

The John Adams Tower



Obama
Delays
Troops



PSAT
Test
Changes



New
Hall
System



College
Board
Op-Ed



Best
Fall
Films



SECTIONALS END EAGLES' FOOTBALL SEASON

Sydney Granlund • Reporter

After a successful regular season with four wins and only one loss in the conference to Penn, ranking 9th in the state in Indiana's 5A class, the John Adams Football Team finished second in the North Division of the Northern Indiana Conference (NIC). Since day one of the season, the team pursued the loftiest of goals: winning the school's first sectional championship. The team's competitive attitude towards every game and a never-ending desire to improve paved the way for an unforgettable season. The Eagles finished 8-4 in a season marked by overtimes, unforgettable wins, and ultimately, a defeat at the hands of Mishawaka this past weekend in the sectional championship.

On October 23 the team began its journey to the sectional championship game. The Eagles faced the Elkhart Memorial Chargers, a team who proved unable to keep up with the Eagle offense. By halftime, the Eagles led 35-0, but Elkhart Memorial rallied after the intermission to score 21 points. Nevertheless, Adams finished with a victory and outscored the Chargers by 30 points, bringing the team its fifth consecutive win and a birth in the sectional semifinals. The team had not made it past the first round in the past two seasons.

The game against the Michigan City Wolves allowed the Eagles to advance to the sectional championship with a win. The key to success for Adams was focusing on the game at hand rather than thinking of where a win would take them, especially because "at the end of the year, all teams always play harder than during the regular

season," according to junior Tavonte Malone. In the second round of Class 5A Sectional 9, the Eagles were able to put points on the board first and hold Michigan City to only seven first downs the entire game. JA came out on top, winning 41 to 28, earning the group a spot in the sectional championship for the first time since the 2012 season.

The hype leading up to the championship between the 10th-ranked Mishawaka Cavemen and the 9th-ranked John Adams Eagles was indescribable. As opposed to the "rather quiet, focused atmospheres" of the first two sectional games, according to junior starting quarterback Andrew Burgess, the Eagles on the field and in the stands would need to be loud to have a chance at being successful again. During the regular season, Adams defeated Mishawaka 14-7 at Steele Field, winning against the Cavemen for the first time in 22 years. Adams forced eight Mishawaka turnovers on Sept. 11 and allowed no points until the third quarter. JA entered the championship with confidence knowing they were capable of beating Mishawaka, but the Cavemen were fueled with the desire to avenge their earlier loss. Malone said, "I expect my team to play hard and everyone to do their job". He continued, "If we do, then Adams will have their first football sectional title."

However, the Mishawaka Cavemen prevailed this past Friday night. A pass from Burgess to senior Brandon Wadley put Adams on the board in the second quarter, instilling a sense of hope on the sidelines and in the student section. The Eagles trailed by only seven points going into halftime,

but unfortunately, the group would not score again. The final score was 27-6, giving Mishawaka their third sectional title in the past four years and leaving Adams with a grand total of zero. Although the season ended sooner than most hoped, the loss Friday will have a positive impact on next year. The loss was "heartbreaking" to senior James Schell, but he hopes that it will "motivate the guys for next year and push them to not feel the same pain again." Malone added, "The loss to Mishawaka woke all of our juniors up. We all realized that the season was over and the next time we hit the field it will be our time to finish what we didn't finish this year."

Despite a crushing loss in the sectional championship, the season as a whole was hardly disappointing. The Eagles ended the season with a total of eight wins and only four losses, and the sense of brotherhood grew stronger each week, win or lose. "The team was a tight knit group of guys who really had a special bond and I am thankful to have been a part of it," Schell said. Besides a great vibe amongst JA football teammates, the group was also pleased in its ability to "shock the world" because "Adams is not really known for having a great football team," Schell continued. Burgess also said, "This is the best season I've ever been a part of," but the team still expects bigger and better next year. The Eagles fell short this year, but the goal for 2016 remains same and just as possible: make school history no matter what it takes.

