

Wall of Fame seniors named

As an Athlete, you understand that competition and being the best is always your top priority. And when you have been playing a sport for four years you don't want all that time to be for nothing.

The ultimate way to prove it is to be on the Wall of Honor for your class. The Wall of Honor is the main that senior is able to be recognized for all of their athletic achievement through their time here at Annandale. being nominated much less being chosen is no easy task as everyone nominated this year has been in more than one sport.

Being considered for the Wall of Honor means that you have to spend a considerable amount of time and dedication for whatever team you have been a part of and consistently kept that kind of attitude thought all four of your years here at Annandale.

Something that is special about the Wall of Honor is that it doesn't require you to be very good at one sport but to be very good in at least two to three because as per usual with any competition people will do as much as they can to better position themselves to be chosen.

Teams win district tournaments

While playing in a sports team competition with other schools is natural and all players understand that it is part of the team experience. Playing against other schools can give teams very important information on how to improve as a team.

A teams main goal when playing other team is to win as much as possible. The most direct way to achieve this is the district tournaments.

These District tournaments are much more organized which allows teams to play more games much more efficiently. with this game after game mentality teams are forced to adapt to their opponents much more quickly.

Along with this rapid adaptation causes a team to grow much faster than if the entire season was taken up by on-off games that happen once or twice a week.

Other than the quicker pace of the game the District Tournament gives teams a much clearer goal than to just win more games.

The idea of winning the District tournament can make a teams drive to win more intense. you can see all of these effects take place as a good amount of our teams like Girls Tennis and Boys Lacrosse have already their district tournaments.

Another benefit of the increased frequency of the games is that it forces the teams to adapt quickly to their opponents and as a result grow better as a team.

Along with forcing teams to adapt quickly to their opponents there is another important benefit to the district tournaments and is that it gives the team a more defined goal.

The goal of winning a tournament can increase a teams drive to win more than the goal to win more games this season. We can already see these in effect with some of our teams winning their district tournaments such as boys lacrosse and girls tennis.

Athletes don't rest over summer

Due to the fact school ends soon that also means that all of the school sponsored sports such as lacrosse, track or soccer will also be coming to an end as well.

This does not mean that all Annandale sports will be closed. There will be an Annandale summer camp for 3rd to 9th graders. That is not to say that some students will find their own way to continue playing sports over the summer.

Summer can be one of the best times to play sports even if there are no teams to play on.

For starters, some people might just forgo the entire process of trying to play sports over the summer and just not do anything over the summer.

While for some this may sound like something they would never do, there are many reasons to why this sounds like the only thing to do.

Over summer break many students might take up summer jobs, go on vacation, go to summer school or do all of them.

To any average student this type of schedule would just not have any time for sports and reluctantly have to drop playing altogether.

For Makonnen Mekonnen going to the gym takes a bigger precedent than playing a sport.

"I feel like going to the gym would be a better use of my time than playing a sport," Makonnen said

What others might do is join a summer camp. Although Annandale is offering a summer camp over the summer, this excludes a lot of people in Annandale.

While that is the case, there are plenty of other sports summer camps around this area that are open during the summer.

While some people might too busy this summer to play a sport other might have too much time this summer and could take up a summer camp just to keep themselves busy.

Other than that summer camps can offer much more than just not playing a sport because sports camps are much bigger organizations, they can afford to go on trips which could be a good way to spend your summer.

If you have enough time to play sports and you don't want to be a part of a summer camp, just playing sports with your friends could be just as a good option as any.

Playing sports with friends can much less competitive than

summer camps and you're still playing a sport, so it really is not a waste of time.

Other than those listed, there are more reasons playing with friends can have many more positive effects than playing alone.

Playing with friends means that you can play on your own schedule giving you more flexibility than if you had a summer camp.

Playing sports with your own friends means that you don't have any responsibilities keeping you away from playing altogether. If sports don't sound like something you want to do over the summer, but you still want to be active, there are still many options around this area to help you achieve that goal.

For example, planer fitness has a deal that offers free workouts for kids 15-18 for the entire summer. this is extremely helpful on many levels.

