

Personal Projects deemed optional during current school year

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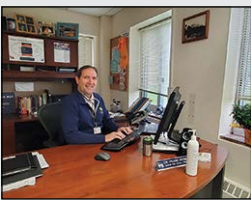
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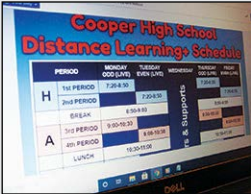


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The unpredictable nature of the pandemic means that Hawks coaches are doing more than usual to ensure athlete safety

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DISTANCE LEARNING WILL LAST THROUGH SEMESTER



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

The building will remain mostly empty through the end of the first half of the school year due to the pandemic.

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

The Robbinsdale School District has decided to continue distance learning for the duration of semester one because of COVID-19. With the pandemic still being a looming threat over schools across the world, Cooper will remain in distance learning until further notice from the district.

"After receiving recommendations from staff and families, middle and high school

students, including fifth grade at FAIR School Crystal, will remain in Distance Learning PLUS through the first semester," Robbinsdale Area Schools Interim Superintendent Dr. Stephanie Burrage told families and staff on October 2. "This will allow students to continue classes with their current teachers and reduce the disruption to learning."

Cooper Head Principal Mr. Herman said the decision to stay with distance learning was difficult, but it was the best decision available given the challenges of

the other learning models.

"While it would have been great to have students and staff back in the building for face-to-face learning, keeping some consistency through the semester was important," Herman said. "Given that the decision to start out the year in [distance learning] and then move to a hybrid model mid-semester would have created the need to revise the schedule, shift students to different classes and make some major adjustments while in the building as the COVID data

shifts, it would not be ideal."

According to Herman, the continuation of distance learning has its benefits and detriments to students when compared to being in the classroom.

"Some students like the distance learning model, however most students, according to surveys and conversations, would rather be back in the classroom," he said. "This first semester, since we started out in [distance learning], I do believe it will be better that we stayed with [distance learning] to the end of the semester."

Officials will assess a possible model shift for the start of second semester in January

Whether Cooper continues in distance learning after first semester will be determined in December or January. The decision will be dependent on the data in our area that the state provides.

"If we can maintain the COVID protocols for safety, overall, I do think it would be better for students to be in the classroom," he said.

Should the school move to a hybrid model in second semester, Herman said there are a few options that are being considered.

"There are a few scenarios that we would look at if we went hybrid," he said. "One plan would be if we could only have 25 percent of the students in the building during a school day. This would mean that each student would come to the building two times per week every other week. The schedule would remain as it is now."

If the school does adjust models during second semester, Herman said families will still have a choice about whether or not their own students will return to school.

"As far as if it would be optional, according to the governor's executive order, students have the option to stay in [distance learning] if their school goes to a hybrid or face-to-face model," he said.

While the middle and high schools are sticking with distance learning, changes are on the horizon for the elementary schools.

"During the past few

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Students revamp work habits for virtual classes

The new ways of conducting school during distance learning have required Hawks to operate differently to ensure academic success

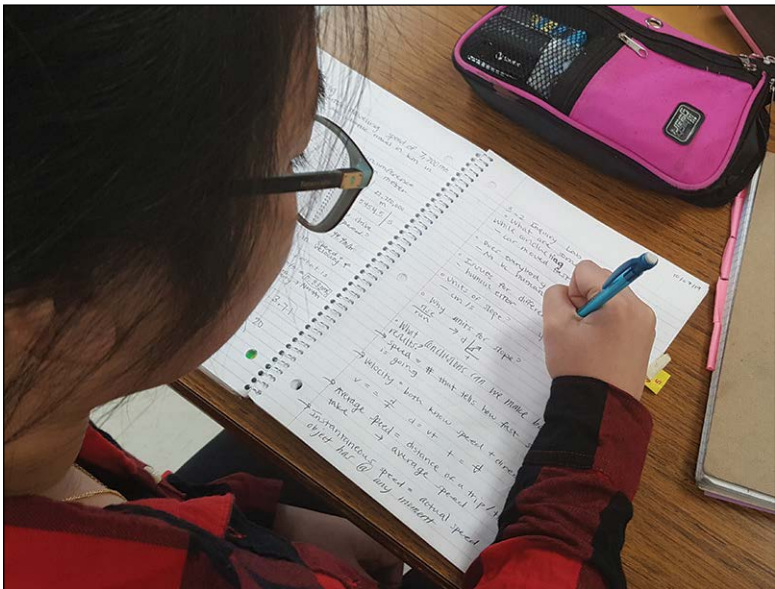


Photo by LOU VANG

Having a set space to study at home is one way students can stay focused.

By YORDANOSE MULAT
Quill staff writer

Students in every grade at Cooper faced the first-ever virtual start to a school year in 2020-2021. This caused students to do various things differently than they have in past years.

"When I found out that my first year of high school was going to be virtual, I was actually happy because I had felt that I wasn't prepared to go to school physically and that I needed more time," Marwen David (9) said.

However, Grace Hambike (12) expressed her feeling of sadness that

her last year of high school would be spent at home.

"I really want to be in class with my teachers and friends," she said.

Students prepared for school in various different ways. Meron Kassa (10) said that she did research to know more about the course and asked advice from people she knew. Furthermore, David organized her house differently "in a way that would make virtual high school easier." In addition, Hambike said she did some work in advance of the beginning of the school year.

"I started going over some of my notes and watching some videos to prepare for my classes," Hambike said.

Other student preparations for the virtual school year that differed from previous years included school supplies.

"I don't need to worry about buying a new backpack, at least until we are back in person," Andrew Tran (11) said. "New additions to my list this year were a comfy chair, printer paper and a webcam."

Also adjusting her supply purchases was Kassa, who bought notebooks with folders inside of them.

"Then, I can have all my resources in one place which helps me stay organized," she said.

Her peer David said virtual learning allowed her to cut back on her purchase of school supplies.

"When I went to go buy my school supplies, I was mainly looking for stuff that would help me to be organized and stuff that I actually need. In the past, I bought a lot of unnecessary stuff," David said.

Mental preparation was also different for students this year.

"I was mentally prepared for this new school year," Hambike said. "I prepared as much as I could."

In contrast to Hambike, Kassa said she was not mentally prepared because she was busy all summer and was not ready to begin school.

"I didn't have as much time for myself as I wanted to," she said.

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Teachers learn new ways to deliver curriculum online

A primary aim of Cooper's staff is to improve the learning experience of students when compared to distance learning last spring

By JACK ATKINSON
Quill staff writer

The Robbinsdale School District's decision to have distance learning for high school students during first semester in 2020-2021 caused teachers to alter their usual plans for the classroom. Unlike the sudden shift to asynchronous distance learning last spring when Minnesota instituted a stay-at-home order to combat the spread of COVID-19, teachers were given more advanced notice to get ready for virtual instruction this fall. For English teacher Ms. Kope, the extra time gave her a chance to think about the role equity could play in her online teaching.

"I think the number one thing right now is to try to be

as anti-racist as possible and to make sure I run my classroom with equity in the forefront of my practices," Kope said. "A lot about distance learning is not fair for those who are typically left out, and we as teachers have to address that and try to change things for the students who don't have white privilege. Students are hurting from the months of civil unrest and need to find a human in their teacher who wants to get to know them and who they know loves and cares about them."

Another element that teachers prepared for this fall was moving to a more synchronous teaching model through which students have to attend live, online classes using Google Meets.

"I have been careful to make sure I provide more in-class work time because I don't want kids to take any work home," social studies teacher Mr. DiSalvi said. "In general, I want to try

to get done with classes as quickly as possible to prevent kids from unnecessary fatigue staring at their screens."

One challenge of distance learning is that it is easy for students to not really pay attention since they are home and they can get distracted by a lot more stuff at their houses.

"It's hard to get students to speak up, or even message up in the comments boxes, and so I have lost half of my ability to teach [and give] the feedback that I so crucially rely on during the regular school day," Kope said. "I'm trying to figure out ways of getting more student feedback, but haven't found anything nearly as effective as being able to see and hear

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Teen vaping causes concern during COVID

Use of vaping products can complicate the dangers of the coronavirus

By MAKAYLA HOTT
Quill staff writer

Vaping rates among teens have been on the rise. This has been a growing concern during the pandemic because people who vape have had increased complications if they contract the coronavirus.

Vaping devices are battery-operated mechanisms that people use to inhale an aerosol containing nicotine, flavorings and other chemicals. According to drugabuse.gov, there are more than 400 different e-cigarette brands currently on the market. At first, these products were seen as a less dangerous alternative to cigarettes, but that view has changed.

“When vaping was first introduced, it was considered a safer choice, but we have since found out it is not,” Cooper health teacher Mr. Rooney said. “That’s the real danger in itself, as it is so new, the experts are not exactly sure. But some of the research has shown vaping can do more damage and at a lot quicker pace than smoking cigarettes.”

Vaping devices are now the most commonly used form of nicotine among teens in America. According to drugabuse.gov, two reasons for their popularity are that they are easy to hide from parents and teachers because “they do not leave behind the stench of tobacco cigarettes” and they can be “disguised as flash drives.”

Another reason for the increase in vaping is that some teens view it as cool. “I don’t think vaping is cool,” Rooney said, “but I think many teenagers do it because it’s cool.”

Of course, not all teens agree with their peers who make the choice to vape. “I don’t think vaping is cool,” Heaven Shaw (12) said. “It can affect your breathing.”

In addition to the health effects, growing evidence suggests that vaping can lead teens to use other nicotine products, including cigarettes. It is for this reason that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) designed regulations to stop minors from buying e-cigarettes in stores or online. Additionally, according to drugabuse.gov, the FDA now regulates “the manufacture, import, packaging, labeling, advertising, promotion, sale and distribution of e-cigarettes,” much like they do for traditional cigarettes.

For teens who vape but want to stop, the process is similar to quitting smoking.

“Trying to quit vaping isn’t too different from cigarettes, as nicotine is the drug that the person is addicted to,” Rooney said. “Nicotine causes a physical and psychological addiction, which makes it hard to quit.”