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The Tower serves to supplement the educational environment of John Adams High School by providing an informative and entertaining source of news and communication to the students, faculty, staff, parents and the community. In addition, the publication is committed to the conversation of fine journalistic standards. All unsigned editorials represent a majority vote of the Editorial Board which consists of Tower members and the advisor. Signed editorials, cartoons, and illustrations represent the viewpoint of the individual author or artist. The Tower reserves the right to refuse any advertising copy or ad which does not meet our standards. Advertising and letters may be delivered to room 1831, Ms. Lewis' mail box, or mailed to John Adams High School 808 S Twyckenham Dr, South Bend, IN 46615.



NEW HALLWAY PROCEDURES

Alice Goulding • Reporter

In early October, a staff member at Adams received a threat during the school day from a person unaffiliated with the high school.

The next week, administration cracked down on hallway traffic, limiting when and how students could leave their classrooms during instruction time.

While these two events seem connected, the administration was clear that the new policies were a result of long-term discussions involving the safety of Adams students. The new hallway procedures aim to decrease the number of students in the halls outside of passing periods by requiring that all students must be escorted by security or an office aide when travelling to areas of the school where adults would not normally be present. This would include trips to the bathroom, locker, and other teachers' classrooms.

"We have about 100 students who account for 60 percent of the absences in the school," said James Seitz, principal of Adams. "We need to get them in class and learning." Seitz hopes to increase attendance by prohibiting students from leaving class during the first and last fifteen minutes of each period, leaving an eighteen-minute window in the middle in which passes can be distributed. Students must also be in their 1st hour class by 7:45 am or report to lockout, a more robust version of a previous standard which allowed students to enter class tardy up until 8:00 am.

While the administration sees the new policy as a way to address the school's current truancy woes, some students see potential problems. Aarani Sarveswaran, a junior at Adams said, "This punishes students who already follow the rules. We shouldn't be penalized because of the actions of a few." Michael Kowalewski, also a junior, questioned

the effectiveness of the new policy, pointing out that, "Right now, I can see at least ten people walking through the halls, unaccompanied by security, without a pass, and with no purpose. It's pointless."

Seitz, however, sees the new system as a much more lenient and proactive approach to dealing with safety at Adams. "In the past, we've had some serious problems with fights, truancy, and a general lack of respect for others," said Seitz. "We've tried a couple of different ideas to deal with security, each with varying degrees of success."

One of these ideas was a ticketing system implemented last year, which penalized students for fighting, harassment, and general disruption of the school environment. While this proved to be mostly effective, it only focused on reprimanding students after they had broken a rule. It did not deal with the prevention of future infractions, apart from the deterrent effect of the punishment itself.

The new policy also tries to relieve Security of the responsibility of admonishing students for their actions, because it focuses on preventing the problem before it occurs. According to Lt. Eric Crittendon, we should be "keeping hallways as clear as possible, because when no one's in your hallways, no one's posing a threat."

While Seitz understands that the new system will take some time to adjust to, he believes that the long-term effects will outweigh any day-to-day inconveniences. He hopes that the policy will shift Security's focus away from punishment to prevention; from fear to safety. If this can be achieved, then the learning environment for all students will improve. Seitz concluded, "In the end it comes down to the culture of the school, and it's one we're trying to change."

PRESIDENT OBAMA DELAYS WITHDRAWING TROOPS FROM AFGHANI- STAN

MARIAH RUSH • News Editor

In October, President Barack Obama announced that he would not be withdrawing 5,500 American troops from Afghanistan during the rest of his term, which ends in 2017. The United States has been stationed in Afghanistan for the past fourteen years, ever since former president George W. Bush commanded the United States to invade Afghanistan. Prompted by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Bush wanted to capture Bin Laden, which Obama accomplished in May of 2011. Obama famously campaigned with the pledge that he would end both wars he inherited, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

White House officials are calling his decision an "extensive, lengthy review". It comes on the heels of a months long review with Afghanistan's leaders, the national security team, and United States commanders in the field. According to Obama, this review indicated that Afghanistan forces are still not as strong as they need to be. In an official statement Obama said, "While America's combat mission in Afghanistan may be over, our commitment to Afghanistan and its people endures... I will not allow Afghanistan to be used as safe haven for terrorists to attack our nation again."