For one since it is free, it is available to many more people which could make it the best option for many people this summer.

Athletes celebrate success

As the school year comes to an end many things end with it, and one of those things are spring sports.

The spring sports season can be considered by some to have the best sports, with the exception of other seasonal favorites like football and indoor track.

One thing that is special about the ending of spring sports is that there is no season to replace it anytime soon, so most athletes who participated in sports are enjoying a very long offseason.

It's not to say that Annandale did not have a successful spring season.

Many teams racked up a fair amount of wins this season. girls soccer had a very solid season with 6 wins and boys soccer collected 7 wins this season.

But throughout this season, there have been challenges that teams had to face, like opposing teams that have consistently beaten them.

A good example is TC Williams, who have been able to beat our teams for nearly every sport on a semi-regular basis.

But it is not all bad news though many teams this season have shown that they have learned from their losses and manage to pull some wins and come back at the end of the season.

One relatively popular team this season was boys lacrosse.

They had a fairly good season with 5 wins beating Mount Vernon or Falls Church.

Besides the stats of how many wins teams got an equally important part of joining a team is the experience of playing on one

For sophomore Henry Villarroel his team experience was a positive one which is something a team should do.

“It was pretty fun this year especially since we won more games than last year and every practice we had a blast except for when our coach would tell us to “get down in a push-up position” or “get on the line” those were the times when I hated to practice,”Villarroel said.

Along with a good team experience, every athlete has their own personal favorite moment of the season, for some, it could be a last minute point to win the game or it could just be hanging out with your fellow teammates.

“My favorite moment was when two kids were messing around and our coach made them take a lap holding hands,” said Villarroel

A vital part of being a part of a team is playing in games.

Every player wants to be the player that secured the win for their team.

For Villarroel, it was when he scored a last-minute shot in a game. “My best moment was probably during our game against Justice High School,” Villarroel said.“It was predicted that we would lose because they had a 7-1 record before facing us.”

Even though the team had the odds stacked against them, the Atoms squeezed out a victory due to Villaroels efforts. He broke down the game-winning play describing his heroics.

“During the fourth quarter of the game the score was 5-5 with 45 seconds left to score we first started to pass the ball around but eventually the ball got to me with 5 seconds left,” Villaroel said, “I did a quick dodge to get into shooting position and then shot not knowing if it would go in or not but luckily it went in with no time left and we ended up winning 6-5.”

An important aspect of the end of a season is seeing how your team can improve for the next season.

Some players will continue to practice so that they can continue to keep their skill sharp so they will not lose skill over the wait for next season.

For Villarroel, he will practice over the summer to hopefully make it into varsity.

“We are all going to try to practice during the summer to get better and try out for varsity but this season where we will all be together,” Villarroel said.

It is clear to see that this spring season was very eventful for many players, with many wins and losses.

With the school year ending it will be a great time to reflect on the past and improve for the future.

Renovation nears endgame

Earlier in the year, it was believed that the bleachers located on the home side of Bolding Stadium would not be completed until after the spring sports season. However, the bleachers are on track to be finished earlier than once thought.

Over the past few days, the construction team has made a lot

of progress.

“It might be done a little bit sooner than we thought,” Director of Student Services John Ellenberger said. “But I have not gotten the official word from the county.”

It is possible that the bleachers will be done before the spring season is over. The seating for the new bleachers will be reduced, but not by much. Ellenberger also asked the county to increase the amount of space between the bleachers and the fence surrounding the football field.

“I asked [the county] to give us another foot of space for the walkway. With that extra room, we might lose one more row of seating, but I don’t think that will really have an impact,” Ellenberger said.

The press box will also be upgraded with a possibility of heat and AC.

In addition to the renovated bleachers, upgraded restrooms will also be installed. Ellenberger received an e-mail from the county stating that AHS would be getting outdoor restrooms for the stadium. According to Fairfax County government code, there has to be a certain amount of outdoor bathrooms to the seating capacity.

As of now, Ellenberger has not received any word of what the bathrooms will look like or where exactly they will be.

As the renovations progress, it will become more apparent when the construction team will be done. The bleachers will be complete for the fall season with minimal loss to the size.