Although Cooper does not specifically help addicted teens stop vaping, they can help provide resources for interested students.

“Cooper doesn’t have any direct resources to help with tobacco addiction, but [the school] does have resources to start the process, pointing someone in the right direction and, at the district level, there is a chemical specialist,” Rooney said.

Ultimately, it is up to the teens who vape to decide if they want to break their addiction.

“Why are you doing this to yourself?” Aryah Adams (12) said. “Stop it and get some help.”

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weeks, we have been working to finalize procedures in preparation to bring our learners back to school,” Burrage said in her October 2 statement. “At this time, pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade students, and secondary special education center-based students, will return [to school] on Monday, November 16.”

Whether the plan to bring elementary students back this month continues forward is dependent on the changes in COVID date. That same thing applies to decisions about second semester for the middle and high school levels.

“We will continue to monitor our county COVID-19 data twice per month and consult with our local health experts,” Burrage said. “The safety of our students, staff and families remains our top priority.”

Administrators strive to support students

Hawks principals have been getting creative in the ways they deliver services to Cooper's student population

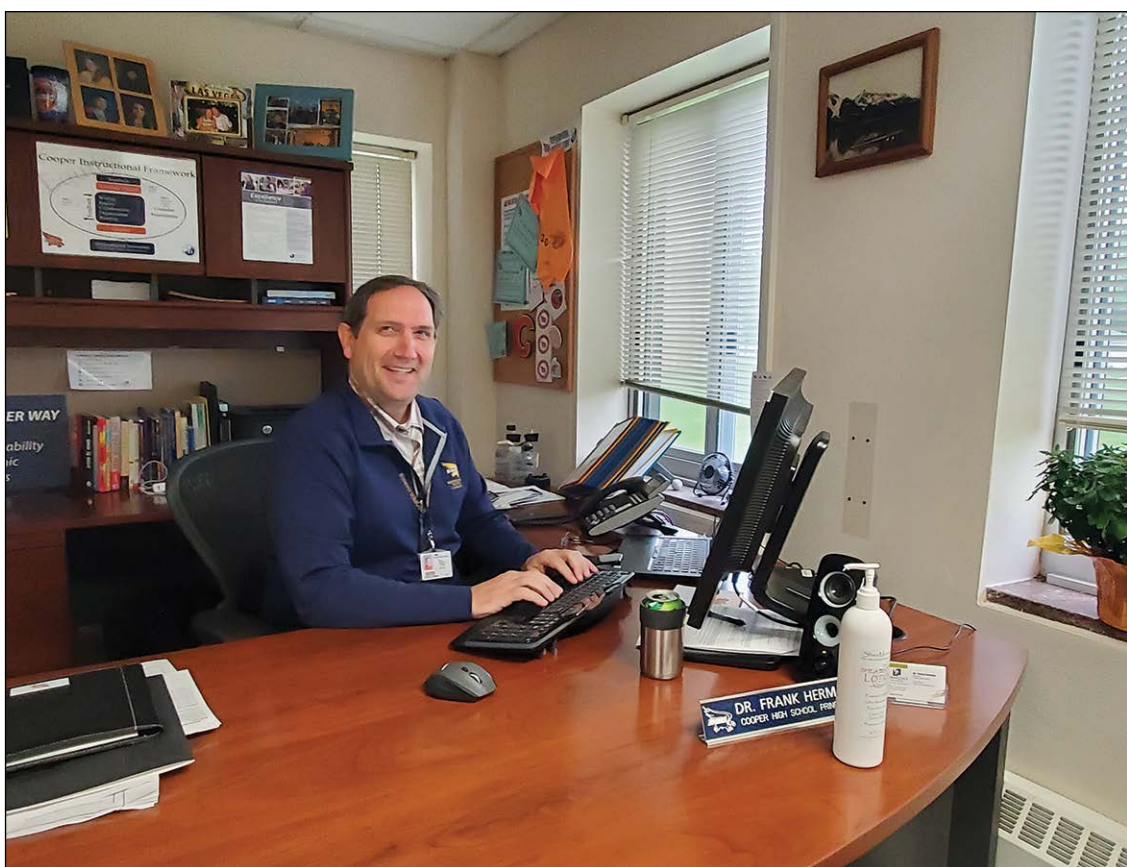


Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Head Principal Mr. Herman comes to the building on most days to conduct the main aspects of his job.

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Cooper administrators have varying thoughts on the structure of school during distance learning this year. With COVID-19 continuing to cause Robbinsdale schools to remain closed, administrators had to make changes to improve on the more unexpected distance learning experience last spring, including moving to synchronous classes on Google Meet calls, the installation of an alternating-day block schedule and the creating of a new grading scale.

According to Head Principal

Mr. Herman, there have been a number of challenges to making these changes during distance learning.

“Aside from not being able to see people in person, I think ensuring that students and staff have the resources they need to be successful in regards to technology, printed materials and online tools [has been a challenge]. I believe it has also been more difficult to build a community like we had in the past, so we have to work on how to do this differently to ensure all feel welcome in being part of the great Cooper community and stay involved in all that is going on,” Herman said.

At the same time, Herman said

changes like the move to a block schedule have been a help this year.

“I believe the block schedule has alleviated some of the stress and anxiety that students felt from last spring. Having only three or four classes a day instead of seven while in distance learning seems to have been a positive change,” he said.

While there have been changes this year, Administrative Intern Mr. Nelson said the administrators have worked hard to make things feel normal for students.

“The biggest challenge for distance learning is trying to keep everything as normal as possible. Last spring, we were in crisis mode; now,

we are trying to establish more normalcy into the students’ school days,” Nelson said.

According to Nelson, one aspect of distance learning that has been “more difficult on the students and staff” is the lack of social interaction.

“I think distance learning is great for our physical health. It greatly reduces the risk of transmitting COVID. However, some students may struggle academically and socially,” he said.

Nelson added that the administration has put resources in place to help students who are facing difficulties during distance learning.

“There are places for students to meet with therapists, social workers, case managers, counselors and teachers. Students just need to fill out a Google form and they will be able to get the support they need,” he said.

While distance learning has brought new challenges, Nelson pointed out that it has had some positive aspects as well.

“I think the best part of distance learning is watching how excited students are to learn again,” Nelson said. “The school year ended oddly last year, like a firework that fizzled out instead of exploding. Not having a true climax at the end of the year has given students a new hunger for knowledge and learning. That is pretty awesome.”

With distance learning happening through at least first semester, students and staff are wondering what second semester and the 2021-2022 school year might look like. Herman said the school would address those questions when the time is right.

“We are not going to look that far ahead as we would love to see our students and staff back in the building when it is safe to be here together,” Herman said.

Personal Project deemed optional for '20-'21

While students are encouraged to complete a project, requiring everyone to do so during distance learning presented multiple challenges

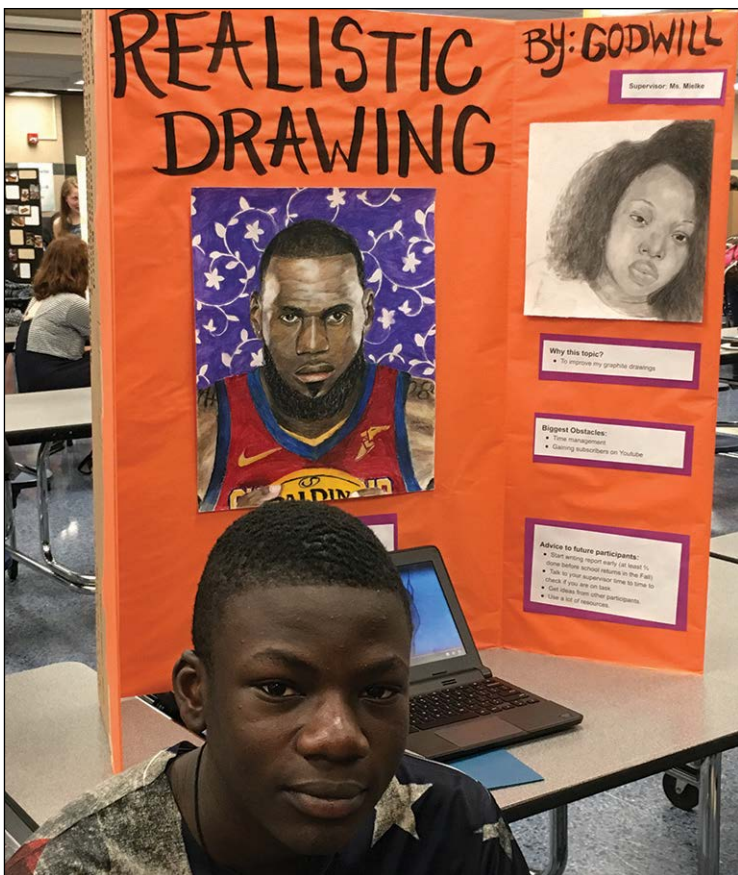


Photo by MS. MEYER

Graduate Godwill Afolabi presents a display of his Personal Project during an annual, end-of-year exhibition of student work in IB and MYP.

By MAJAY MURPHY
Quill staff writer

The Personal Project, which is the capstone project of the International Baccalaureate (IB)

Middle Years Program (MYP), will not be mandatory for ninth and tenth graders this school year due to distance learning. However, students who choose to complete a project will receive an elective

credit for doing so.

“Completion of the project is an expectation we have for all incoming tenth grade students,” IB-MYP Office Assistant Ms. Meyer said. “However, due to distance learning, it was decided that this year, the project would be an optional project.”

While students do not have to complete a project in 2020-2021, Meyer said there are many benefits for the students who decide to pursue the Personal Project.

“Completing the project will earn the student an elective credit,” she said. “Students need to amass 13 elective credits at Cooper in order to graduate, and this is a way to earn one of those credits. Also, another benefit is that you get to create your own independent study project. In regular courses, students are often assigned a particular area to research; however, the Personal Project is an opportunity to select an area that really interests you.”

In recent years, Cooper students have completed a wide and diverse assortment of projects, ranging from writing a cookbook to creating original works of art. In order to complete a project, students develop a project proposal, pick a mentor, conduct research and maintain a journal.