Obama's decision comes with intense scrutiny from some people, who argue that Obama should not have broken his promise he made. Others argue that we have overstayed our welcome in Afghanistan. Ariana Bueno, a junior at Adams, said "I think that if their isn't a major threat to the Afghan people we shouldn't be there...I'm all for foreign aid but maybe our stay has been a little too long."

Obama insists that our presence is not only helpful, but needed as well. "Afghans are making difficult but genuine progress," Obama said. "This modest, but meaningful extension of our presence -- while sticking to our current, narrow missions -- can make a difference. It's the right thing to do."

Despite arguments that we have overstayed our welcome, Afghan officials welcome the United States' presence. Mohammad Daud Sultanzoy, an Afghan politician who works with the President of Afghanistan, said, "It's very positive in light of the continued problems that this region is facing...Our security [forces] have shown the will and capability to fight, but we still need the support of our allies, especially the United States."

Support for a military takeover

Is there any situation in which you could imagine yourself supporting the U.S. military taking over the powers of federal government? %



YouGov | yougov.com

September 2-3, 2015

POLL SHOWS POTENTIAL SUPPORT IN THE UNITED STATES FOR A MILITARY COUP

KAITY RADDE • Reporter

Military coups, or forced military takeovers of government, are not generally viewed as a positive development. Or are they?

A YouGov poll prompted by an article written by a West Point professor - that later forced his resignation - may have proven that Americans could be persuaded to feel differently about coups. When asked if there was "any situation in which [they] could imagine [themselves] supporting the U.S. military taking over the powers of the federal government," almost one third (29 percent) of all Americans said yes.

Here are the numbers broken down by political affiliation: 20 percent of Democrats, 29 percent of independents, and 43 percent of Republicans - almost one half - said yes. These numbers are shockingly high, especially considering the fact that most coups occur in extremely unstable circumstances, and demonstrate the lack of trust that many Americans have toward their government. When the question was rephrased to "whether they would hypothetically support the military stepping in to take control of a civilian government which is beginning to violate the Constitution," the number

of Americans who said yes went up to 43 percent, regardless of political affiliation. The same poll also found that 70 percent of Americans believe that military officers want what is best for the nation, while 71 percent believe that members of Congress want what is best for themselves.

"If I were a member of Congress, I would be a little uncomfortable... I would be worried [by this poll] about the government as a whole; that people distrust it so much they would basically dismantle it," said Adams junior Stephanie Portolese. "And I am surprised that no one [from Congress] has addressed it, since almost one hundred million people are unhappy with the way things are."

One-third of Americans can see themselves supporting a coup: does that make it realistic? "Not at all," said a United States Marine who has requested to remain anonymous. However, "if [military officers] tried to initiate a coup, most soldiers would obey because it is their job to obey lawful orders."

A coup of today's United States is implausible, but the hypothetical support of one is unsettling. At the very least, it offers lawmakers an opportunity to reevaluate their actions and begin to represent their constituents more accurately.

Why the College Admissions Process is Meaningless

Arieanna Eaton • Associate Editor

November 1. For three-quarters of the student population, this date is utterly meaningless; however, for the senior class any mention of this date can elicit a response ranging from groans to a full breakdown. Months of preparation lead to one weekend of furious scrambling and revisions. November 1 was one of the first early application deadlines.

For any senior, the past year or longer has been filled with horrific terms like early restrictive action, early action, early decision, holistic review, SAT, ACT, superscoring, merit scholarships, and of course, GPA, transcripts, and extracurricular activities. Conversation has been consumed with talks of tutors to help raise SAT subject test scores. After the junior PSAT, the standardized test race began; it was fair game to take each test as many times as it took to raise scores by a few hundred points. Those numbers chart our aptitude in Critical Reading, Writing, and Mathematics are simultaneously everything for making the benchmark for your top choice and nothing if you don't have the right application essay, the right GPA, the right extracurriculars.