Students commit to college athletics

As the spring season arrives, student athletes begin to make their decisions on where they are going to commit for college.

Seniors such as Alex Bellem, Kenzie Gardner and Devin Gill will be off to play their designated sport next year.

Starting quarterback, Gill, capped off his high school football career in early November. He has played football for four years and is ready to take the sport the next level. He has decided to play football at Fork Union Military Academy near Charlottesville, Virginia.

"I chose Fork Union because it was the best option for me in terms of a junior college or prep school," Gill said. "I am going for a semester to develop as an athlete and to get ready for high level college football."

Gill will be attending a prep school to train his body for the next level.

Other professional football players have also gone to small schools to prepare for the next level, such as Lions running back LeGarrette Blount, Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers, and Panthers quarterback Cam Newton.

Gill explained how he thinks he will do well once he gets adjusted to the faster pace of the game.

"I know I will continue to prove people wrong, you've got to bet on yourself, always," Gill said.

Senior captain Bellem for the varsity lacrosse team is also continuing his lacrosse career through college. He has played lacrosse here for four years, but has also been playing ever since he was a child. Bellem has decided to sign at Palm Beach Atlantic University in Florida, which is D2 and will be receiving a full ride scholarship from the University.

"I decided on PBA because of the coaching staff and the location of the school," Bellem said. "I also really like the Christian based education."

Bellem believes that he can be really good at PBA, but is a little nervous to play with such experienced athletes.

"My freshman year will be more of a learning experience as I will probably be getting a little bit of playing time," Bellem said. "I hope to score a goal my freshman year to prove that I am a good enough player."

Gardner is the only senior on the girls varsity lacrosse team

this year. She has played here for the last four years and will be attending Eastern Mennonite University to play lacrosse next year

“I decided to sign at EMU because this is their first ever women’s Lacrosse Program,” Gardner said. “I get the opportunity to start for all four years and not having to wait until my junior or senior year to play.”

Gardner also explains how she is slightly nervous to play at EMU.

“Athletes have much more experience at the college level,” Gardner said. “The majority of our new program will be incoming freshman, so we’re going to have a lot of learning to do.”

She believes she will be better than ever as she takes her next step.

“Fighting off from a concussion, I think I will be playing at my highest level. I get to play every position on the field and first and foremost to relax and have fun,” Gardner said. “It will be experience throughout my academic and athletic career.”

Athletic trainers heal injured

In high school, athletic trainers play an important role in athletics, as they are professionally trained health care personnel who work to diagnose, treat and prevent injuries. At AHS, there are two athletic trainers: Kathleen Ayers and Ryan Hughes.

Hughes is the head athletic trainer and he covers the afternoon and evening shift, including all of the home games throughout the year. Hughes’ daily duties include completing

paperwork and getting the athletic training room set up. He makes sure it is ready for the end of the day so that students with injuries can come in and receive medical attention.

Freshman Ishaat Hannan was injured in a game and sought assistance from the trainers.

“Athletic trainers are important because they’ll provide you with the care you need when a doctor isn’t available,” Hannan said.

Hughes helps students by diagnosing and treating their injuries and also by demonstrating how students should complete rehabilitation.

In addition to Hughes, Ayers also works diligently to ensure the wellbeing of all the students, especially those who get injured.

The process for evaluating student injuries is unique for each particular instance.

“When a student gets injured, they come and see us in the athletic training room, where they are evaluated in order to determine what exactly is wrong with them,” Hughes said. “Then we sort out what types of treatments will best suit his injury.”

“It’s better to have someone be able to check your injury rather than having no one check it at the moment,” Hannan said.

Both Ayers and Hughes also find physicians and specialists who will work to help the athletes with their specific injuries. Equally important, athletic trainers work with the entire athletic department. Including coaches, to adhere by safety protocols, educate both students and teachers on certain health issues, such as weight loss and weight gain, which can significantly affect the performance of athletes.

Athletic trainers provide student-athletes with holistic medical care, meaning that the trainers apply an approach that takes into account both the internal and external factors in order to diagnose a student.

