

# Students hyped for Winter Olympics

The Winter Olympics kicked off just recently on Feb. 9, this time from Pyeongchang, South Korea.

The start of the Winter Olympics garnered the attention of many students around school.

A number of AHS students invest a lot of time in keeping up with and watching events daily.

“One of my favorite things about the Olympics is chanting on the US team in all of the events as they compete against multiple countries,” junior Javonte Durr-Cannon said.

There’s a broad range of sports that students prefer to watch at the 2018 games ranging from bobsleigh to ice hockey to cross-country skiing.

“My favorite events would have to be either the snowboarding or cross-country skiing,” senior Nghia Nguyen said. “I prefer those of events over any others because I feel like they require more preparation and work.”

With the Winter and Summer Olympics always being two years apart, there’s a great deal of variance between the two.

Differences in types of events and playing environment typically results in viewers preferring one over the other.

“I like to watch both [Winter and Summer Olympics] but prefer the Winter Olympics more,” Durr-Cannon said. “The athletes competing work hard in colder temperatures which makes the winter games better than the summer ones to me.”

Some students noted that the amount of events and sports being less in the Winter Olympics than the Summer Olympics enhance and make the viewing experience better.

In past years there have been as many as 42 summer sports in the game compared to only 15 total sports in the winter games this year.

“It is easier to keep up during the winter because there are less events,” Nguyen said.

This year, the official Olympics app also allows for an easier time keeping up with events and the medal counts by allowing the user to select the country they want to view information on.

Upon doing so, it becomes easier to view upcoming events for the selected country and their medal count.

Having begun on Feb. 9, the winter games will last a little over two weeks until Feb. 25.

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## **Girls track finishes strong**

Girls Indoor Track and Field closed out its season with a solid showing at districts at Episcopal High School in Alexandria.

The Atoms competed on Feb. 1 through Feb. 4 against rivals from the Patriot Conference.

Facing strong opposition, many of the girls ran personal bests, but sadly, none were able to qualify for regionals.

Junior Ellie Hohenstein qualified for regionals in the pole vault but will be unable to compete due to a disappointing back injury.

"I'm sad, but there's always next season. My back will get better," said Hohenstein.

Phillip Harris, the girls distance coach, believed that they did well this season but had more to offer in seasons to come.

"This is probably one of the most improved seasons we had for the girls in a long time," Harris said. "The relays really came along. They made a lot of improvements."

Harris believes that what the team needs is more girls to fill the events and guarantee the team's constant improvement.

"The girls numbers need to go up. We need more girls. The leadership of some of our seniors, like Emily Pope was vital to our success," said Harris. "New leaders will be crucial to the success of the team next year."

Sophomore distance runner Vitalina Fuentes believed the season was great for herself and the team as a whole.

"I was able to improve [my time] by 15 seconds which is a lot in the mile. The team did great as a whole," said Fuentes, "The majority of us got personal bests compared to our old times. It was a big improvement since last year in winter track."

Fuentes is looking to make some serious gains in the off season so she can come back better than ever next winter.

"To improve I have to put in more mileage and work more in the weight room to gain some muscles," said Fuentes.

It was a strong end to the season for the Atoms. Many of the athletes plan to continue their training in the upcoming season of Outdoor Track.

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# Girls track takes off

The Indoor track season got underway on Saturday Dec. 3 at Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia.

The Atoms indoor track team competed against Chantilly, Mount Vernon, and West Potomac. The meet was very success for both girls and boys.

The girls placed second and the Boys placed first in the competition.

“It was one of the best meets we have ever had,” girls varsity track coach Phil Harris said.

Many of the runners ran really well, and some of them ran the fastest they ever have.

“The meet went great a lot of people got personal records in their events,” senior Ariana Ward said.

Ward competed in the 4 by 200 meters, 4 by 4,300 meters. The Atoms have a lot of returning runners from last year including Junior Janice Milian.

Milian competed in 1600 meter race, also know as the mile.

It looks to be a very good season for indoor track, led by the boys cross country team that made it to regionals this fall.

But even with early success there is always room for improvement.

“The team really needs to work on their speed, we have plenty of distance runners,” Coach Harris said.

The runners think we need to improve on some other things,

like starts, closing speed, endurance, and other important techniques to run faster than they ever have in a meet.

“Overall just dropping our times, even though we have really strong runners who run really good times in their events,” Milian said. “I need to improve on my start and pacing myself through the race.”

“The team overall is working hard and doing a fantastic job I wouldn’t change anything,” Ward said.