“During their project, there is a wide variety of support available to the student, including Cooper staff, IB staff and their supervisor,” Meyer said.

At the end of the process, students turn in the journal, a reflection essay and the project itself to their mentor for scoring. Finally, in May, there is an exhibition during which the projects their creators are celebrated.

In addition to the in-school benefits of working on a Personal Project, Meyer noted that there are outside-of-school benefits as well.

“Completing the project is a great resume addition,” she said. “As students begin looking for employment, they can use the process of the Personal Project as a selling point for why employers should select them. Students have selected their own topic, defined a research area, conducted that research [and] created an end product, all while utilizing their own time-management and self-starting skills. Relaying your ability to follow a project through from start to finish, independently, can be a huge selling point to a potential employer.”

Students who are interested in learning more about the Personal Project can contact Meyer at jodie_meyer@rdale.org.

Activities Office emphasizes flexibility during COVID outbreak

Assisting students involved in Cooper clubs, groups and sports requires daily oversight and adjustments

By MAX REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

The Cooper Activities Office workers are facing new challenges and taking new safety precautions due to COVID and distance learning this school year.

Cooper Activities Office Assistant Ms. Thurston said that the Activities Office has made a variety of changes to reduce the spread of COVID.

“In the office itself, we have added a plexiglass barrier on the counter for when we are talking to students or parents. We use a lot more hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes, wiping down keyboards, the

copier, counters, and door handles every day,” Thurston said.

Also, the Cooper Activities Office is limiting one masked student or family in the office at a time.

The biggest change in the Activities Office from previous years is the scheduling changes for all fall sports. Cooper Activities Office Director Mr. Oelfke had to redo all fall sports game schedules due to the new Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) COVID guidelines.

At the same time, the sports registration process itself wasn’t a whole lot different for fall sports athletes. According to Thurston, “the registration form can be completed

online and sent in for fall athletes.” Also, a number of the fall sports forms were picked up during maternal pick-up days, which Thurston said was beneficial.

The biggest change for athletes this year is having to do the daily self-screening form before attending a practice or a competition. Thurston said that doing this is for everyone’s safety, as coaches don’t want athletes attending an event if they aren’t feeling well. Athletes also need to be masked when coming inside the building and are required to practice social distancing, which can be a challenge for students when they are with their friends.

Additionally, athletes need to bring their own water bottle this year, as the water fountains are closed, and sharing water bottles with one another is prohibited.

Due to COVID and distance learning, Thurston said there was a slight decline in the number of students participating in sports for the fall. She said it is difficult when practices are held after school, as students are not in the school and aren’t able to go straight to practices.

Cooper has added activity buses that pick students up and bring them to practice in the afternoon and take them home afterward. Thurston said this has helped a lot in getting students to participate.

Hawks get jobs while learning from home

Although they face scheduling challenges and health concerns, students try to earn money during their time offline

By SANDY VUE
Quill staff writer

Many students at Cooper are balancing their time between distance learning and working jobs in the community. One of the many challenges working students face is finding the time to complete their homework assignments and turning in their work on time while also having a job.

“Sometimes, I have to stay up late to do my homework due to the fact that we have to be online live and then work afternoons,” Emilio Sarabia (11) said.

Sarabia’s peer Bailey Morehouse (11) said she is experiencing the same thing.

“You have more on your plate so it’s easier to get behind on work and be stressed,” Morehouse said.

According to Morehouse, participating in extracurriculars like sports can interfere with school and work, making it harder to stay caught up. Furthermore, Sarabia said “having homework after class” interferes with his schedule.

“It might be practice, but not when students are copying or not getting it done,” he said.

Students working during COVID-19 has raised the concern of their parents. Wynter Burns, a 2020 Cooper graduate who worked her junior and senior years, said her “parents were not excited” when she worked last spring because she was “risking getting sick,” but they still allowed it. Other parents have a different view on the issue of working.

“They just didn’t want it to affect my grades,” Sarabia said.



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

The Hy-Vee in New Hope is one business at which many Cooper students find part-time work.

At the same time, some parents think taking on a job will benefit their child.

“My parents are happy that I’m taking on ‘adulting’ tasks [and] skills like time management,” Morehouse said.

As Cooper plans for a full semester of distance learning, some working students like Sarabia are finding that working during distance learning is “easier to accommodate” than normal because students can work more or different shifts. For instance, due to the shift to distance learning last spring, Burns said she started to “work 15 hours a week” as

opposed to the past, when she used would work “10 hours a week.” Similarly, Morehouse said that with distance learning, working part time is “not as hard” because she is at home for a large portion of the day.

Despite the challenges and risks that comes with working during distance learning, each student has gained benefits and experience. The best thing for Burns about working during last spring’s quarantine was “getting out of [her] house.”

“It puts you in a new environment, and just for that shift, you can do anything but schoolwork, and in a way, it’s a good way to unwind,” she said.

Sarabia said his job has helped him learn how to maintain a schedule.

“It has helped me learn to manage my time appropriately and wisely,” he said.

Meanwhile, Morehouse said she has learned how to deal with and talk to people better.

While having a job can help get students out of the house, as well as gain experience in the workplace, during distance learning, it is also important for students to remember to keep their priorities straight.

“It is not a necessity to work during distance learning,” Morehouse said.

History course added during distance learning

AP World History is a new option in the Cooper social studies department

By ZACARI WATSON
Quill staff writer

A new year at Cooper brought with it a new AP World History class. Even with the coronavirus, the Cooper social studies department has still managed to implement this new class during distance learning.

AP World History is being taught by Ms. Kilsdonk. She said there are several main types of assessments that will be given in her class.

“Students will take many collaborative assessments in the beginning that consist of comparing areas in historical periods and then practicing components of AP exams like multiple choice, short answer, documents-based questions, and long essay questions, with the aid of their notes and other resources,” she said. “We will also do a variety of assessments like scored discussions, creative interpretations of historical concepts, and more.”

Kilsdonk said she had to go through a process in order to get the new class approved.

“I proposed that a middle ground between a regular class and an IB/AP class be offered so that students of varied skill levels would have access to a challenging class and to have a safe environment to take on this level of work,” she said. “I proposed the class to the counseling department and the school principal.”

According to Kilsdonk, there are many ways in which students will benefit from taking the new class.

“Students taking this class have the opportunity to work at their own level, which means that some students may want to challenge themselves to earn college credit with the modeling and skill scaffolding of Ms. Kilsdonk, while other students may just want to work toward earning high school credit,” she said.

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students during class.”

Echoing Kope about the challenges of engaging students is DiSalvi.

“It is also really difficult for me to teach when I am not able to see my students’ reactions,” he said. “I understand their hesitation to turn on their screen, but it still is difficult for me to tell how well they are understanding lessons if I can’t read their facial expressions.”

At the same time, there have been some benefits to distance learning from a teacher’s perspective. Kope mentioned that she does not miss the traditional bell schedule of an eight-period day.

“I love not hearing bells all day. The bells make me crazy. I always replay the Edgar Allen Poe poem ‘The Bells’ in my head at the beginning of the school year,” she said.

Another benefit of distance learning for teachers is one that many students are also enjoying: the reduction of travel time to and from school.

“I have enjoyed being able to work at home,” DiSalvi said. “This has allowed me to eat lunch with my wife. It also means I can get up a little later since I don’t need to get up and drive to work.”

While teaching virtually has its benefits and challenges, Kope said she works hard to effectively reach her students.

“I do know that I have a lot more energy because I am not using the same kind of energy that face-to-face teaching entails. I’m trying to harness that energy into coming up with interesting lessons, culturally-relevant curriculum and fighting the racism that I see around me. I hope all of the other teachers are doing that, too,” Kope said.

When it comes to the way that students are receiving the online lessons that teachers are preparing, DiSalvi said he hopes he helps his students to succeed despite the lack of in-person contact.

“On the one hand, I think there is a small group of students who benefit from distance learning because they can focus more on their instruction and less on social pressures in the classroom,” he said. “However, overall, I think it is more difficult than in-person learning because for students, like teachers, it is hard to develop relationships online.”

Academic success in distance learning requires innovation

As Cooper students are already finding out, relying on the old methods of doing well in class will not always work this year

By ANDREA TRIBBLE
Quill staff writer

Distance learning is forcing students to become self-motivated and organized. Although those are good traits to have, this style of learning can be taxing on students’ mental health and passion for school.

When students are doing in-person school five days a week, it’s easy to feel like you have no more fuel in the tank. However, during distance learning, this feeling of burnout comes more quickly and aggressively. Being at home can make it difficult to focus on your assignments, which can cause work to pile up, only adding to the stress. As difficult as it may seem, throwing in the towel isn’t the answer. Fortunately, there are some ways to make your distance learning experience more manageable.

1. Establish a specific work area

One thing that can help students succeed in distance learning is a designated work area. Working from your bed isn’t always the most efficient thing to do, no matter how comfortable your bed is. Creating a designated work area, whether that be a desk or your dining room table, can make it easier to focus.

2. Maintain a planner

Utilizing a planner is also a good



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Staying organized can be difficult with the alternating-day schedule.

tool. Marking down any assignments, due dates and class schedules can help you stay up to date and in control. Keeping track of your planner and the materials will also help you prioritize assignments based on how close their due dates are. Planners are a great thing to incorporate into your daily life and can put your school work into perspective, which may relieve some of the stress of trying to juggle multiple assignments in your head.

3. Schedule some down time

Taking breaks in between studying is another tip that can greatly benefit any-

one feeling overwhelmed during distance learning. Taking a break to listen to a song or grab a glass of water is an important part of studying. It is advised to take a short 5-15-minute break every hour or so, and a longer 30-minute break every 2-4 hours when your study session requires that much time. Note that these breaks shouldn’t include TikTok or video games, but productive things like stretching or walking around your house just to get your body moving.

4. Pay attention to your mental health

Taking care of your mental health

is just as important as taking care of your school work. It is okay to turn the Chromebook off and put the books away. You want to always nurture your mind and spirit and make sure you are doing everything you can to ensure you are in a safe and comfortable place. There are many things going on in our world right now that are beyond our control but cause us stress nonetheless. Knowing when to shut the world off and create a relaxing moment for yourself is crucial.