As the number of students who participate in sports increases, the importance of athletic trainers in high school in general,

has drastically increased. Furthermore, the fact that athletic trainers provide immediate medical attention is crucial, especially in cases where long-term implications, if not properly followed, may have severe repercussions for the athlete.

“Athletic trainers are important because they help us and they give us good rehabilitation to recover,” senior Diana Silva said. “They’re always here when we need them, and they also give us physical therapy equipment to use so that we can increase faster.”

The process for evaluating student injuries is unique for each particular instance.

According to the National Athletic Trainers’ Association, 1.6 – 3.8 million concussions occur in both high school and colleges across America.

“The most common injury that students get, in the entire campus is probably the lateral ankle sprain, which we immediately treat with ice in order to reduce and control both the swelling and inflammation,” Hughes said. “The next day, we will start up by introducing some range-of-motion and light exercises to increase blood flow to help them recover from their injuries so they can get back to playing in practices and games sooner.”

Throughout his experience, Hughes has seen some severe injuries occur.

“I have seen many severe neck and spinal injuries that happened during football games. I have also seen a couple of broken lower legs from rugby,” Hughes said. “These injuries require a 911 call, as they have to be cared for immediately.”

Practicing proper technique, ensuring to warm up, cool down, and stretch, and staying hydrated are all known to reduce the risk of getting injured for athletes everywhere. Stretching, warming up, and cooling down are exceedingly important due to the fact that they help to loosen up the muscles and prepare them for play.

Both static and dynamic stretching are encouraged and implemented. Static stretches work to improve the end-range

movement of a muscle and dynamic stretches help improve mobility through a range-of-motion manner.

In addition, sleep is also crucial to preventing injury, as a lack of sleep and muscle fatigue increase an athlete's susceptibility to injury. Furthermore, trainers encourage athletes to hydrate before and after practice, as well as promote a healthy, well-balanced diet.

Coaches also recommend the use of proper equipment, such as helmets, pads, and shoes, as well as the implementation of proper technique during practices and games.

March madness hits home

March Madness has tipped off and there is action taking place everywhere. Millions of brackets have been filled out by viewers and everyone will be watching to see how the tournament plays.

In a 68 team tournament, there are over, 32 chances to make a mistake. The chances of having a perfect bracket are one in 9,223,372,036,854,775,808. So it is anyone's guess who will win it all.

UVA has been a make or break team in the past five seasons of the tournament, since many teachers are alumni and students are applying to the university, it makes UVA a favorite.

UVA has disappointed a lot, being ranked No.1 in their tournament division and not getting very far. In the 2018 tournament, UVA was ranked No.1 in their group and lost to the 16 seed, the University of Maryland Baltimore College. This epic loss was the first time ever a 16 seed beat a first-seeded team and resulted in thousands of busted brackets.

This year has come down to a judgment call as the Cavaliers have been in a dog fight for first place in the ACC (Atlantic Coastal Conference) all year with the Duke Blue Devils. Duke

has also been high in the rankings all season, and they rarely disappoint in the tournament.

Duke is known for having successful tournaments. However, with the recent injury to stud freshman Zion Williamson, the Blue Devil's game had a notable drop-off.

"When Zion Williamson went down it kinda changed everything and Duke fell off a little bit," freshman Maxwell Lanham said. The last time Duke won the National Championship was in 2015 against Wisconsin and they could very well do it again after knocking off UNC and Florida State in the ACC Championship tournament.

But then there's Gonzaga who can dominate any team on the west coast. Gonzaga is a big-time basketball team and they are definitely ready for this year's tournament. North Carolina has huge hopes as well since they won in 2017 and definitely show up to play every tournament. Both of these teams are favorites to win this year.

Another team is Tennessee, the greater SEC (Southern Eastern Conference) team in the NCAA. They have really brought up their basketball program in the past few years.

"I didn't expect Tennessee to have such a good start," Lanham said.

They have been up and down all season being ranked everywhere between 10 and 1. Another SEC dominance is Kentucky, but they have been questionable the past few years not really shining out or blending in. You either get a good team or mediocre team, but even when they're mediocre they're better than most. Michigan, who really brought their basketball program up in recent years, has always fallen under Michigan State. MSU has always been the more dominant basketball team in Michigan.

