

## Student Reporter

## My High School Sports Team Experience



**Andrew Chung**  
Grade 10  
Los Osos High School



The racket that I use to currently play tennis, to which I've adjusted to well and know how to use efficiently.  
[Source: Author, Andrew Chung]

Getting involved with sports during high school is not what it may seem. Popularity, celebrations, and being one of the “cool kids” has been portrayed by sports

throughout the media. However, that is actually not the case at all, at least from my experience. Being on a sports team required nothing less than hard work and pure effort. It has definitely not been easy, but that does not mean that it hasn't been fun. Actually, it has been one of the most interesting and exciting high school experiences that I've had to this day.

I recently joined my school's boys tennis team, and I have to say that it has been a blast. I have been playing tennis for a little bit, and so passing tryouts to get on the team was a huge opportunity for me that I just could not pass up. I was excited and nervous before going into the season, and there were times when I doubted myself. I didn't think that I was

good enough, I saw many other players who were better than me, and I thought I wasn't fit enough to do well. However, all of those second thoughts immediately disappeared after my first day of practice. It was full of work, but it was so much fun. There were many running practices and tennis drills that I had to do, and it was tiring. However, not only did we do drills, but there were many activities that I got to do with my teammates that helped me bond with them. I made so many new friends, and I was having the time of my life. As of recently, I've only done practices, but the actual matches of the season do not start until March. It's something that I look forward to and use as my motivation to continue working as hard as I can in order to achieve

victory.

There are definitely times when I wanted to give up. I was getting really tired after practice, I had to commit to hours of tennis in school and after school, and I lost some free time. However, in the end, I realized that what I'm doing is worth it. Although there are many losses to being on a sports team, there are many benefits such as being able to exercise every day, learning more about a sport, and most importantly, having fun. I look forward to going to tennis every day after learning in all of my other classes, and it's almost a way for me to relieve my stress. It's a way that I'm able to do what I want to do, and to fully enjoy the high school experience and embrace the opportunities around me.

## Student Reporter

## Aquaponics Building with Portola High School Students



**Minseo Kwon**  
Grade 9  
Portola High School

Over the course of three months, Portola High School's 9th-grade students had the opportunity to construct their own aquaponics system. This system allows fish and plants to grow at the same time while recycling nutrients. Water infused with nitrates from the fish's feces leaves that tank to water the plants. The nitrates provide the plants with the nutrients they need to grow. Then, the water is recycled and filtered through clay pebbles into the fish tank. Initially, Portola's students were given the task to build a system that would benefit agricultural farming by conserving water and energy. Under the supervision of teachers, the 9th-graders constructed a working aquaponics system from scratch.

The first few weeks were dedicated to finding the right plants, fish, and materials for the aquaponics system. Ultimately, most groups decided to use the tilapia fish, as they could withstand the aquaponic environment better. After a lesson on safety with sharp tools, the students started to drill and attach wood parts. The fish

and germinated seeds were added to the system soon after.

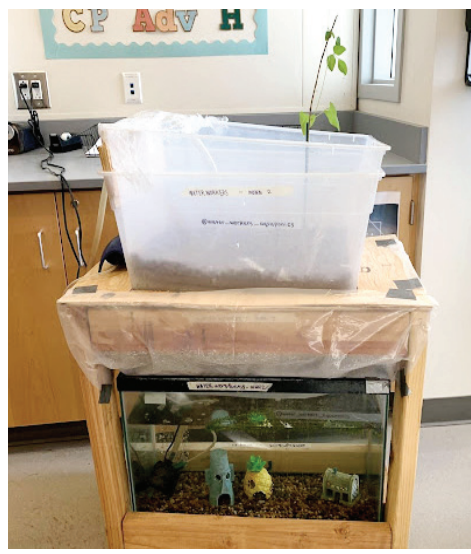
Another aspect of this project was that each group had to promote its aquaponics structure. The end goal was to successfully run the system and present the student's work at a showcase. Many teams decided to use Instagram as a method of reaching a wider audience. The students had the chance to be creative in their

promotion strategies by designing logos and posts.