5. Focus on prioritizing yourself

School is not who you are, it is something you engage in. We’ve been in school for a handful of years and it’s easy to feel like we need to prioritize it before anything else. This is not necessarily true; your mental and physical health come first. In order to succeed and give your best effort in school, your mind and body have to be in a good place.

6. Be willing to adapt

Distance learning can be challenging, but this year has been full of challenges that we have all conquered thus far. While we are not used to this style of learning, figuring out what works for you and what motivates you to get work done will help you carry out the rest of the year. The willingness to adapt is key.

Technology workers dedicated to helping students, staff

Meeting the hardware, software needs of the Cooper community during distance learning falls on a hard-working team

By CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN
Quill staff writer

Preparing for distance learning this fall was a challenge not only for Cooper students, teachers and administrators, but also the people responsible for the school’s hardware and software technologies, which are critical to remote teaching and learning. Together, technology integration specialist Ms. Leali-Broberg and technology specialist Mr. Dziasek have been working hard to make sure students and staff are successfully online and making the most of distance learning.

The first hurdle in getting ready for the fall was getting devices into the hands of Cooper students.

“One of the biggest items the technology department had to deal with was getting devices,” Dziasek said. “The district ordered early so the technology department was able to get

iPads for elementary students and new Chromebooks for middle school students. The district [also] had to work to get mobile hotspots for student access.”

After obtaining technology and distributing it to the different grade levels, the tech team also had to face some technical issues that are beyond the control of the district, including problems with Schoology and Google Meets.

“There are still technical issues that are beyond the district’s control,” Dziasek said.

Although all students and most staff members are working from home during distance learning, Dziasek said he is still coming to the office every day to help parents and students with issues on their devices and answering questions.

Much like Dziasek, Leali-Broberg is also helping with the technology needs of students and staff during distance learning. She

said that she wakes up to about 50 to 100 emails every day.

“I also spend most of my time just responding to teacher and student needs for support. Luckily, now we seem to have figured out most of the major issues so I can work more efficiently and spend more time on projects like helping teachers prepare lessons,” she said.

Helping students and staff make use of the technology was a big part of Leali-Broberg’s focus before the school year even started.

“We always do a ‘Summer Tech Academy’ in August that is optional for teachers. Usually, we get about 50 people that sign up. This year, we had over 300. We made sure all the classes we offered were tools or teaching techniques for distance learning and helping teachers feel prepared. We also did everything online so that teachers could experience distance learning from the students’ perspec-

tive to understand what works and what doesn’t,” she said.

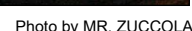
Despite the great efforts they are taking to support students and staff, both Leali-Broberg and Dziasek noted that not everyone is able to have dependable access to Wi-Fi, Chromebooks and iPads. Additionally, they both have encountered the same issues with Kami submissions and Schoology crashing. However, they have been impressed by the growth of teachers and staff when dealing with technology issues.

“I have been absolutely floored by the growth I’ve seen in teachers,” Leali-Broberg said. “So many have had to learn new technology so fast, and while there have been some speed bumps, a lot of teachers are working hard and trying new things and it’s been really amazing to see how much teachers are willing to learn and do to offer the best learning experience for students.”

The alternating-day block schedule and Wednesday support sessions have improved the distance learning experience this school year

Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

If you believe in the potential of our country to actually reflect our founding principles, you will vote on November 3. Not only should you vote, you should vote with a purpose and an understanding of how important your single vote is. Moreover, you should share this understanding with everyone who still believes their vote doesn't matter.



Not having classes on Wednesday is another important factor to the efficiency of distance learning and the success of students. Wednesdays are reserved to catch up on work and visit teachers if help is needed on any material. This allows students to have a day of the week where new learning is on pause, allowing them to catch up. The fact that Wednesdays are provided for

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The Quill welcomes Letters to the Editor. If you would like to send The Quill your thoughts about a story that ran in the paper, or your thoughts about an issue affecting our school or community, please word process and email your letter to eric_zuccola@rdale.org as a text-only file. The Quill reserves the right to edit all Letters to the Editor for space.

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NSPA

Rocket League blasts players to free fun

The car-based soccer game, which has been increasing in popularity among gamers, went free-to-play in late September

By ANDREW HAGGE
Quill staff writer

With the start of *Rocket League* season one, Psyonix, which created this car-based soccer game in conjunction with Epic Games, which has owned Psyonix since early 2019, went free-to-play on September 23. *Rocket League* is now available on every platform. This is a huge step for Psyonix, which has kept *Rocket League* pay-to-play until now. With Epic Games having the fan base it does, mostly due to its huge hit, *Fortnite Battle Royale*, they were able to afford making *Rocket League* available to everyone at no charge.

Psyonix came out with a Llama Rama event celebrating the new advancements a week after the new season was live. Players were able to earn an all-new battle bus vehicle as well as new wraps and rewards. Every Wednesday, weekly challenges are brought out to give players things to do while they wait for more season challenges to arrive. With *Rocket League* having four stages to the season challenges, each new stage, starting with stage one, will unlock on a certain date that Psyonix has yet to specify. While these season challenges are harder and take longer to complete than weekly challenges, they grant better rewards. This is meant to give players something to work on while waiting for more since these will take the average player weeks to complete.

The Rocket Pass, which is



Photo courtesy of PSYONIX

The innovations added to *Rocket League* over the years has opened up new opportunities for Esports.

their version of a battle pass, costs \$10 of in-game currency. The Rocket Pass contains 70 tiers and with it comes brand new items. In the pass, you will also get back credits through which you can afford the next one for free. Once you reach tier 71 in the pass, you unlock better rarities of items from the pass, which are worth more and have different coloring to them. The Rocket Pass tiers go on until you have collected every color and type of each item in that season's pass. In *Rocket League*, the rarest item color is Titanium White, which can guarantee you some credits

through trading. The price of the pass is consistent with most other games that have some sort of game pass or tier system.

Rocket League has always been a fun game. The basic controls are pretty simple and easy to learn. If you play often, you can learn expert controls quickly and will be able to fly in-game as a car. Being able to fly is what makes this game unique, especially for a game in which they combine soccer and racing cars into an action-packed creation called Soc-car.

Ever since 2015, *Rocket League* has always featured new ideas. In fact, this game was the

first of its kind and opened up a new side of Esports that no one knew existed. The popularity of Esports has grown, and with it came the *Rocket League Championship Series* on Twitch.

Overall, *Rocket League* is a great game, and with various updates, it continues to improve upon itself. The physics of this game are quite realistic when compared to some other games and they are easy to understand. The best part is that you can play with your friends anytime. I strongly recommend you try it out for yourself. *Rocket League* gets four out of five stars.

Unusual subject matter adds to appeal of *Haikyuu*

Now streaming on Netflix and Crunchyroll, this anime series focuses on a competitive volleyball team

By CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN
Quill staff writer

Shoyo Hinata is a determined volleyball player who seeks to become a champion in the sport. He joins his school's volleyball club just to find out that they need to sharpen their skills and work together as a team if they want to make it to the top. This is the premise of the popular anime series *Haikyuu*, which is now streaming on Netflix and Crunchyroll. Its unique combination of subject matter, story telling and pacing make this a show that everyone should check out.

The company behind *Haikyuu* is Production I.G, a famous production studio that has created hit shows like *Kuroko's Basketball*, *Guilty Crown* and *Ace of Diamond*. This studio is well known for its sports anime and their understanding of the actual sports they cover. For example, *Kuroko's Basketball* and *Ace of Diamond* display a bit of realism in sports and teach the audience some sort of moral lesson related to sportsmanship. Something in common between *Haikyuu* and the other shows is the



Photo courtesy of MAINICHI BROADCASTING SYSTEM

The show strives for realism in its depiction of the sport of volleyball.

fact that they focus on team chemistry and show the day-to-day life of practicing. It is enjoyable witnessing the character development and seeing them work together through hardships.

The pacing of the show is well designed. Most anime are missing key scenes from the original manga, but I think Production I.G did a good job at keeping the animated version of *Haikyuu* accurate with respect to the original manga on

which it is based. The story and animation are unique and you won't see a dip in animation quality as you watch it. I'd say the story arcs are consistently interesting and they will keep you on your toes. There are also superficial things that contribute to having a good experience while watching the show, such as the soundtrack and the animation itself.

One particularly interesting thing about the show is that it

teaches the viewers about volleyball. Viewers of the show can learn the sport and take something away from it. Haruichi Furu-date, the writer and illustrator of *Haikyuu*, doesn't try to fictionalize volleyball as much as he did with *Kuroko's Basketball*. After some criticism of *Kuroko's Basketball*, he decided to add only a little bit of "fictional aspects" such as the height of Hinata's running jump and his spike setups with his teammate Kageyama. Although there is a bit of exaggeration, it doesn't affect the integrity of the show. By taking a largely realistic approach, the show's creators make room for characters to develop and grow as individuals, which viewers will see as the series goes on.

In conclusion, I think the show is worth checking out and it lives up to its hype. Not only is the author aware of the actual sport, but he also tries to teach you about it. The animation quality lives up to its expectation and the storyline is interesting. The connection between the anime and manga is good and the character development is strong. *Haikyuu* earns a rating of four stars out of five.

Adventurous viewers should be open to *Ending Things*

The new Charlie Kaufman movie, which is available on Netflix, continues that director's reputation for challenging films

By DAVIS RUPPERT-KAN
Quill staff writer

"I'm thinking of ending things. Once this thought arrives, it stays. It sticks, it lingers, it dominates. There's not much I can do about it. Trust me. It doesn't go away."

These are the opening lines of the latest Charlie Kaufman movie, aptly titled, *I'm Thinking of Ending Things*.

A bit of a dark start, I must admit. Let's back up.

Ending Things, the new Netflix movie, stars Jesse Plemons and Jessie Buckley as a romantically dead couple, Jake and Lucy, respectively, as they go to visit the former's parents' rural home. That's about as much as I can say on the purely surface level.