But even with a high GPA, excellent test scores, a myriad of extracurricular activities, hundreds of hours of community service, and you're a legacy at your top pick university — all of those factors might add up to squat. If that last seat comes down to you and a Division I athlete, tough luck that you were a captain of the JV tennis team. Better check out that safety school.

In order for universities to have the highest rank in "U.S. News", colleges with the lowest admissions rates are at the top of the list. A barrage of emails and thousands of trees later, thousands of underqualified students are hopeful that they too can get into an Ivy. That drives the admissions rate lower, which pressures students to apply to more colleges. That lowers the acceptance rates farther —



The looming menace of College Applications explored in its effects on our Senior Student Population

well, you can see how it's spiraled out of control (the top colleges' acceptance rates are half what they were a decade ago). Is seventeen too many colleges to apply to, or after all the rejections will I have just enough to still have a solid list to choose from?

Despite admissions officers' insistence that they undertake a holistic view to assess an individual's unique capabilities, I still can't help but wonder if the essay ranging from 250 to 750 words can really provide a detailed explanation of my capabilities. Most of my teachers don't accept an essay with less than 800 words yet I'm supposed to be able to enlighten my college admissions counselor to the

unique facets of my character that my laundry list of extracurriculars and advanced classes couldn't convey.

For all the stress we seniors put on ourselves, it can't hurt to step back and take a look at the bigger picture. An application is only a list of achievements over the course of four years that in the total course of your life really won't matter, and even the most perfect application won't guarantee you a spot. Step back, take a breath, and let's enjoy our senior year. We deserve it.

PSAT TEST CHANGES

A dramatically different test is questioned on its efficiency.

Abigail Myers • Reporter

In October, every sophomore and junior at John Adams took the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test). Taking this standardized test is a national requirement and serves as a qualification test for students interested in the National Merit Scholarship. Many students observed the changes that the PSAT underwent from 2014 to 2015. The National Merit Scholar Corporation's dramatic changes to the 2015 PSAT was "it's biggest change in 30 years", according to the Princeton Review.

The 2014 PSAT was taken last year by the classes of 2016 and 2017 and was dramatically different from this year's test. Last year's PSAT contained a written essay portion, a sentence completion portion, and a quarter point deduction for incorrect answers in the multiple choice portions of the test- all of which have been deleted from the new test's curriculum. This year's PSAT featured a 35 minute increase in time for the test, making it more like the time limit for the SAT. Instead of a deduction for incorrect answers, students simply do not receive credit for the question.

Overall, the 2015 PSAT proved to be an interesting experience for both sophomores and juniors at JA. Most of JA's sophomores found the PSAT relatively easy, considering the fact that the test will not count toward their scholarship acceptance, and teachers did not spend much time preparing them for the test. "I thought the test was pretty mediocre. It wasn't anything too difficult," explained sophomore Dana Garwood. She continued saying, "Undeniably, it was easy. Of course there were a few questions I didn't know, but that is expected while taking a test built for upperclassmen." Sophomore Delia Wilson said, "I thought that some parts of it (especially the math sections) were a little advanced for sophomore level."

John Adams, like many other high schools, administer the PSAT to sophomores to prepare them for their junior year PSAT, and eventually their SAT during their junior or senior year. By taking the PSAT, sophomores can roughly gage their future SAT score based on their results and get a feel for the test. Fiona Hughes, a sophomore at JA said, "I think the most difficult part of the test was to manage my time so that I could answer every

PSAT Structure: 2014 versus 2015

	2014	2015
Scoring	20-80 each component	1600 total
Total time	2 hours 10 minutes	2 hours 45 minutes
Total questions	125 questions	139 questions
Reading	48 questions, 50 min	47 questions, 60 min
Writing	39 questions, 30 min	44 questions, 35 min
Mathematics	38 questions, 50 min	47 questions, 70 min
Guessing	Penalized	Neutral
Pace*	62 seconds/question	71 seconds/question

question. This was especially relevant in the math portion of the PSAT." Generally speaking, sophomore students thought that the PSAT was surprisingly easy, however, the math portions were more advanced than their level.