Michigan has the team to do something good. Last year, they made to the finals and can easily make it to the Sweet 16 or higher.

Michigan State is doing quite fine, if they could really pull some levers and press some buttons, they have a good chance to get into the Final Four. However, based on the competition, Michigan State will probably end up in the Sweet 16 at best.

The biggest story so far for NCAA basketball this season was the ACC.

Every team has been very competitive and over half the teams have at least been ranked. Virginia Tech has never been as dominant in past seasons, but they definitely have had the spotlight on them a few times.

For most teams in the ACC, they would be ranked really high at points of the season but were knocked around by Duke, Virginia, etc.

Based on where these teams are placed they could control their region but they will have trouble with the bigger teams. Along with the Hokies; Syracuse, Louisville, and Florida State have all been strong forces inside the ACC.

The ACC has really been dominant, the former great Pac-12 (Pacific 12 Conference) only has one hope for a successful March Madness team: Wisconsin. Wisconsin had an okay season so far, but they have to work a little harder if they want to compete with the better teams in the tournament.

The Pac-12 used to be a huge force within the tournament, with teams like Oregon, Washington, and UCLA, they were the conference to beat. However, it is very quiet now and is not very competitive.

Unfortunately, Oregon's star center, Bol Bol, was injured early on and Oregon has not been able to recover since.

This has built most of the intense competitive energy within the first few months of the season.

One of the many great things about doing the March Madness bracket is competing with friends, coworkers, and family. English teacher Bill Maglisceau puts together a bracket pool with other staff members every year.

Last year in 2018, there were up to 89 teacher participants in the pool. He started in 1998.

"The old athletic director, Olan Faulk, had asked me to do it," Maglisceau said.

Some teachers have had some outstanding brackets.

"One year, Mr. [Joseph] Valentino had a near perfect bracket and another year Dr. [Michael] Mazzeralla came from behind and

won. Those two are almost always in the mix” Maglisceau said. Like most, Maglisceau plans on having Duke win it all. In this tournament there are bound to be some fireworks, upsets, blow outs, nail biters and crazy finishes. In a tournament with 67 games every basketball play in the book will be implemented.

Q & A with Coach Lindsey Ottavio

Q: How long have you been coaching soccer?

A: I have been coaching soccer for four years. This will be my second year as Annandale’s varsity coach.

Q: Did you play soccer before coaching it?

A: I actually started playing soccer when I was four years old. Then I played all throughout my high school career. I played in college and in England for two years.

Q: How did you discover your interest in soccer?

A: I was so young that I think I just tried soccer because of my parents. I loved it the moment I started and I didn’t want to play any other sport. I didn’t have any other interests. I just really wanted to train and play soccer.

Q: What made you want to coach soccer?

A: Coaching is the natural extension of playing. After I stopped playing, I still wanted to be involved with the game, and to pass down the knowledge I gained to girls specifically.

Q: Do you do anything with soccer in the off season?

A: Yes, I actually coach travel soccer as well. So I am busy coaching soccer year round.

Q: How do you prepare for a new soccer season?

A: Preparing for the new soccer season sort of starts immediately after the last season ends. We do a complete reflection and as the new season gets closer it is more about building on the foundation we had last season

Q: What is one thing you love about coaching?

A: I love the relationships I create with my players. Seeing them thrive and genuinely improve is such a great feeling as a coach.

Q: What is your favorite memory from coaching?

A: My favorite memory was when we won our first game last season. I was taking over the program and it was new for me. We were trying to develop our own personality for the program. But that moment when we achieved our first victory was the sweetest feeling.

Bleachers postponed until summer

The new home bleachers at the football stadium are yet to be completed and are not expected to be fully finished until the summer of 2019.

John Ellenberger, the Director of Student Activities, was displeased when he heard about the delay from Fairfax County. However, He is working hard to make the best of this situation.