While the actual subject

matter and real focus of the film is pretty blatant by the title alone, one still might want to go into the film completely blind. For those

existentialist and depressing, tonally and thematically.

As for the rest? I'd hate to spoil it. No, really. Even though

I actually wrote and deleted about 500 words of this review just because I really didn't want to spoil this movie but also really wanted to write about it nonetheless.

of you who don't want spoilers of any kind whatsoever, I'll just say not to watch the movie if you're depressed or going through difficulties yourself, as it's quite

the initial twist and true meaning of the film is pretty apparent as soon as the other main character appears, it's still more individually impactful to realize it for

yourself, as is the case with much of Kaufman's work, which ranges from *Being John Malkovich* to *Synecdoche, New York*. The point of his movies is to figure them out yourself and ascribe meaning to things as you see fit.

I actually wrote and deleted about 500 words of this review just because I really didn't want to spoil this movie but also really wanted to write about it nonetheless. I dunno. Maybe you'll derive the same meanings and conclusions as I did. I really can't say much else without spoiling it, but it is a fantastic, beautiful film, and I heavily suggest you watch it if you can stomach the subject matter. I rate *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* somewhere between four and four-and-a-half stars out of five.

Ford vs. Ferrari will get your pulse racing

An A-list cast brings a real story to life with plenty of drama, comedy, action

By NOLAN ANDLER
Quill staff writer

From the creators at Chernin Entertainment and 20th Century Fox comes *Ford vs. Ferrari*, a drama set in the world of motorsports that is based on a true story. Released in November 2019, it's a comedic and emotional movie about friendship, competition and teamwork set in a period when the Ford Motor Company was struggling with money. The cast consists of award-winning actors such as Christian Bale, Matt Damon, Noah Jupe, Josh Lucas and Jon Bernthal. If you are a motorsports fan, or if you are just in search of a good movie, *Ford vs. Ferrari* is the one for you. I think it's a good movie because of the acting and cinematography. It is also a historically accurate movie that shows the birth of the famous Ford GT car and gets you rooting like it is a live sporting event.

The film gets rolling when Enzo Ferrari (Remo Girone) turns down an offer for a merger between the Ford and Ferrari companies in 1963. Henry Ford II (Tracy Letts) doesn't take this too well and decides to get his revenge by putting together a race team to take down Ferrari. He gets former race car driver and current automotive designer Carroll Shelby (Matt Damon), fearless race car driver Ken Miles (Christian Bale) and the rest of Shelby's crew at Shelby Motor, Inc. to build a car for Ford that is good enough to take down Ferrari. As they strive toward the mission, the central characters deal with personal demons and with corporate interference by the Ford Motor Company itself.

When you think about the characters in the movie, you don't think of the real Ken Miles or the real Carroll Shelby, you think of Christian Bale and Matt Damon. And that is a testament to their great acting. Christian Bale does an extraordinary job playing a person like Ken Miles, who is fearless and cocky, and Matt Damon is equally good as Carroll Shelby. The emotions they show are really fun to watch and it never sounds like it is scripted.

Also great are all of the actors who play the Ford employees. For example, Josh Lucas as Leo Beebe and Jon Bernthal as Lee Iacocca feel like they are auto industry professionals when you see them on the screen. They all fit their characters well and that's another thing that makes this a good movie.

Another highlight of the movie is its combination of excellent directing and special effects. This is most apparent in the film's race scenes, which accurately show what the tracks they raced at back in that time period looked like thanks to subtle special effects. One specific sequence that shows the great directing is in the beginning of the film. When Ford gets all of his executives to go to the balcony level above the factory where they build the cars to yell at the employees about the direction the company is going in, it always provokes a chuckle given the way the actors walk like they are secret agents.

One last element that is good in this movie is the music. Songs like "Polk Salad Annie," which plays during scenes when they are either racing or testing the car, gives the impression that the cars are going fast. Another scene that is fun due to its use of music is the sequence when Iacocca goes to talk with Ferrari. The intrigue of the possible merger is backed up by a background song that sounds like music from a spy film.

Overall, the reason why all movie fans should watch *Ford vs. Ferrari* is that they do a perfect job mixing drama with laughs thanks to the excellent acting, directing, camera work and music. If you are in need of a good movie, whether you are a motorsports fan or not, this is a great one to watch. I give *Ford vs. Ferrari* five out of five stars.

Premier Performers

The story of the musicians and artists who bring their talents to Cooper

Emily Hernandez

By CHRISTOPHER NGUYEN
Quill staff writer

Emily Hernandez (12) is part of Cooper's choir and band programs. She is currently in Concert Choir, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band and Marching Band. Hernandez has been in a band for a total amount of nine years.

"I started in fourth grade," she said.

As for choir, Hernandez has been doing it for seven years. She said she joined choir on an impulse.

"For choir, I have been in it since sixth grade, so for seven years. Joining choir was at first an accident, but as time went on, I really did start liking the class, so I continued to do it," she said.

Hernandez said her interest in music comes from the fact she looks up to her sister and dad, who also play instruments.

"I decided to start playing because

of how my sister and dad both play their own instruments, so I always wanted to play my own," she said.

Her favorite choir memory is when she sang with the Cooper choir at Orchestra Hall for the first time.

"[I liked] hearing how the band, choir and orchestra sounded on the pieces each group practiced so hard for," she said.

As for band, she enjoys practicing with her peers and performing at football games.

"[I like] all of the marching band practices and football games with Mr. Hahn and the band," she said.

Hernandez said she will continue with music for the remainder of the year. In fact, choir and band are such a big part of her life that she wants to pursue music after high school.

"It really became a big part of my life and I wouldn't think about stopping anytime soon," she said.



Photo by E. HERNANDEZ

Zoe Hollander

By SANDY VUE
Quill staff writer

Zoe Hollander (12) is involved in theater, choir, long-form improv and select vocal ensembles. She has been involved in these Cooper activities for four years and has been taking acting classes since she was seven.

During her years in theater, Hollander's favorite role was playing Wednesday Addams in the *Addams Family* musical.

"If not for that show, I likely wouldn't be as close with two of my best friends as I am now," she said.

Friendship has also been important in improv. During her sophomore year in that activity she "finally began to feel comfortable in scenes" thanks to her friends.

"I got to work with some very good friends for the last time and got to

spend even more time with one of my best friends. Our overnight from that year sticks out as a particularly good memory; a bit chaotic, but fun nonetheless," she said.

Hollander has held leadership roles in her arts activities. The most prominent role was being an improv captain alongside two co-captains. She also has been a choir assistant.

Moving forward, Hollander said she is hopeful improv will happen this year.

"Improv is planning on holding auditions for new members soon and is looking to do shows in some format this year, and I've heard tell of a fall show and winter musical," she said.

Some plans that she holds for her future are to attend college and pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts in musical theater.

"I intend to turn my passion into my profession; at least, that's the goal," Hollander said.



Photo by Z. HOLLANDER

Sarah Lehnertz

By JACK ATKINSON
Quill staff writer

Sarah Lehnertz (12) is in Concert Choir, Bella Voce, color guard, theater and short-form improv.

"I have been doing singing my whole life, but my first year of choir was All-District Choir in fifth grade," she said.

Prior to that, Lehnertz said she did solos for school talent shows and church programs, which is what helped draw her to music.

"In every activity, I've always felt like I had someone to talk to and everyone is working towards a common goal, whether it be to make someone in the crowd laugh, cry, and everything in between," she said.

Some of Lehnertz's favorite performance memories involved the district's annual fall festival for music and the

Cooper theater shows.

"Playing Little Girl in *Ragtime* was definitely my favorite theater memory and I even got to do a little ballet," she said.

Although many of her performance activities are on hold right now due to the pandemic, Lehnertz said that color guard is happening.

"We have a total of three performances at home football games," she said.

When it comes to school, choir and history are two subject Lehnertz enjoys.

"I really like singing with all my friends and I really like getting to study the past," she said.

Outside of school, Lehnertz enjoys working, hanging out with friends and pursuing her interests in music and photography.

As for the future, Lehnertz is "thinking of possibly pursuing journalism, advertising or even psychology."



Photo by S. LEHNERTZ

Hannah Hoffstrom

By FAITH KING
Quill staff writer

Hannah Hoffstrom (12) participates in choir at Cooper. Hoffstrom joined choir in fifth grade and continued on with it throughout middle and high school. One highlight of choir for Hoffstrom has been her friendships.

"I've enjoyed making lifelong friendships and memories that I will cherish," she said.

One of Hoffstrom's favorite memories from choir was their trip to San Antonio during her sophomore year. She also enjoyed playing "boomwhackers" for their World Music Concert.

Outside of school, a huge part of Hoffstrom's life is dance. She has been dancing since the age of four and is currently a competitive dancer for The Dance

Complex. When she is not dancing at the studio, she is teaching and helping younger dancers learn their routines.

"Dance is year-round, so that keeps me very busy. I really never have a day off, but I wouldn't want it any other way," Hoffstrom said.

When she's not busy with choir or dance, some of her hobbies include photography and cooking.

As for a career path, Hoffstrom has "a couple of options." She plans on either going to Iowa State University to study meteorology or attending the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities to study chemistry.

One thing Hoffstrom knows for sure is that she would like to continue her dance career in the future, whether that means auditioning for her college's dance team or continuing to work at her dance studio.

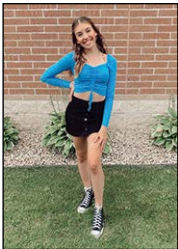


Photo by H. HOFFSTROM

First *Spider-Man* still spins its web

Sam Raimi's classic take on the Marvel character holds up nearly two decades later



Photo courtesy of COLUMBIA PICTURES

Before Tom Holland and Andrew Garfield, it was Tobey Maguire inside the famous Spider-Man spandex.

By LUKE REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Spider-Man is one of Marvel Comics' and pop culture's most famous fictional characters whose popularity has led to him appearing in many forms of digital media, such as film, television and animated features. From 2000-2020, Spider-Man has appeared in many different forms and film adaptations, and he continues to grow and evolve as time goes on. For this review, I will be discussing the 2002 *Spider-Man* movie, directed by Sam Raimi with a screenplay by David Koepp. I believe this is one of the strongest outings for the Spider-Man character when it comes to his presence in films.

