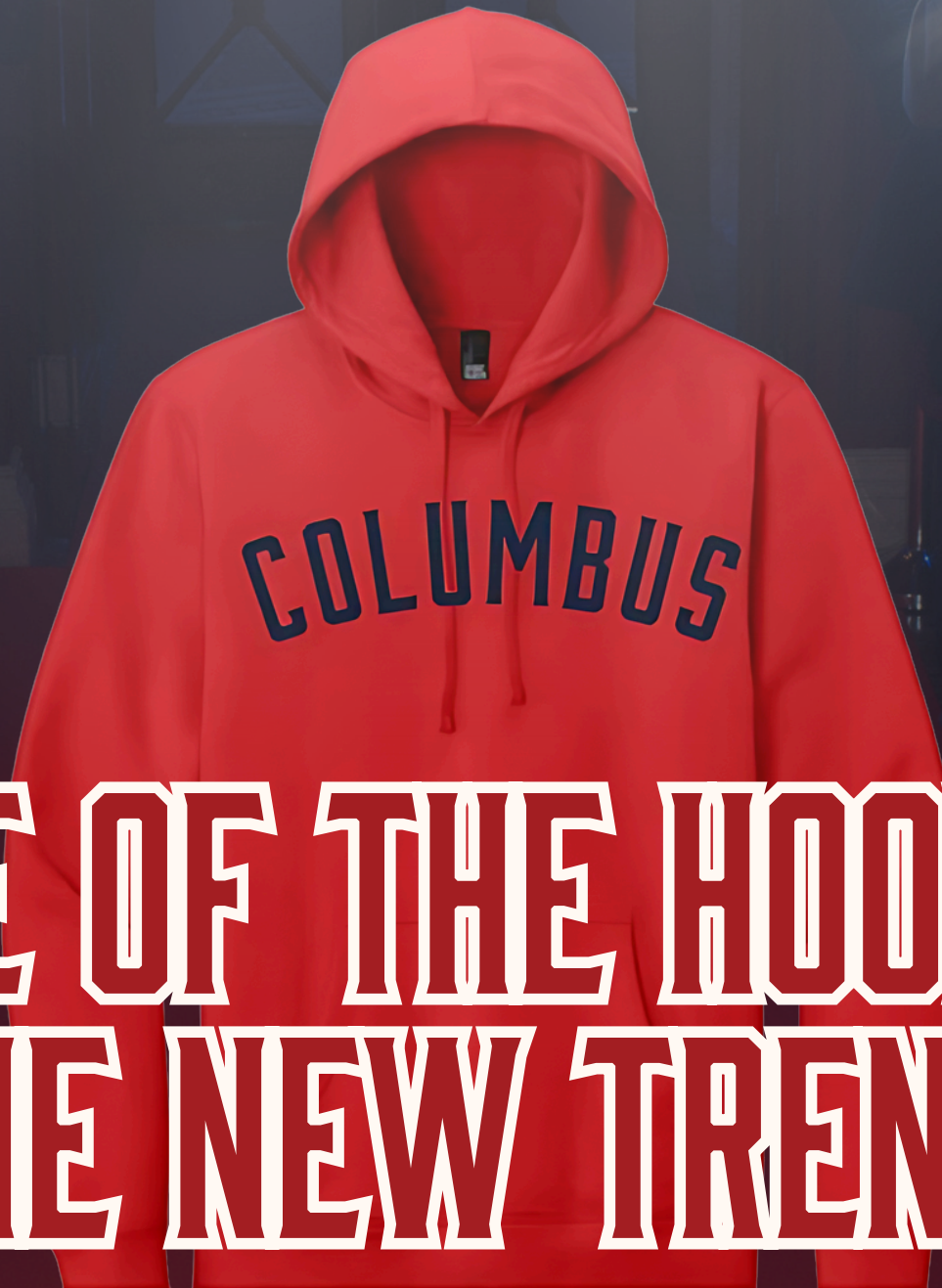
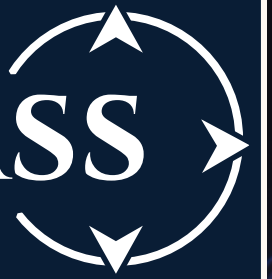


# THE COLUMBUS COMPASS

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## College Fair Gives Students Inside Look at Colleges

Carlos Gutierrez · Staff Writer



Photo Credit: Br. Eladio

As many students at Columbus begin to start their college application process, many want to be proactive in looking for a school that suits them. Lucky enough for them, Columbus' annual College Fair is a great way for them to get their feet wet with college interaction.