The girls distance team was successful in the fall during cross country. Many of the girls have been together on the same team for their whole high school track experience.

Most of the sprinters play other sports in the fall because there is no sprinting. Playing other sports help them develop other aspects of running and athletic skills needed to sprint.

Over the weekend on Saturday, our Indoor track team will be participating in the PR holiday invitation.

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## **Swim dives into new season**

With a new season, and new coaches; the swim team are looking to live up to last season this winter. New coaches Victoria Douglas and Coach Kendall are poised and ready to take the Atoms by storm.

“I am very excited to be a part of the AHS Swim and Dive coaching staff. I am looking forward to working with Coach Shelley and the parent volunteers,” Douglas said.

Coach Douglas has been teaching Math at Annandale for the last two years, but this is her first year coaching swim. "I have been swimming ever since I can remember. I swam every summer at my local country club," Douglas said.

Coach Douglas coaches junior varsity cheerleading as well as swim.

So far the coaches have received a warm welcome, "I have met the new coaches I am excited to see what they will bring to the team and how they will help our team grow," Senior Ben Padrutt said.

Padrutt is returning for his 4th and final year on the Atoms swim team and is the captain of the team.

Padrutt is looking forward to starting competitions and getting back to the swim team's traditions, of bleaching their hair for the conference meet. The boys bleach their hair blonde and the girls dye the tips of their hair red.

Fellow senior Rachel Neary is looking forward to another tradition, senior night. "I am looking forward to senior night. It is weird to finally be the senior so I am really excited for it," Neary said. Coach Douglas is most looking forward to getting to know the student athletes and seeing where the team goes.

With the arrival of some new coaches, the team as a whole doesn't have any goals yet, but the individual swimmers certainly do.

"My goal for this years swim season is to improve my times from last year and to qualify for regionals in an individual event," Padrutt said.

The Atoms had success last year with a few individual swimmers; but the boys 200 meter free relay really stole the show by making it all the way to the state competition. The

Atoms swim team will be looking for similar success this season.

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## **Skin care for cooler months**

Summer is coming to a close and the cooler months are creeping steadily towards us. Due to the dry air outside and house heaters, many students have trouble taking care of their skin when the weather changes.

### **Oily Skin**

A little natural glow is great if you want look lively and healthy, however some teens produce too much oil, causing their skin to look shiny.

“I wash my face every night and try stay away from oily food as much as I can,” junior TraMi Ly said.

When skin is too oily, it can be prone to breakouts, acne and blackheads. The best way to care for this skin type is to use a gentle oil free face wash and moisturizer.

A common mistake people make is washing their face too often. Your face need oil and stripping it away can be harmful, leading to dry skin. Oily skin can usually sustain the cold weather, however some people can have breakouts because of the temperature change. Make sure to change washes wash if your skin type shifts.

### **Dry Skin**

On the other spectrum of skin types is dry skin. Dry skin can look flaky and scaly and wearing makeup can be difficult because it could flake off. The changing of the seasons can

worsen dry skin. The ideal thing to do is to use moisturizer specifically for dry skin after you wash your face. A trivial mistake teens make is washing their skin with hot water thinking that they are cleaning their pores. This leaves skin lifeless and it will lack essential oils that keep your skin clear.

Use lukewarm water and restrict long hot showers. This skin type is most susceptible to worsening dryness over the fall and winter seasons.

“In the winter my skin can be get kind of dry but I use lots of moisturizer to help ease it,” junior Emily Lien said.

You can prevent some drying by using lotion if you will be out for longer than 15 minutes and by covering your some of your face with a scarf so any harsh winds will not hurt your skin. When caring for the rough parts, use an essential oil, like argan or sunflower oil. There are plenty of oils to buy and use, and it varies for each person. Some may cause an allergic reaction, so be sure to skin test one day prior to using it on your face. Make sure not to apply too much or this could lead to a breakout.

### **Combination Skin**

If you have some patches of dry skin and some patches that are oily, then you have combination skin. Dealing with this type can be difficult because most products are designed for one type.

If you have products that work with one skin type but not the other, you should spot moisturize and treat. Have moisturizers that are the best for that type and use it only where it is needed.

“I wash my face everyday at least once when I wake up to keep my skin hydrated because your body is mostly water so it obviously needs it to stay clear and healthy,” junior Jessica

Winkler said.

In the colder months, a person with a combination skin type will most likely get dryer skin. You should have a thicker facial moisturizer just in case your skin type changes with the weather.

