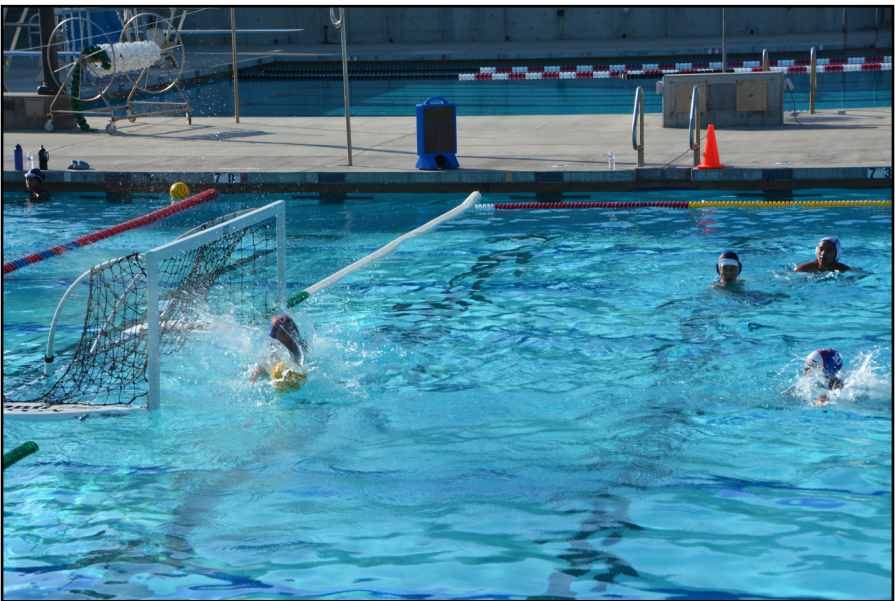


The boys and girls water polo team are getting ready for their upcoming season and are coming in with a lot of confidence for this season with both teams having new talent and experienced players. While preparing for their season, the team has practices at 4 PM after school.

Senior Lance Lin talked about the practices, saying, “They’ve been going pretty well.”

In addition, senior Katherine Yen says, “Practices have been pretty okay, we’ve gotten a lot of new players this year, especially since last year we didn’t have as many players, so it was kind of difficult to play every single game for an hour straight, but we’ve been pretty adaptable with all our new players, especially our coach.”

With a new season approaching, new players come with it. When asked about how well they think their season is going to go, Lin responded, “I see my team doing well. I think our team has a



good chance of winning some games.”

Furthermore, Yen comments about the girls’ team’s coming season, saying, “I feel pretty good about it actually. So far we’ve been playing schools in a higher division than we are, and we’ve won one game and we’ve lost one, but we lost 14-15 to a school that’s a higher division than us, so I feel pretty good about it, especially since we got so many new players, and they’ve been doing pretty well.”

Yen also mentions sophomore Giana when talking about up and coming players, saying, “She’s improved a lot. Last year, she could not swim very well, but now she’s up to almost my level, which is crazy, and now she’s one of our captains of our team, and I could just see a lot of potential from her.”

With new players joining the water polo program, the boys and girls water polo team are in high spirits to have a good season this year.



# Over the Net Practice

## Girl's Tennis Season Approaches

By Carden Dang

After ranking up to B-League from C-League from a great 2021-2022 season, the Girls Tennis Team gets ready for their upcoming season by showing up to practice every single day to improve their skills and their game.

According to Michelle Sanchez, a Doubles player for this year’s season, describes how she is getting ready for the season, “I come to practice everyday and play on the weekends too. I play with the wheelchair Tennis players [players outside of the school invited to the courts] as well to practice.”

The coach for the Boys and Girls Tennis coach, Coach Scott, plays a huge role in both motivating and teaching the players. Coach Scott works hard at

practice everyday to make sure that the players are ready for their season by coaching them on how to play, but more importantly, how to think.

Michelle Sanchez states, “I have to come everyday, practice more and more, and don’t give up. I love everything about Tennis, it distracts me, it makes me feel better, and I just love Tennis.”