On September 10, more than 60 schools set up stands in the Cafeteria and Basketball Gym. This large variety of schools allows new and returning students to scout and learn about what schools to apply to, as well as to learn more about the college application process.

"The key benefits for the students attending this year's college fair is to come and to meet with representatives from the university and to hear in person about everything that the university has to offer, from majors to financial aid, scholarship opportunities, how to apply to that school, so its a way the reps and the students to get connected in person," said Ms. de la Osa, college counselor.

For many students, everything that comes with searching for the college that suits them may be challenging; However, the College Fair offers an opportunity for students to communicate with and ask questions to college reps face-to-face.

**"To be honest, I'm hoping to learn about the different universities and my chances at getting accepted into one and which one is the right fit for me," said Daniel Viloría '26.**

Even universities with dual enrollment programs and partnerships with Columbus were in attendance.

**"Columbus is well-respected across the country so that's why I think a school from Virginia would partner with Columbus," said Ryan Myzak, director of admission at Marymount University in Arlington. "Part of the dual enrollment agreement with Marymount University is that if students take three courses and get a B or higher on each, you are guaranteed admission".**

The best way to be prepared to go to college is to get as much done as you can in high school, and talking to your college and guidance counselors is one way to get advantages in the academic race.

This event, which is popular with Columbus students, parents and students from schools like Our Lady of Lourdes Academy and Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart, will continue to keep students engaged and active in the college application practice and will serve as a testament to Columbus' status as a college preparatory school.

## Annual Club Fair: Success and Tradition

Joseph Alonso · Managing Editor

Tables, posters, trophies and students screaming for you to join their club: this is the view of the Christopher Columbus Club Fair.

Every year, Columbus' more than 60 clubs gather in the gymnasium and the L building lobby, ready to make their recruitment moves on students looking to join a club—and this year was no different. The fair aimed to display student life that would encourage both new and returning students to engage in the wide variety of activities Columbus has to offer. Columbus makes it easy for students to find a group that fits their interests.

"The club fair helps, not only getting the word out, but it gives kids the opportunity to find out exactly how to sign up, when and where to get all their information so it kind of lets them know exactly what to do so they can join properly," said Mrs. Debra Martinez, upperclassmen guidance counselor.

The best part about Columbus' club fair is that new clubs are brought in each year. This year, new organizations like the Rowing and Rugby clubs made their debut. Co-presidents of the Rowing Club Mateo Martinez '26 and Gabriele Mendoza '26 shared their enthusiasm about introducing this new kind of sport to the school:

"Rowing is a beautiful sport, it is not very accessible on the school level, so... we'd like to eventually wear the Columbus crests on our uniforms and turn this club into a team."

Similarly, Ignacio Gutierrez '27, president of the new Rugby Club, underlined the school's open-mindedness: "In Columbus, it's the easiest thing to start a club as you can bring your idea out, and things like the club fair help to promote your club."

It is in such an event, supported by the long-running tradition of student engagement within Columbus High School, that students can start clubs. "A great representation of the diversity that this school offers... so there's someone for everyone. And if you can't find it, as Mr. Pugh says, 'We'll make it,'" said Mrs. Martinez had students feeling a part of the while moderating the LINK Club.

Signing up isn't the only thing on students' minds at the Club Fair; being connected to others, and getting included is what they feel. "I think the club fair is exciting because I see a whole lot of new clubs that I never thought would be here, like Key Club, Castaways Against Cancer, and Debate," said Patrick Sacher '28. He added,

"I think it's an important tradition because it keeps more students involved in the school... and it makes a bigger brotherhood."

With every passing year, the club fair continues to be an important part of Columbus's life, connecting students, sparking new passions and keeping the spirit of brotherhood alive. This annual event does keep the student's interest alive and vibrant, provoking them to follow their passions and at the same time, get connected more to the community around the school.



# Seniors vs. Faculty: A Dodgeball Showdown for the Ages

Allan Tompkins • Staff Writer

Last year, the seniors and faculty faced off in what seemed like a dynastic rivalry in basketball, ending with the seniors barely clinching a 51-50 win. This year was no different as the faculty faced off against the seniors once again, But this time, with revenge on their minds. It all came down to an intense game of dodgeball in which students could get away with throwing something at their teachers and not get sent to the dean for it.

Round 1 (Elimination):

The first two rounds were elimination rounds between 3 teams of seniors to find out who would be worthy to face the faculty. Referees Mr. Ortega and Mr. Pino would keep track of every single ball thrown, making sure no player who got hit would remain in the game. Round 1 began and right off the bat, the seniors did not take it easy on each other. Jose Gomez led the left side of the gym while Andres Gotera led the right. As the multicolored dodgeballs zipped across the basketball court, the teams began losing more and more players in what looked like an exchange of gunfire across a battlefield. The teams began adopting a pattern of moving up, throwing the balls, and then returning to the end of the court to dodge the opposing team's throws.