Make sure to only use it on the dry areas just in case your skin is still oily on some parts. Using a heavy lotion on oily skin can clog pores on the t-zone area, the t-zone area is your forehead to the nose and is usually oily.

Different skin types respond to weather changes; having another set of products for the colder months can help ease any discomfort.

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## **Winter Band Concert**

The Winter Band Concert took place on December 20th at 7 p.m. in the AHS Auditorium.

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## **Winter sports start getting festive**

As the temperature plummets and winter coats are whipped out, it is evident that the seasons are shifting, not only with mother nature, but with the sports here at AHS. Every sports team has distinguishing traditions that allows for bonding between team members and the creation of a more cohesive group

overall. This is especially clear in winter sports.

Basketball is widely known for its popularity during games, but before the team hits the court, they take part in activities to bond as a team.

“[The varsity girls basketball team] always prays before games and we go in the team room during half time. The room was decorated at the beginning of the year with our hand prints and numbers on the walls above our chairs,” junior Gaby Ripani said.

While some sports have several traditions, the wrestling team seems to have more simple activities to participate in.

“We don’t have many traditions, but sometimes we have team gang fight where we split into groups and wrestle,” junior Jordan Pokraka said.

The swim and dive team is especially unique in their traditions, as their “rude awakening” was hard to ignore in the past, but has been restricted by administrators due to the fear of hazing. However, the team has been known for their many cheers such as shouting, “lets give them the finger” and raising their index fingers following another chant, “we’re number one!” With such a large team, these traditions allow for a stronger and more united group.

“[Girls] dye our hair for districts red and guys bleach their hair for districts,” sophomore Elizabeth Manthos said.

The dance team also partakes in activities throughout their two seasons.

“We have secret pals at every home game that we perform at and during practice, we bring food for people’s birthday. We also have an end of the season sleep over and a winter holidays party,” sophomore Hannah Coulter said.

While certain traditions are more extravagant than others,

activities that are unique to each sport creates the mood that winter is known for; festive.

“Traditions help the team come together with lots of team spirit.” Manthos said.

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## **Banquet-less Winter Sports Banquet held**

The elimination of the food portion of the fall, winter and spring sports banquets brings negative and positive reactions about the end-of-year awards ceremony. On the bright side, it cuts off a good 30-45 minutes of unnecessary time creating faster and more to-the-point ceremonies. Many, however, enjoy the good food and good times spent with their fellow athletes.

On March 7, the AHS winter sports banquet was held in the auditorium. It was the first winter banquet without the banquet itself.

“Going to sports banquets without food is better because it went by a lot faster, even though it wasn’t as fun,” sophomore Joe Bermingham said.

Due to this change in procedure, coaches seem to be more prone to having their own banquet where food is present instead of attending the school-held banquet. Among others, winter track is a prime example of this decision. Gathering at McGill’s Famous Pizza & Buffet, athletes paid \$10 for all you can eat pizza, salad and ice cream as they listened to awards being announced by the array of track coaches.

“I liked having [the banquet] separate because I got it done and over with, and didn’t have to worry about it later. Also, it was shorter and I got to eat and hang out with my friends,” junior Sabrina Romano said.

While some like the separate ceremony with food, others were perfectly content with the newly revised banquet held at AHS.

“I’ve never been to a banquet with food, but it wouldn’t matter to me if it was there or not because I only care about being there with my team,” freshman Hannah Coulter said.

Food or no food, sports banquets are a great way for athletes and coaches to spend one last time together as a team and congratulate each other for all their hard work and commitment.

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## **Annual battle of the classes gets a wonderful winter twist**

From one class to the next, giant snowmen adorn the doors as they gather not dust, but rather white snowflakes on their bellies. As another spirit event approaches, the Student Government Association (SGA) heads the effort to raise money and pep up the students of AHS. In one week, Battle of the Classes will start at the end of the schoolday during double R5 flex.

Battle of the Classes is a popular school event where students and teachers sign up to watch or be a part of a competition between the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes. In the previous year, students participated in dance-offs, relays, and the amusing “don’t-forget-the-lyrics.”

Battle of the Classes is being organized differently this year by the students in Leadership classes and the SGA. Last year, classes were allowed to go based on which teachers signed up first. This year, there are “snowflakes” which are being sold for .25 cents a piece.

The classes with the most snowflakes are allowed to go while the others are forced to stay in their classrooms.