Spider-Man begins by showcasing all of its important characters. Peter Parker, played by Tobey Maguire, is a typical bullied high school nerd. Peter's love interest, Mary Jane "MJ" Watson, played by Kirsten Dunst, is a kind-hearted student mixed up with the wrong group of people secretly searching for the right person to be with. Peter's best friend, Harry Osborne, played by James Franco, is the son of a scientist, Norman Osborne, played by Willem Dafoe, with whom he does not have an ideal father-son relationship. Norman secretly idolizes Peter, who recognizes Norman's work and admires him, which leads to issues with Harry.

While on a school field trip early in the film, Peter is bitten by a radioactive spider, which transforms his body, giving him the abilities to shoot webs, climb walls and have super-strength, though at the cost of his ego. Followed by Peter's transformation is Norman's, who undergoes an experiment which turns him into a deranged murderer who wears a green military field suit, which leads to him later being dubbed the Green Goblin. I really love Raimi and Koepp's choice to follow up Peter's

origin with Norman's, showing the contrast between how both of these characters transform.

His big change inspires Peter to use his powers in a fighting tournament in order to win prize money that he can use to buy a fancy car to impress MJ. However, Peter's greed for his own personal gain causes an argument between him and his Uncle Ben, who is worried for Peter after Peter gets in a fight at school and forgets to help Ben paint the house because he is distracted by testing his powers. In my favorite scene in the film, Ben tells Peter, "With great power, comes great responsibility." Peter immediately shrugs off this advice and demands that Ben stop "pretending to be" his father. The performances of the actors in this sequence is a highlight of the film.

Following his victory in the cage match, Peter allows a criminal to steal the prize money because he "missed the part where that's his problem." To Peter's shock, the criminal who he lets go ends up killing Uncle Ben, who was out looking for Peter. Now using Uncle Ben's advice and realizing what his own personal gain has cost him, Peter decides to become a crime-fighting superhero in New York dubbed "Spider-Man."

Not surprisingly, the structure of the screenplay soon brings Spider-Man into conflict with the Green Goblin. After several encounters with Spider-Man, the Green Goblin proposes to Spider-Man an alliance to take over New York together. Spider-Man refuses, turning the Goblin further against him. Shortly thereafter, Norman learns Peter's identity as Spider-Man, recognizing a flesh wound he gave to Spider-Man, which inspires the Goblin to hospitalize Peter's Aunt May and kidnap MJ. Spider-Man saves MJ and battles the Goblin in a brutal and hard-hitting fight that results in Peter being all bloodied up and physically in pain. It is in fight scenes such as this that

Raimi's filmmaking style reaches its full potential, with interesting camera angles, great choreography and rapid editing upping the intensity.

Spider-Man does persist in causing the Goblin to surrender and reveal himself as Norman, who asks Peter to help him and to "be a son to him now." However, Peter reveals he had a father whose "name was Ben Parker." Norman's desire to kill Peter overshadows his desire to get help, causing Norman to inadvertently kill himself while trying to impale Peter with his spiked glider. At the end of the film, Harry blames Spider-Man for his father's death and MJ finally decides to be with Peter, who she realizes is the right person for her. The fact that each character experiences a suitable fate at the end of the film is evidence of the movie's strong structure and effective characterization.

In the end, Peter puts the "man" in Spider-Man. He has completed his mission in defeating Norman and his main goal at the start of the film, which was to be with MJ. Despite this, Peter knows that having people close to him puts them in danger, so he must reject MJ to keep her safe. Peter is now taking Ben's advice into full account: "With great power comes great responsibility." While he may use his spider powers to help ensure his selfless gain, it is the "man" part of Peter that he grows into at the end.

In conclusion, *Spider-Man* holds up as one of the best superhero origin films. Still, I only give *Spider-Man* three out of five stars because there are several noticeable errors, including some problems with the practical and CGI effects, and some points in the film where characters do things for no reason at all. Nonetheless, *Spider-Man* is a unique, one-of-a-kind superhero movie and a must-watch for any comic book fan thanks to its engaging story about what it means to become a man.

STUDENTS REVAMP HABITS continued from page 1

Meanwhile, Tran said he was ready for virtual learning.

"I felt that I was mentally prepared for the new school year," he said.

Another major part of being ready for virtual learning this school year included planning for success. The way Tran

planned to be successful was by using a "calendar and to-do list for assignments, both of which really helped [him] adjust to the new block schedule."

In addition, David said she created a "dream board" for the current school year.

"My high school dream

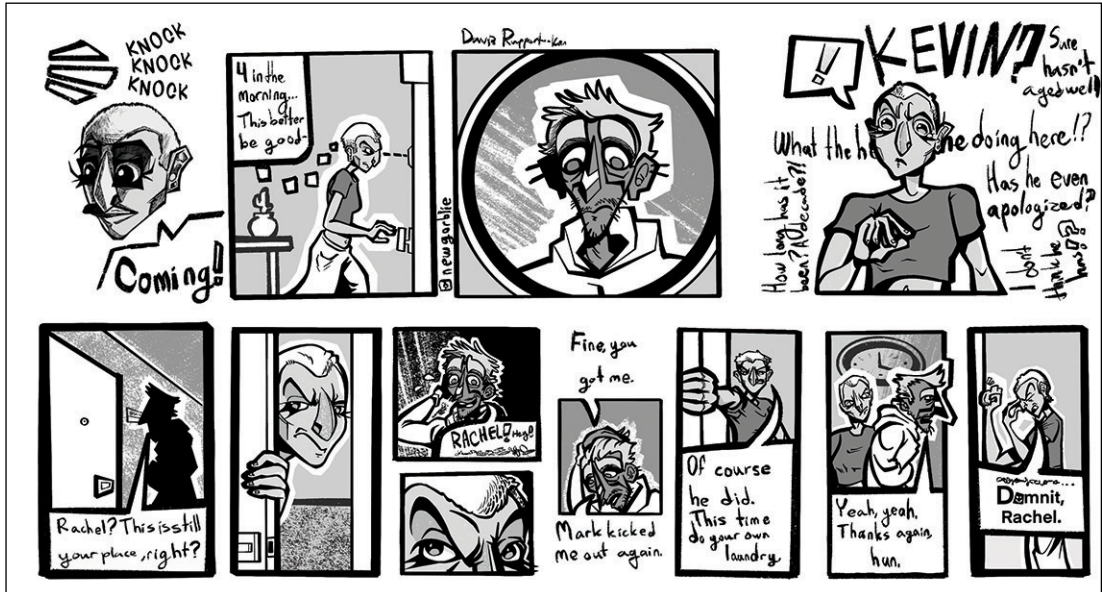
board [has] every single thing I want and need to accomplish and how I'm going to accomplish them," David said.

Finally, Hambike said that she made new goals and tries to work with and around people that she knows are successful in the classroom.

Quill Comics Corner

Uhhh...Working Title

By Davis Ruppert-Kan



Athletes adjust to fall season

Changes to practices, competitions due to COVID require team members to be flexible



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Members of the boys cross country team wear masks and social distance to travel to the October 14 sections meet.

By NOLAN ANDLER
Quill staff writer

Cooper fall athletes experienced a 2020 fall sports season that saw the COVID-19 pandemic and distance learning bring many challenges and restrictions to practices and games.

The announcement that fall sports such as soccer, tennis and cross country would still take place this year brought a lot of joy to the members of those Cooper teams.

“It has added a lot of relief that we’ve been able to play a few fall sports because it has added some normalcy to our lives,” Bella Grandbois (12), captain of the girls soccer team, said. “It is very weird not having to show up to school every day, so an activity that brings me there with my friends has been super fun and a blessing during this time.”

However, they had to make a number of changes to keep the players safe. According to Grandbois, many of the changes related to social distancing.

“One of the hardest parts of the season is that we haven’t been able to do any team bonding,” she said.

Practices have been impacted and changed around in lots of ways for all sports to limit contact.

“We have to fill out a survey daily saying how we feel, and we have sanitizer and wear masks unless we are playing,” Grandbois said.

Another sport that had to change up its approach to practice was football. In fact, it did not look at first like they would have a season, let alone practice, due to a decision that football would take place in spring. Captain William West (12) said he was happy that decision was changed.

“I really can’t say how I feel about a spring season. All I know

is that I wish we didn’t waste over a month of our fall season only to reverse the decision made August 4 to wait until spring,” he said.

As for safety protocols during practice, West said they try to wear masks as often as possible.

“We have to wear masks except when we have our helmets on or when we are properly socially distanced,” he said. “The only reason why we don’t use them with helmets is so we can wear mouthguards to protect against head injuries like concussions.”

One major thing that the virus is affecting is the college recruiting process. Coaches have been limited on contacting recruits due to the pandemic. Fortunately, for some athletes like Grandbois, recruiting was already done last summer, but for others, adjustments had to be made.

“The dead period that was extended to January 1 has limited the ability of coaches to come and see them play,” she said. “Coaches not being able to come see them pushes back their chance to receive offers.”

Of course, not all athletes are focused on the recruiting process this fall. Instead, they are just happy to play.

“Recruiting is on the back burner right now. I’m more focused on getting to state this year. That’s the number one goal right now,” West said.

At the same time, West added that on-the-field success can still get a recruiter’s attention.

“I’m hopeful that, with the shortened season, I can still put together a great performance with the help of my teammates to get noticed,” he said.

In addition to the challenges COVID has brought to practicing, competing and getting attention from colleges, it has also led to dis-

tance learning, which has brought different challenges to students who take part in sports.

“The first week of classes in PSEO at the [University of Minnesota] was pretty hard since I had to learn a new site and how it works while going to soccer practice,” Grandbois said.

Also facing school challenges is Grace Hambike (12), captain of the girls cross country team.

“I’m in full IB diploma and some classes are harder than others when it comes to them being taught online,” she said.

While distance learning has been hard for some athletes, others like West said he has not experienced much of a problem with it.