As the Girls Tennis season starts, the players are faced with newer and harder challenges compared to the last season. However, they are approaching these challenges head first and head strong with their determination and dedication with the guidance of Coach Scott.

# Spike to Victory

By Gavin Tulio & Justin Reyes

The team is filled with players who are both new to the sport and have experience in the sport. When asked about who some of the most experienced players are, Tran says, “I think I’m the most experienced player because I have 4 years of experience in High School and out of all the seniors, I’m the only one who has been playing for 4 years.”

The team recently had a game on August 31st against Oak Grove High School, where the team won 3-0. Junior and Varsity player, Meg Graycochea puts her input on the game, saying, “I say the game was very fun, very chaotic.” When asked about how well the team did in the game, Graycochea replies, “I say we did good, but there are things we can improve on, like communication.”

As these committed young athletes begin their journey, they demonstrate the ability of sports to bring people together, motivate, and inspire.





# Across That Finish Line

By: Ethan Le

This season, the cross-country team is practicing and conditioning very hard under the guidance of coach Kevin Wang in preparation for their upcoming races that are steadily and fast approaching with the closest one being a 2.75 mile race located at Montgomery Hill on September 13th. Preparing for the season, the team has practice every day after-school that begins from 4:15 PM to 6:15 on (Tues/Thurs) or 7:15 on (Mon/Wed/Fri) that consists of whartons, dynamics, skillwork, training runs, hill and interval training, and various workout exercises at the weight room.

This year also welcomes many new faces to the cross-country team. The team members, a combination of new and returning runners, come together to support each other during practices.

Senior Kevin Castillo shared, “I didn’t know what to expect when I first joined cross-country. I was more surprised by the amount of supportive people and team spirit on the team. It was more community oriented when I originally thought it was going to be more solo, because of this; I learned to grow as a person by surrounding myself with positive influences but also developing strong bonds with the team.” This demonstrates how team spirit not only fosters individual growth but also strengthens the bond among team members.

Cross-country is a sport notoriously known for its physical and mental challenges, and the team is gearing up to face them head-on. Junior Lenny Cortes stated, “Cross-country is a sport that requires a lot of mental strength. Sometimes, your body tells you to give up

but your mind doesn’t want to give up. There are also times when the races are



difficult, mentally and physically and I just wanted to quit, but you just gotta push and get through it.”

Junior Valerie Holguin added on, “One of the challenges is the unpredictable weather. Sometimes, it’s really hot unexpectedly. Another challenge is that sometimes it’s hard and difficult to breathe during the intense runs. However, the team is really fun and supportive.”

Sophomore Oni Nguyen mentioned, “One challenge is that I don’t have much free time anymore after joining. It requires a lot of time because there’s a lot of hard-work, dedication and commitment involved. Running is also hard and challenging at times but it’s all about the mentality.”

This year, many newcomers decided to

join. When asked for their reasons for joining cross-country and their thoughts on it so far, freshman Gabriella Parra responded with, “I joined cross-country to get more stamina and become faster. I enjoy the people on the team because I’m new and everyone is helpful. However, it’s still a bit hard for me but I’m getting used to it.”

Freshman Abigail Guereca answered, “I decided to join cross-country to increase my running endurance. What I enjoy about the sport is the community. For me, cross-country practices are fun because I get to better myself and surround myself with good people

around me.”

Sophomore Audrey Cruz replied, “I joined cross-country to try out a new sport. I also wanted to meet new people. I’m really glad I made this decision because I like the sport and team a lot.”

Sophomore Oni Nguyen vocally expressed, “I really enjoy cross country because of the running aspects. I really like how supportive and kind the team is. Overall, I’m really into it.”

As the cross-country team continues to practice and prepare for their upcoming races, they bring with them dedication, determination, and teamwork. With a mixture of experienced veterans and enthusiastic newcomers, the future holds bright opportunities.

# More Scenes from Girls Flag Football

All photos by Alex Le



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