Juniors had a different perspective on this year's PSAT because they have last year's test to compare it with. "Last year's PSAT had a lot more geometry and this year's [PSAT] had a lot more Algebra 2. I like that it didn't have an essay this year either," said JA junior McKayla Guinn. When asked whether this year's test was easier or harder than last year's, junior Mary Landry stated, "I think this year's PSAT was just a little harder, mainly in the writing section. A few questions just seemed different to me from what was being asked on last year's test."

Many students have differing opinions on the changes to the PSAT. Some students are glad that changes were made and feel that the test was made easier because of it. Fiona Hughes stated, "I am happy those changes were made because I do not like writing timed essays and more time is always better." Dana Garwood agrees, saying, "Standardized tests only seem to get easier as changes are made." Yet others, like Delia Wilson, believe that the changes to the PSAT will hurt them in the future and that the previous PSAT better prepared them for the SAT. "The SAT has an essay that most colleges require and I think it would be good preparation for the SAT to write one on the PSAT," said Wilson.

One major concern among students, especially juniors, is how the changes to the PSAT will affect scores and scholarship acceptance. Aubren Kubicki, a junior at JA said, "It doesn't really bother me that much either way, I just hope they take the better of my scores from this year and last year." John Adams Head Guidance Counselor, Ms. Tammy Berebitsky, explained, "The same type of selection process will take place to finding top scorers [on the PSAT]." The only difference in scoring is that the maximum score has changed from 240 points to 1520 points due to the new division of sections and grading system. Results from the 2015 PSAT will be available online at www.studentscores.collegeboard.org in late December.

Nevertheless, the 2015 PSAT serves as a preview to the Spring 2016 SAT that will be administered in March. "Now I know what to look forward to on the SAT," explained JA student Victoria Ybanez.

The PSAT may undergo even more changes due to President Barack Obama's recent proposal on standardized tests. In late October, President Obama suggested changing education requirements in the classroom, including removing standardized tests altogether from the educational system. For more information on this topic, visit <http://www.ivybound.net/sat-articles/psat-changes-for-2015/>, <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/psat-changes#tab2>, <http://psat2015.com/>.

Films to Watch this Fall

The leaves changing, heading back to school, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and crisp weather are all things that remind us of Fall. What better way to spend your free time than watching some classic Fall themed films?

MADDY KIMMELL • Reporter



RUSHMORE

This quintessential Wes Anderson film takes place on the campus of Rushmore Academy just as students return for a new school year. "Rushmore" follows the story of Max Fischer and his unrequited love for Rosemary Cross, a new elementary school teacher at Rushmore Academy. Herman Blume is an unsatisfied multimillionaire dealing with his failing marriage and two entitled sons who attend Rushmore with Max. Mr. Blume and Max meet and soon develop a mutual respect and friendship. Things begin to falter after Mr. Blume is introduced Rosemary and he quickly becomes infatuated. Max's childish pursuit of Rosemary collides with Mr. Blume's and the two begin to spar for Rosemary's love and their newly found friendship begins to crumble. "Rushmore" is the perfect film for Fall, after all nothing says Fall like a new school year.



THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

When Halloween rolls around the best way to enjoy the holiday is to stay in a watch truly terrifying horror film. In 1974, the low-budget film "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" shocked audiences everywhere. The film follows the unfortunate trek of several friends traveling to investigate reports of grave robbing and vandalism at the grave of one of their grandparents. On their way, the group agrees to pick up an unfavorable hitchhiker, they quickly discover that he is actually an unhinged maniac and push him out of the moving vehicle. Shortly after, the group runs out of gas and the only gas station within a hundred miles is conveniently out of gas, but luckily enough there is a house just down the road that may have some gas they could buy. When they arrive at the dilapidated home the horror truly begins. The group's terror is marked by the introduction of possibly one of the most enduring horror film characters of all time, Leatherface. With a mask made out of human skin, a passion for protecting his inbred family, and a chainsaw Leatherface poses as a rather formidable villain for his victims. This is the perfect film to watch late on Halloween night, and if you're brave, by yourself.



PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES

Holiday travel can pose as a bit of challenge. This next film chronicles the journey home of Neal Page, who desperately wants to return to Chicago in time for Thanksgiving with his family. Before boarding on his flight home, Neal meets Del Griffith, a shower curtain ring salesman also making his ways home for the holidays. To Neal, Del has a talkative nuances, but Del sees the good in other people and falsely believes that the two have become friends. Much to Neal's chagrin he and Del are seated together on the flight, however Neal remains comforted by the fact that he will soon be home. Unfortunately, things don't go quiet according to plan and Neal's flight from New York is forced to make an emergency stop in Wichita due to bad weather. When the plane lands Del insists on helping Neal get home and Neal, although reluctant, has no other choice but to accept his offer and put his trust into a stranger's hands. The bustling ambience of the holiday season makes "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" an annual tradition.

#MCVSTRONG

LAMAR ODOM'S SHOT AT REDEMPTION

Halle Green • Reporter

Lamar Odom has seen and celebrated many good times, but has also experienced his share of trials and tribulations as well. Odom is a retired NBA player who played for six teams, including the Miami Heat, the Los Angeles Clippers, and the Los Angeles Lakers. Lamar was married to Khloé Kardashian, although a tough stage in their relationship made them decide to call it quits. This stress without a doubt led to his descent into drug abuse.

Odom decided to take a four day trip to the Love Ranch in Crystal, Nevada; the Love Ranch is a licensed, legal brothel that is owned by Dennis Hof. Odom had taken numerous drugs, whose effects were evident during his stay. On October 13, 2015, two women that worked at the Ranch called for an ambulance, after finding Odom unconscious in his bed. The women stated that there was blood coming out of his nose, and a pink foam coming out of his mouth. Odom was taken to the Sunrise Hospital, located in Las Vegas, Nevada. His wife, Khloé, along with her mother, Kris Jenner, and sister Kim, who is in her third trimester of her pregnancy, flew in to be with Odom after finding out the shocking news.

Khloé, 31, was deeply saddened after seeing her soon to be ex-husband lie in a hospital bed, in a coma. She never left his side, and made all the decisions she felt would be right for him. She also made the decision to call off their divorce. Khloé was in a

time, but she felt that it was the right thing to do, a decision that was supported by Harden.

Fans all over the world, along with Lamar's former NBA teammates, have expressed their sympathy and support for him, as well as with his family. Dwayne Wade made numerous tweets about his ex-teammate and good friend, including "I pray this morning for my brother. Dear God he's one of the good ones. PLEASE watch over him and listen to his heart speak #PrayersForLamar". Lamar's children also expressed their gratitude for the prayers and love that had been shown to their father during his hard time. Rob Kardashian, Lamar's brother-in-law and friend, posted a picture of the two together on Instagram and captioned it as, "Praying nonstop for my Brother!!". Kylie Jenner also took to Instagram to show her love for her brother-in-law, posting a picture of the two dancing in the car together and captioning it, "Let's dance together again soon. Prayers up for Lamar please." The entire family showed their support for Lamar along with Khloé during the tough situation.

Khloé also made the decision to have Lamar get transferred to another hospital in the Los Angeles area, so that she could be closer to him. She posted on her website a thank you note to all of the doctors, nurses, and workers from the Sunrise Hospital. Lamar's road to recovery is off to a remarkable start as he is able to move, show signs of responsiveness, and even talk.

NOTRE DAME GIRLS' BASKETBALL NEW RECRUITS

Samantha Jankowski • Reporter

With the Notre Dame girls basketball season kicks off in a couple weeks, here is a look at the incoming freshman who are sure to make a difference on the court.

- Arike Ogunbowale: 5'9", a strong, athletic guard who drives to the rim with consistency. Ogunbowale has a scorer's mentality and is quick on her feet. Her mid-range shot is impeccable, but she is still developing her deep range shot. Ogunbowale is a member of the 2014/2015 USA Basketball U17 National Team. She averaged 20.04 points per game and also 9.6 rebounds. Overall, she will be a great asset to the team.