“So far, it hasn’t been difficult. With classes in the morning two days a week, it gives me plenty of time for football in the afternoon and homework in the morning and evenings,” he said.

In fact, some of the flexibility in the distance learning schedule has helped fall athletes get in better shape. West said he has been getting up to lift at 4:15 a.m. every morning before school.

“The lifting is mostly to gain strength and muscle mass to gain weight so I can be successful in my position on the offensive line and defensive line,” he said.

Meanwhile, Grandbois said she has been running, lifting and meeting “with an individual training coach to work on [her] technical skill.”

Finally, Hambike said she has been focusing on staying injury-free.

“I have been ensuring that I stay on track with my workout and that I am listening to my body since I am prone to injury,” she said.

Teachers get innovative with PE

COVID requires Cooper’s physical education department to think in new ways about their classes

By ANDREW HAGGE
Quill staff writer

COVID-19 has forced some classes that rely on in-person participation to transition to a fully online format. While this has been a challenge for all Cooper teachers, it has been especially difficult for members of the physical education department.

“I never thought I would be dealing with something like this,” Ms. Schaffer, who has been teaching physical education classes at Cooper for 18 years, said.

Physical education classes rely on physical activity and playing games, which means that teachers of these classes typically have everything planned for the gyms and outside, not for a computer at a student’s home. In order to give students the same information and a similar experience to what they would have if they were learning in person, physical education teachers needed to get crafty and creative with their instruction.

“Typically, we have an idea of what our units are going to look like and what equipment we need to make them happen,” Schaffer said. “But with everyone is stuck in their

own confines, physical education teachers had to create a new way of teaching this year.”

One method for transitioning physical education classes to distance learning has been giving students more choice and independence. Schaffer said members of her department worked hard to figure out ways of getting students to be active while also complying with the COVID-19 guidelines so that everyone stays safe.

“PE is usually a place where students can come in and have fun while playing games with their friends, but, because we are not in person, it is literally a totally different ballgame,” Ms. Schaffer said.

“[Students] can pick from a variety of high-, medium- or low-intensity options that we give them,” Schaffer said.

One drawback to distance learning Schaffer pointed out was her inability to actually see her students during class.

“I would love to see more students showing their faces when we

meet in our Google Meets. I think all teachers would agree that it is really tough to talk to a blank screen all day long,” she said.

While the changes to physical education classes have been challenging, Ms. Rademacher, who has been working at Cooper for 23 years, said she was feeling rewarded with the outcomes that came from the additional planning. Although she said that much of the curriculum in the ninth and 10th grade classes has “not been that different than in years past,” Rademacher said the elective physical education classes she teaches needed a lot of revisions.

“We are focusing on individual wellness overall to keep everyone as healthy as possible,” she said. Both teachers knew that planning for this year would be difficult following the experience of moving to distance learning last spring. However, they said they learned from last year’s experience.

“PE is usually a place where students can come in and have fun while playing games with their friends, but, because we are not in person, it is literally a totally different ballgame,” Schaffer said.

Cooper Competitors

The story of the athletes who strive for success in Cooper sports

Amalia Villalobos

By YORDANOSE MULAT
Quill staff writer

Amalia Villalobos (12) competes in soccer during the fall, Nordic in the winter and ultimate Frisbee in the spring. Villalobos has been playing soccer for 15 years. Moreover, Villalobos has a history of soccer in her family.

“Both of my parents played soccer and were coaches of our rec team. I grew to love it and so I continued to play,” she said.

Villalobos was one of the captains leading the soccer team this year and she said she had a great experience.

“I would say being a captain has gone well. The three of us have been able to recruit new girls and get them to love the sport as much as us,” Villalobos said.

One of Villalobos’ favorite memories in soccer is riding the bus with the

team and “singing the Cooper song.”

During the winter sports season, Villalobos participates in Nordic skiing. Last season went well for the team.

“We had a lot of fun and people were able to improve their race scores,” Villalobos said.

As for the spring, Villalobos plays ultimate Frisbee. However, their last season was canceled due to COVID-19.

When it comes to academics, Villalobos likes chemistry and biology.

“I have always loved and been interested in the sciences,” she said.

Some hobbies Villalobos pursues include club soccer, traveling, road trips and camping.

In college, Villalobos would like to “major in biology” with the hopes of “possibly become a sports medicine physician or a PA.”



Photo by A. VILLALOBOS

Henry Suah

By MAX REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

Henry Suah (12) plays soccer in the fall for Cooper. In the winter and spring, he plays soccer for a club team.

Suah is one of the four captains of the Cooper boys soccer team this year.

“I’ve been playing soccer since I was five years old in Liberia,” Suah said.

Suah chose this sport because, in his home country of Liberia, soccer was the main activity he and his friends did as kids.

“Back in Liberia, my cousin came to visit and was juggling a soccer ball and I thought it was the coolest thing in the world, so I was determined to learn how to do it,” Suah said.

Suah has enjoyed traveling during his time playing soccer for Cooper.

“The bus ride to Duluth was very

special,” Suah said. “It was long and adventurous, and we had time to talk with each other and build a team bond.”

In school, Suah’s favorite subjects are math, English and AVID because he has a strong connection with his classmates.

“I want to go to college and major in business and marketing,” Suah said. “I hope one day I can own my own business and help my family back in Africa.”

Suah also stated that he wanted to continue playing soccer in college, as he loves soccer with a strong passion.

In his free time, Suah enjoys playing FIFA on PlayStation and watching movies and television series. His favorite movies to watch are the movies in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

“I’ll take Marvel [movies] over DC any day of the week,” Suah said.

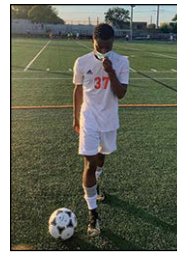


Photo by HENRY SUAH

William West

By MAX REKELA-JASPER
Quill staff writer

William West (12) plays football in the fall, skis on the Nordic team in the winter and plays ultimate Frisbee in the spring.

West is one of the nine captain nominees for the four captain spots on the Cooper football team. This is West’s 11th season as a football player. In fact, he has played every season since he was in second grade.

“I must say, I didn’t really pick it,” West said. “My dad recognized that my brother and I loved it and signed [us] up for a youth league when we both met the age requirement.”

The main thing West enjoys about playing football for Cooper is how closely knit the team is.

During the winter sports season,

West will be returning to Nordic as a captain for a second year.

“Last season went great,” West said. “I had tons of fun, but the goals I set for myself weren’t completed, so I hope to fulfill them this coming season.”

In the spring, West is also one of the ultimate Frisbee captains.

“I have a lot of fun playing this sport,” West said.

In school, West enjoys all of his classes. He does the PSEO program, through which he is taking classes at Hennepin Technical College in Eden Prairie for marine and motorsport technology.

After high school, West plans to become a technician in the marine and motorsport field.

“Someday, I would like to open my own business to deal with them or work for someone who manufactures them,” West said.



Photo by WILLIAM WEST

JJ Collier

By FAITH KING
Quill staff writer

JJ Collier (12) plays football for Cooper in the fall, basketball in the winter and has recently started running track in the spring.

Collier has been playing backyard football his whole life, but first joined a team when he was in eighth grade.

“What convinced me to play was my friends and the energy I felt when I played my first time,” he said.

A highlight of playing football for Collier is the team unity.

“I have a group of people I can call my brothers and call on any of them if I’m ever in trouble. Also, who doesn’t love Friday night games with everybody seeing your talents put on display?” he said.

One of Collier’s favorite football

memories was going around volunteering and helping people in the community with his teammates.

As a varsity player, Collier said he knows the importance of leading by example for the younger players.

“Me and everyone on varsity does a great job at helping them,” he said.

Collier’s favorite subject in school is math.

“I’ve always been intrigued by the possibility of being able to solve a problem and understand how it is either right or wrong,” he said.

Outside of school, Collier enjoys jogging, playing games related to sports and drawing.

“It’s one of my talents not many people know about,” he said.

After high school, Collier plans on attending North Dakota State University and majoring in architecture.



Photo by JJ COLLIER

Vikings season off to poor start despite roster

Gifted players are not yet working as a unit to achieve team victories

By ANDREW HAGGE
Quill staff writer

The Vikings started the season through week seven with a 1-5 record and with many troubles throughout the lineup. The defense is struggling without key players who were let go over the offseason due to cap space, and the offense, even with first-round pick Justin Jefferson, is struggling to overcome defense after defense.

The struggles that have been shown in Minnesota's defense are not quite what fans expected of the team. Defensively, the Vikings look really strong through the lineup, yet somehow, they are having difficulty stopping one team after another. Along the D-line, the Vikings picked up both Yannick Ngakoue and Ifeadi Odenigbo to replace weak spots left by past linemen who were let go due to cap space problems. As the season started, the defense looked like it would be fine and do just as well as it has in past years, but as everyone now knows, it's not even close.

According to ESPN.com, the Vikings are allowing the second-most points per game in the league at 32. The only defense that is worse is that of the Dallas Cowboys, who are at 36 points. Just about every offense that has gone against the Vikings has found a way to beat them.

The defense needs to find a way to be a stronger unit with fewer mistakes and points allowed. With Eric Kendricks leading the team in tackles, it seems as if no one else is doing much when looking at stats. In short, the defense needs to force more turnovers, have better coverage of receivers, and stop the run more than ever before. These are the main issues that needs to be addressed if they want to make the playoffs.

The offense has had its own issues this season, from a poor offensive line to key running backs being hurt. However, Kirk Cousins has been the biggest problem. In just six games, he has thrown 10 interceptions. That is the most in the entire league. What's worse about that stat is that Cousins has been the quarterback all 10 times. Every time one is thrown, it costs the team a crucial scoring chance, from the measly three points a field goal can bring to a touchdown that might give them a lead. Cousins has been out of it and throwing into horrible places, which one could say is the main reason Minnesota loses.

On the upside, the running backs are doing a great job. Dalvin Cook, who was drafted in 2017, had more than 100 yards each week until he had a groin injury in week five, bringing his amazing record to a halt. He scored seven touchdowns through five games, which is impressive considering how much the offense has struggled.