Unfortunately, sustaining the aquaponics system was not an easy one for some groups. Leakage and pipe problems were the most common amongst teams. Water would spray outside the plant bucket or drip into the wood. This caused puddles of water next to the aquaponic tanks. Over the holidays, all groups faced the chal-

lenge of evaporation. Water levels were reduced by half over the two-week vacation. These issues posed as a test to see which teams could quickly find solutions. While many groups were able to fix the problems and continue to run their system, others had to cease their aquaponics journey.

In the end, many groups were successful, as some plants grew two feet tall. Most of the fish had endured the circumstances of aquaponics and survived. The students of Portola High School enjoyed the experience and were able to learn more about how farming worked. Most students concluded that aquaponics was better than traditional farming because of its water and energy conservation. Tiffany Kim, a participant of the aquaponics project, commented, “Aquaponics recycles nutrients and water, so little supervision and time is needed to maintain the system.” Overall, the students were able to experience maintaining and building a functioning farm. Biology class helped them connect to the real world and see how produce is made.



A group of students at Portola High School completed constructing their aquaponics system and added Spongebob houses for decoration.  
[Source: Author, Minseo Kwon]

## Student Reporter

## Sleep Walking; A Students Life



**Ashley Seong**  
Grade 8  
Chino Hills Junior High

In a world where college is deemed as an event that will determine your entire life, high school students have a lot of pressure on their hands. This is because of the amount of emphasis on grades. Even with all of this pressure and stress, schools starting at early times lead to the lack of sleep. Sleep is how the human body “recharges” itself, and it is important that students receive enough sleep after their busy day of doing extracurriculars and homework. Unfortunately, because they are so busy, students use their valuable sleep time to do homework instead. For these reasons, high school starting times should be pushed back so that high school students can have a better chance at a brighter future.

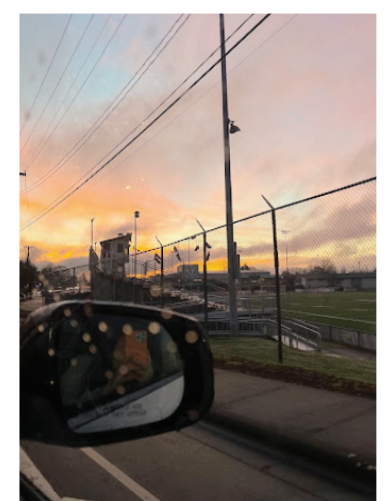
Most people do not realize how important and crucial sleep can be. Sleep foundation states that the lack of sleep can, “increase [the] likelihood for participating in risk-taking behaviors, [height-

en the] chance of unhealthy behaviors, [heighten] risk of athletic injury, increase of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation, [and increase] risk of motor vehicle accidents”. This lack of sleep can lead to many consequences that can affect one's resume or future, as some acts can result in bad marks on one's transcript. Along with negatively impacting a student's grades, lack of sleep can significantly impact one's mental health.

To discover how students personally feel about their school's starting time, I interviewed my friend Ella about how she feels about starting class at 7:45 AM. She expressed her frustration by explaining that, “I have dance almost all day and when I head home I have to eat and do my school homework. Not only that, I have other tutoring homework to do and I usually get around 6 hours of sleep daily.” Ella stated that she feels that a lack of sleep prevents

her from doing the best she can at school. She has also expressed that when she does get enough sleep, she can really feel that she is alert and doing her best.

More sleep can result in better outcomes. For example, a University of Washington study compared the sleep behaviors of two separate groups of high school sophomores at Roosevelt and Franklin High School. Studies showed that, “Final grades were 4.5 percent higher for students who took the class after school start times were pushed back compared with students who took the class when school started earlier... number of tardies and first-period absences at Franklin dropped [after start times were pushed back]”. This further indicates that high school start times should be pushed back to prevent having tardies or absences, so that students can focus on their grades. In doing so, the quality of work and the attitude of high school students can



Taken at 7AM on the way to school, the sunrise shows how early students have to leave home for school to not be late.  
[Source: Author, Hannah Kim]

be improved.

I believe that high school start times should be pushed back because of the proven mental, physical, and academic benefits. There are so many advantages that can follow from students getting even just an hour more to sleep.