Students are excited to buy snowflakes as many line up in crowds to get the most snowflakes so their R5 class can attend. “The snowflake drive has been a big success this year. We’ve raised about \$200 already,” junior leadership student Anam Asif said.

Contrary to popular belief, the money raised from the snowflake drive is not going to AHS, but to local charities. “The money that we’ve raised will be given to organizations like Fairfax Hospital,” Asif said.

This year, there will be old favorites like don't-forget-the-lyrics and relays, but there will be some new additions to Battle of the Classes like tug-of-war as well. AHS students are getting excited for the event, which will be held next week Friday, January 14.

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## **Students prepare for Winter Break**

After three weeks of studying and teachers pressing work loads down right before interims are distributed, students are more than ready for another break from school. With the newly fallen snow, Winter Break is just around the corner and AHS is

preparing for the long-awaited holidays.

“For Winter Break I’m going to Miami, Florida for my brother’s basketball tournament and for Christmas we’re going to South Carolina to see my grandma. So we are going from Florida to South Carolina during the week and a half we have off,” sophomore Megan Guglielmo said.

Many students and teachers tend to travel to visit family and friends to celebrate the holidays. This year, winter break begins on Thursday, Dec. 23, after a two-hour release on Dec. 22. The new year brings the return of school beginning again on Jan. 3, giving Fairfax County’s staff and students a week and a half off.

“I have friends down south that get a full two weeks off for winter and a full week off for Thanksgiving break. So i wish ours could be longer so we’re able to do more,” sophomore Austin Chavez said.

Teachers often give out heavy homework assignments and projects for students to complete over break. There has been controversy over this topic since after all, it is a break. Almost two weeks without school can cause brains to easily forget new topics learned in class; which requires more time to review old material and less time teaching new concepts.

“I don’t think teachers should assign homework because winter break is a time for students to have a break from school and not have to worry about homework,” freshman Ally Mastrota said.

Whether students are traveling for the break or just spending family time, AHS is already showing effects of Winter Break.

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# Strumming in a winter wonderland

If the recent [snow flurries](#) and overplayed holiday music on the radio were not enough to create the holiday spirit, then maybe the AHS music department can help.

The [band](#), [chorus](#) and [orchestra](#) departments will continue to host their very own holiday-themed concerts. Each performance will include a variety of classic winter tunes, along with pieces they have recently been working on performing.

The band performance will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 14. Some songs they will play include "Festival Of Hanukkah," "Sleigh Ride," "Frosty The Snowman," and "Abracadabra".

"I'm most excited to play 'Abracadabra' in gold band because it's a pretty fast piece and it sounds magical," freshman saxophonist Kaitlin Martindale said.

The last of the three annual winter-inspired concerts will be performed by the choral department. The Chorus Winter Concert, will take place on Thursday, Dec. 16. Songs such as "Masters In This Hall," "Jingle Bells," and "Winter Wind" will be performed.

"I like holiday music because it's fun to sing and more upbeat a lot of the time," said junior William Bennett, who is a member of Men's Chorale and Annandale Singers.

"I love the holiday season!" freshman obist Erica Johnson said.

The orchestra played on Tuesday, Dec. 7 under the direction of orchestra and IB music teacher Stephanie Lewis. Some holiday songs they played include "Festival Of Lights," "You're a Mean One Mr. Grinch," and "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

“The concert ignited the Christmas spirit in the audience, and we played a very pleasing performance,” said junior violinist A.J. Janwatin.

“I liked playing ‘A Charlie Brown Christmas’ the best, and I thought we sounded really good,” said junior violist Sabrina Romano.

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## **Few students participate in spirit-less week**

Last Monday, the cafeteria during all lunches was filled with blaring music and a bustling back table as Leadership prepared to have a demonstration. Students paraded down the main aisle of the room, showing off the recommended attire for each day of Winter Spirit Week, which occurred from Dec. 6-10. The different days included Switch It Up, Sports Day, Little-Kid Day, Senior Citizen Day, and Atomic Day. The week culminated on Friday with a pep rally during R5 flex. That night, there was a basketball double header against South County.

“[The spirit week] wasn’t right before winter break, so there was no big event it was going up to,” sophomore Skye Lindberg said.

This opinion is mirrored among other students as well.

“If they had decent themes, it would have been better,” sophomore Stephen Oakes said. “They should have changed Little Kid Day to Pajama Day because everyone just wore hoodies anyway.”

Leadership has promised additional spirit days in the Spring,

and the overall spirit of this past week evidently has varying opinions.