Out wide toward the receivers, Justin Jefferson has exploded, already tallying more than 160 yards through only nine catches. The number of catches shows that he gets almost 20 yards a catch, which shows he is a player who can really help when going down field.

Similarly, the veteran who has done exceptionally well in recent years, Adam Thielen, has just three catches but has amassed 51 yards, which means he is getting 17 yards per catch. He is clearly another receiver who can be trusted when in a tight position.

Ultimately, when it comes to the offense, Cousins just needs to work on his precision and has to find other ways to extend a play besides throwing into a super tight spot and having the ball intercepted. Right now, the offense is scoring an average of just 26 points a game, which is six less than the average opponent scores.

With the offense not scoring as many points as the defense lets in, it will be really difficult for the team to stay united with each other. If the defense can't give the offense good field position, don't expect the Vikings to score or win. When it comes to the offense, look for the receiving core and Cook to be the focus in the near future. They are trusted and can make a play when one is needed, even if Cousins can't be counted on to make the play each time.

Coaches curb COVID with hard work

The unpredictable nature of the pandemic means that Hawks coaches are doing more than usual to ensure athlete safety



Photo by MR. ZUCCOLA

Cross country coach Mr. DiSalvi addresses his runners while wearing a mask, one of this season's safety protocols.

By ANDREA TRIBBLE
Quill staff writer

In the wake of the coronavirus and distance learning, Cooper athletics have been put in a difficult position. There have been questions about postponing or canceling seasons, modifications to the ways practices and games are conducted, and an emphasis on keeping athletes safe. This has forced Cooper coaches to adapt to the times.

Mr. Howard, Cooper's varsity football head coach and 10th grade principal, is no stranger to the challenges of both distance learning and the impact of COVID-19 on high school sports. After entering the school year thinking that football and volleyball would be on hold until spring 2021, it was decided by the MSHSL on September 21 that the two sports would still take place in late fall, getting rid of any concerns about a spring season. Howard said that preparing for a season during a pandemic has forced his and other fall sports teams to integrate safety precautions. He also said that football faced the additional challenge of having to get ready quickly.

"We still needed to and will continue to have alternative training for our players. We had about 80 players in week one of voluntary

practices," Howard said.

According to Howard, he and his coaching staff have done many things to keep spirits hopeful amidst the uncertainty of the fall season. For one, he said the coaching staff has always instilled the fact that football is bigger than "Friday Night Lights."

"This is no exception to the motto. With that said, our players enjoy the team feeling and coming together. The family atmosphere is the number one priority for our team, so that is what keeps our players motivated," he said.

In addition to players being forced to adapt to safety precautions and changes within the sport that they've become so accustomed to, they have also been facing changes with their education due to distance learning. Distance learning has led to an unusual start to the school year and Howard and his staff continue to hold their athletes at a high standard of academic leadership.

"We have implemented a new standard for our team to remind our students that they need to be the leaders in the class, even with distance learning or hybrid instruction," Howard said.

The coaching staff have created the opportunity for "team upgrades" as an incentive for his players to step up and be leaders in their virtu-

al classrooms. Howard said they are also stressing that players keep the team GPA in the first quarter over 3.0.

These moves are personal to Howard, who has two children that are part of Cooper athletics. As a result, he gets a first-hand look at the impact of both distance learning and sports on athletes.

"Even though sports were up in the air, we value that we wake up daily with a chance to make our day better today than it was yesterday. It [was] emotionally draining to see my children not able to compete in the sport they love [before the MSHSL reversed course], but as a leader, we remind our players and I remind my children that it's always 100 percent of the time important to err on the side of safety and health," Howard said.

Of course, in addition to being a coach, Howard is also a member of the Cooper staff, which brings a number of additional challenges during distance learning.

"I have been working hard with our amazing Cooper admin team and teachers to provide an exceptional experience for our students. Days have been long yet rewarding as an assistant principal to see that students are more engaged in class and working hard to be great," he said.

In contrast to the challenges faced

by Howard as a coach due to the delayed start to football, other fall sports such as cross country were more fortunate when it came to the impact of COVID-19 on fall sports coaches.

"Our cross country meets haven't really been postponed," head girls cross country coach and social studies teacher Mr. DiSalvi said. "In fact, we will end up with almost the same amount of meets as a regular season."

Cooper fall coaches have been trying to keep their athletes positive and motivated through this unusual time, and DiSalvi and the rest of the cross country staff are no exception to this.

"We are very patient and understanding when students are absent from practice. We have tried to make practice fun in unusual ways, like having 'blue days' and 'orange days,' where kids have to wear blue or orange to practice. We have also tried to have socially distant scavenger hunts as well," he said.

Much like Howard, DiSalvi has learned that flexibility is the name of the game when coaching during a pandemic.

"We just found out about a week and half ago we were going to have a section race for cross country. This was really unexpected since there is currently no plan for a state meet and we normally have our season schedule planned before athletes go on summer break. Although sudden changes like these can frustrate me as a coach, I always have to take a deep breath and remember that all the work I do hopefully makes a better experience for the athletes," DiSalvi said.

Like a handful of other coaches, DiSalvi is also a teacher in the building, which adds to the workload and the struggle to find ways to adapt to COVID's effect on sports and school.

"It gets a bit exhausting having to get up early and manage my athletes for six days a week on top of my typical teaching duties, so at times it feels like I have had less free time than in a typical season," he said.

Even with all the extra responsibilities, DiSalvi is a representation of the passion coaches have for their sports and athletes.

"I am also very fortunate to coach such a group of kind, hard-working girls. Seeing them have fun and improve every day really gives me a sense of pride and satisfaction," he said.

Twins season has stellar start, flawed finish

Although favored to go far in the playoffs, the Twins yet again fell flat when the postseason arrived

By NOLAN ANDLER
Quill staff writer

The Twins didn't have it as easy in 2020 as they did last year. With the return of most of last year's team, which broke the Major League Baseball home run record, and the big offseason signings of Josh Donaldson, Rich Hill, Homer Bailey and Kenta Maeda, it looked like this would be the Twins team that would break the franchise's postseason winless drought and make a run to the World Series. Unfortunately, that is not how everything played out.

The first obstacle was the pandemic, which hit last spring just as the MLB was starting up. While it at first looked like the league was going to have to cancel the 2020 season, they were able to find a way to still play baseball by shortening the season to 60 games, playing without fans and introducing an extended playoffs.

Once the season kicked off this summer, the Twins started off hot, winning their first four series and achieving a record of 10-2. Led by Nelson Cruz, Max Kepler, Byron Buxton, Josh Donaldson and Eddie Rosario, along with a pitching cast led by Kenta Maeda that looked like they were much improved from last season, the Twins were making things happen.

However, as the season went on, the Twins started to struggle. The team lost some valuable players to injury, including Byron Buxton and Josh Donaldson. Also injured were two pitchers that the team traded for who were playing well, Homer Bailey and Rich Hill, along with veteran Jake Odorizzi. Adding to the injury setbacks were the struggles of several key players like Mitch Garver, Jorge Polanco and Miguel Sano, who all fell off from their 2019 performances.

These issues combined to lead the Twins into two long losing

streaks that put them behind in the standings. During this bad patch, the Twins struggled with leaving players on base and the pitching started to go downhill again.

While the Twins had their fair share of struggles, they also had their bright spots as the season went on. Despite losing some games that they shouldn't have lost, they also had some great series wins against teams like the Cardinals, Cubs, Brewers and Indians. They also tied the series against an improved White Sox team. It is important to note that all of those teams made the playoffs.

The team also got great production from some of their rookies, especially Lamont Wade, Jr., Brent Rooker and Ryan Jeffers. Also, a couple of relievers that the Twins signed, Caleb Theilbar and Jorge Alcala, played pretty well.

Eventually, as the playoffs arrived, the Twins managed to turn

things around enough to win the division. Their seed in the playoffs allowed them to avoid playing the Yankees, who have knocked them out of the playoffs repeatedly in recent years. Instead, the first round matched them up against the Houston Astros in a best-of-three series based at Target Field.

Unfortunately, despite many advantages, it was the same playoff song for the Twins. The Astros swept the team, which means the Twins have now lost 18 straight postseason games.

While the loss left a lot of Twins fans upset and angry, there is a lot of hope for the future of the Twins. With the production that the Twins got from the rookies, and the players they signed this season, the Twins won't go away, they'll only get better. Overall, this was a weird season for all of baseball and going back to a normal 163-game season for baseball in 2021 should help teams that struggled this season like the Twins.

Timberwolves struggle to find their identity

From athlete play to coaching strategies, the areas in which the team needs to improve next season are many

By MAJAY MURPHY
Quill staff writer

The Minnesota Timberwolves ended the 2019-2020 season at 11th place in the Western Conference. During the season, they lost to the Pelicans 123-114 and the Celtics 115-102, but they also beat the Magic 120-103 and the eventual champions the Lakers 108-86. While it was a good season for the team when they first started, toward the middle and end of the year, it got bad. Overall, their record was 36 wins and 46 losses,

which was a disappointment.

One aspect that led to the Timberwolves poor season was their defense. Although they have some top players, they don't seem to know how to use those players. The Wolves barely ran a 2-3 zone and never realized that, if they ran a 2-3 zone, it would have been an easier season for them.

The second aspect that came up short this year was the offense. The offense seemed to be on and off this season. On some nights, the starters played well, while on others, they seemed to give

up on some plays and seemed scared to play against the other team. Clearly, we don't have the same Timberwolves team from the past when it comes to the offense, which contributed to the team's losing record.

A third aspect of concern this season was the coaching. While the coaching was good at first, it started getting bad toward the middle of the season. Despite the fact that the team had new players coming in from the draft, the coaches did not seem to make good use of them. Time after time, it was clear later in

the season that the coaches did not seem to know what to do in clutch moments and which players they should have out on the court.

The moral to the story is that the Timberwolves need a new coaching staff and new players. While the 2019-2020 season looked like it could have been a fresh new start, it ended up bad yet again. By working on the shortcomings of the defense and offense, and getting some better coaching, the team chemistry may eventually improve. Let's hope they figure out a way to make this happen next season.