- Ali Patberg: 5'11" guard, handles the ball well when faced with pressure, and has fantastic court awareness. Patberg has a smooth stroke and a great arc to her shot, which makes the defense guard her close up. What they do not know is that Ali can cut to the basket for an easy layup. She is, overall, a great athlete and a valuable player for Notre Dame.

- Marina Mabrey: 5'10" guard, very tough and confident. She brings swagger to the floor and her defensive style is challenging for her opponent to go against. Mabrey has a great outside shot which, combined with a high basketball IQ makes her a competitive player whose main goal is to win the game.

SENIOR PROFILE: BROCK EASLEY

Brock has inspired me, because I look at him, and I just think, "That could be me someday."

Niki Hakimzadeh • Reporter

To many people, running is seen as an activity to stay healthy or be active, but to the cross country kids at John Adams it is seen as much more. Brock Easley, a JACC (John Adams Cross Country) Senior, has seen running in many different lights in his four years. From starting out his freshman season with a 23:01 5k to finishing his senior season with a 17:18 PR (personal record), anyone can see Easley's tremendous improvement, as he is now JACC's number one runner. He said, "My freshman and sophomore year I was either injured or just not coming to practice because I didn't want to." However, after sophomore year, something changed.

At the end of his sophomore season, the coaches decided to make him a captain. "One time, I asked Rivera why he made me a captain and he said, 'I just saw something in you,' and when I became a captain, I saw that in myself too," Easley said. "I started coming to practice and I ran in all of the meets. I also did winter running club for the first time last year and continued running track," he continued.

With this new mindset, Easley took on a challenge that most people would never dare to try: Winter Running Club. The club starts only one week after the cross country season ends, and ends one week before the official track season starts. Easley and the rest of the club run through all conditions throughout the winter, but their dedication to



the sport keeps them from backing down. "No one really wants to run in -4 degree weather, but if you love running enough, and have the drive to get better, then you just do it," said Easley. "But I remember, freshman year, if someone told me they ran in -10 degree weather I would say 'you're insane, I would never do that to myself, I mean I'd probably die.'"

Along with Winter Running Club, Easley also did Track. He ran a JV 4x4 relay race his freshman and sophomore year then switched to the two mile and 4x8 relay his junior year which he plans to run again this year. Easley's season does not stop after track- he continues running after track season and trains for the Sunburst Half Marathon, which he ran for the first time this year with a time of 1:32:57, and plans to run again this upcoming year. After the Sunburst he takes a week off before returning to cross country's summer conditioning.

This season has been one unlike any other for Easley. With four PRs and many individual and team awards throughout the season, he has made sure to leave his mark on JACC. Starting off the season with a 17:52 and ending it with a 17:18, Easley's hard work is extremely evident. He also placed 18th at the N.I.C meet with a time of 17:24 and 17th at Sectionals with a time of 17:43. The PR of 17:18 also got him into the top ten individuals from the region to go on to the Semi-State meet. "It was so exciting to make it to Semi-State," said Easley. "It's kind of a big deal, at least in my eyes. We haven't had a boy go to Semi-State in a couple years and it feels kind of

cool to be seen in the same field as those runners."

Even though Easley has finished his High School cross country career, this is not the end of cross country for him. "I would definitely like to go in college, if not on the actual school team, I would join a run club," said Easley, "Farther down the road I want to get into longer distances like Marathons and Ultramarathons and hopefully run on all seven continents." In his time of being a captain on JACC, Easley has also inspired many people. A fellow teammate said, "Brock has inspired me, because I look at him, and I hear his story of how he started as a really slow freshman, and now he's our top runner, and I just think, 'That could be me someday.'"

Easley recommends cross country for any freshman or anyone else who is thinking about joining the team. "Cross country is such a journey and evolution. There are people that start out not so speedy, like myself, but over time they evolve and become greater than they ever thought they could be, and seeing that evolution is incredible," he continues, "For any freshman that didn't do it this year, do winter running or sign up next year because it's worth it." With the season over, Easley leaves his teammates with one last piece of advice, "This thousand mile journey has to begin somewhere, so you better be willing to take the first step?"