“A gentleman from Fairfax County Public Schools said they were having a hard time getting the permits pushed through Fairfax County Government,” Ellenberger said. “We went through the whole football and field hockey season [without replacing the

bleachers].”

Despite the bleachers being a major necessity for football, the construction of the new bleachers began shortly after the fall season ended.

“At first, the gentleman from Fairfax County Public Schools said that we would have [the bleachers] for the spring season,” Ellenberger said. “That would have been fine, as long as they were installed by March 1.”

Everything seemed to be heading in the right direction until about two weeks ago when Ellenberger received a call from the county.

“They stated that they were behind on another job in the county, and because of that, we are not going to have the new bleachers for the spring season,” Ellenberger said.

There are many problems that must be solved so that the games can go on.

“The biggest issue was the question of sound because they already demolished the press box, where all the sound was amplified,” Ellenberger said. “I need to make sure we have sound for announcements, music, senior nights, and anthems.”

Ellenburger is very persistent and wants to have the 2019 spring season be just as enjoyable as any other.

Despite this setback, he was able to solve the issue readily.

“Mr. Witkowski let me borrow an extremely loud speaker that is used for band practice,” Ellenberger said. “I’m really thankful that Mr. Witkowski and the band department are hooking me up for the sound.”

Although disappointed, Ellenberger still found innovative ways to recreate the ideal stadium.

Ellenberger reached out to the county and they told him that they would do everything in their power to make sure that the scoreboard works.

“We also had

He also has a backup plan in case the county cannot provide him with a functioning scoreboard.

“My plan B is to use an older scoreboard, which is about four feet by six feet, and put it on wheels just in case,”

Ellenberger said.

Many seniors are disappointed that these problems will affect sports games. However, they are attempting to ignore the issues and still have fun celebrating their last year at AHS.

"I feel annoyed because it is my senior year and it is going to be weird playing lacrosse with no home bleachers and press box," senior Faris Vadakoot said.

"[The bleachers] are going to be a little bit smaller, because of the handicapped requirements under the ADA."

Ellenberger stressed the importance of being compliant with the requirements outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA. Everyone deserves specific accommodations in order to ensure and promote equality and inclusion.

"As a senior, I am glad that the repairs happened after the football season. The bleachers hold a memory of going to football games for four years. It's also a bit upsetting that I will not get to see the final product," Vadakoot said.

Regardless of the lack of home bleachers and other setbacks, the field will be the sight for many games during the spring season, such as for lacrosse and soccer. During the games, both AHS supporters and any supporters of the opposing team will be sharing the visitor's bleacher.

Senior Andrew Izquierdo has been playing for the boys soccer team for the past three years. He feels that this spring season will be different without them.

"It's always been a tradition to have our home fans and hype squad on the home side," Izquierdo said. "I just don't think it is fair to have this happen in my senior year."

Even though we may not have the bleachers completed, the necessary arrangements have been made in order to ensure the best possible season.

Girls tackle stereotype

Wrestling is a very high impact sport and it is extremely tough and hard on an athlete's body. It is not really surprising that it is primarily linked to being a "boys' sport". Although clearly, it is a male-dominated sport, that does not mean that girls cannot compete in it too.

In fact, recently, the wrestling team at AHS has experienced a large growth in female wrestlers. In previous years, there hasn't even been a single female wrestler but this year there is a total of six girls participating on the team.

"I like the fact that girls feel confident enough to come out and wrestle," Says Coach Damico, the head varsity wrestling coach, "More and more girls all over the nation are picking up wrestling and I think it's great that we are ahead of the curve."

Sophomores Eva Gomez, Nicole Lopez and Breanna Sanchez, and freshman Izzy Teinfalt, Danielle Dean and Alex Cabrera are the girls who are currently on the Annandale wrestling team.

"I tried out for wrestling just for kicks", freshman Izzy Teinfalt said. "I eventually started conditioning with Coach Klein and slowly fell in love with the atmosphere. When the season started, I really enjoyed it and knew I made the right decision."

The major growth in girls wrestling isn't only at AHS, a recent participation survey by the Virginia High School League found that the number of girls competing in wrestling increased 18 percent from 2006-07 to 2015-16.

These increased participation numbers for girls are greater than other NCAA sponsored sports of crew, fencing, skiing, and riflery and in the NCAA emerging sports of rugby, sand volleyball, and horseback riding. In fact, women's wrestling

is reportedly one such as the fastest growing sports at the scholastic and collegiate levels.

Not only have more females started playing the sport, but respect for it at higher levels has increased in the past 15 years. According to the National wrestling coaches association, in 2004 women's wrestling was recognized as an Olympic sport. 14 states and one US territory now sponsor a state high school championship specifically for girls wrestling.

"Most people would expect that I, as a female, would receive some sort of unfair treatment or discrimination," Teinfalt said. "But it turns out that all the coaches and other wrestlers are very accepting and treat me no differently, and that really makes it a healthy environment."

So far, the team has participated in eight meets.

"My record hasn't been the best this year" Sophomore Eva Gomez, a wrestler on Varsity says, "But I can proudly say that I've beaten three boys so far."

One of the things that make wrestling so unique is that girls wrestle against boys at the wrestling matches simply because there is no team specifically for girls.

Although legally girls can try out for boys team's, in every other sport at AHS except for football, there are girl's teams and boy's teams. Several sports hold co-ed meets, such as track and swimming, but at those competitions, girls compete against other girls and boys compete against other boys.

"I can tell that a lot of my male opponents think that they can beat me really easily," Gomez says, "All that really does is motivates me to work even harder."

The team has an upcoming District tournament on Friday, February 1 against Mt. Vernon, Hayfield, T.C. Williams and

West Potomac at AHS and they could make it to the region tournament against Fairfax at Fairfax High School on Thursday, Feb. 7.

New bleachers to be installed

Anyone looking out at the stadium lately can make out a noticeable difference, the stadium bleachers on the home side are no longer in sight.

Just over two weeks ago, the bleachers, along with the press box, were taken apart and removed.

A plan that was originally supposed to take place last summer, the bleachers were not replaced in time for the fall sports season due to issues arising pertaining to construction permits. The installment process for the bleachers on the home side of Bolding Stadium is set to begin in the next two weeks.

“I requested that they [the bleachers] would be done by the first of February because that is about the time that spring sports start,” Director of Student Activities John Ellenberger said. “Ideally, we want them to be completed so that there is no interruption with the spring season, but the worst case scenario is that we would use the visitor side until construction is complete.”

The previous set of bleachers which included a home-made front railing had been utilized for decades without replacement. The incoming bleachers will be brand new however, they will also be slightly different than the previous set.

Due to handicap requirements, the bleachers will lose

approximately one to two rows of seating in the front. There will be about an extra foot of added space in between the stadium fence and the bleachers. This will widen the walkway and help in reducing crowdedness.

“The whole set will be the same size length wise as the previous bleachers, but we did lose a row or two of seating,” Ellenberger said.

Payment for the bleachers will not be from AHS, but rather Fairfax County Public Schools. In addition to installing new bleachers, a new press box will be added as well fitted with an air conditioning and heating unit.

“I think that it’s pretty cool that they are putting in new bleachers,” senior Alex Brennan said. “Hopefully the new bleachers will improve the viewing experience during football and soccer games and the added walkway space is an added bonus too.”

The visitor side bleachers will not be replaced anytime soon as they are virtually brand new after being replaced only a few years ago.

The installment of the new bleachers comes only as one of the recent improvements made to athletic equipment and facilities at AHS.

A new scoreboard at the baseball field was installed at the end of last month. Payment for the scoreboard was courtesy of the Athletic Booster Club.

Other recent improvements include the replacement of the track last school year and the updated tennis courts as well.

An upcoming renovation will be taking place for the main gym floor which went through serious damage this past summer.

“They were fixing the roof and had about one third of it off one day,” Ellenberger said. “A crazy storm rolled in and

within an hour it put it about two inches of water down on the gym floor.”

The water damage to the court resulted in the formation of ridges and bumps along the seams of the floor.

The gym floor is set to be sanded down to bare wood in order to remove the ridges and will then be freshly painted. Images of the new floor design were released recently as well.