As the battle continued, one player stood out who sealed the win for his team: Jayden Leon. With less than one minute left in the game, Leon rushed to the center of the court and launched a ball over to a player in front of him letting his guard down to an opposing senior on his left who threw a ball directly to his chest. As the ball bounced off of his body, what seemed like an out, Leon caught the ball, leading to a sudden roar in the crowd. With only three players left on one team, and seven on the other, Gotera's team ended up winning the first round, taking them to face off the final senior team, led by Mario Magana, in Round 2.

Round 2 (Elimination):

In the second round, both teams definitely played more conservatively, staying toward the back of the court to avoid getting hit. While not as close, nor as exciting as the first round, the atmosphere was still tense and the teams fought with all they had.

As Magana's team began losing more and more players without getting many of Gotera's team out, victory was near. Dylan Gill on Magana's team earned the MVP of Round 2 as he got numerous outs while also being the last standing member of the team before getting hit in the head to end the game and make Gotera's team undefeated.



The faculty are prepared for their matchup. (Photo Credit: Melissa Alonso, Student Activities Moderator)

Round 3 (Faculty):

As Gotera's team remained on the court for a third time, the highly anticipated faculty took their positions on the left side of the gym. Mr. Diaz and Mr. Ulloa wore matching red, white and blue headbands and took their marks on the line as if they were about to run a 40-yard dash. The second Ms. Alonso yelled, "Go!" both teams rushed to grab as many balls as they could and the battle began. Within a minute, half of the faculty was eliminated by the dominating seniors, yet hope was far from gone. "I zigged, zagged and dodged but unfortunately, my legs didn't work the way I wanted them to," said math teacher Mr. Sanchez.

Without a doubt, the clear MVP of the faculty was Mr. Pino. He not only had a cannon for an arm, but he also strategized against vulnerable players on the opposing team who had just thrown the ball, which dealt a considerable number against Gotera's team. Not far behind him was Mr. Garrigo who showed bravery by staying most of the game toward the front line, intimidating the seniors with his fast throws.

For over two minutes, the four remaining faculty members: Mr. Diaz, Mr. Garrigo, Mr. Pino, and Mr. Hernandez tried their best to survive against the ten remaining seniors and after a hard-fought battle, the faculty fell short to the likes of Gotera's undefeated team. While the seniors rejoiced in their victory, they weren't finished as they confidently requested one more game which the faculty happily accepted; this was their final chance at revenge for last year's disappointing loss.

Mr. Moro reflected on his performance with optimism, "I did not do as well as I anticipated but I had a lot of fun. The energy was high, everyone was laughing and in the end, that matters more than winning or losing."

Round 4 (Faculty):

For the last time, both teams lined up on their sides and once again rushed for the balls. This time, the faculty took a less offensive strategy and played it safe to preserve as many players as possible. Pino and Garrigo continued to dominate, yet the seniors focused their attacks on them, knowing they were the faculty's stronger players and eventually getting both of them out. The entire crowd was on the edge of their seats as three players remained for the faculty while only 1 was left for the seniors.

Mr. Cooper, who lasted until the end played an impressive game as he seemed to be getting more and more seniors out without getting hit once. When asked how he felt about being the last faculty member standing, Mr. Cooper replied with, "It was amazing; it really reminded me of my time playing dodgeball in elementary school."

With less than a minute left in the game, a lowball was thrown to the last senior, yet was said to have been deflected by a ball. Play resumed for about 15 more seconds before Mr. Ortega abruptly stopped the game and claimed the ball actually hit the senior's foot, making the faculty the winners. The students flooded the gym with a wave of boos as the faculty happily accepted their long-deserved victory.

Overall, the competitive yet fun atmosphere of the games captivated the audience and really had everyone guessing who would be the winner. "Doing activities with the teachers outside of school makes senior year more special," said captain, Andres Gotera. "It was even more fun when we dominated every team with our teamwork."

Every year, both faculty and seniors challenge each other to new and different games to determine who can come out on top. Last year, the faculty lost, while this year, the faculty tied. With this trend, the only thing left is a long-awaited win from the faculty which just might be seen next year. The only question is, will the seniors be ready?



## Explorerpalooza: Rock His By a Band of Teachers

Javi Albite and Joseph Alonso · Staff Writer & Managing Editor

Another month-long Columbus Walkathon fundraiser has passed, with the teachers' rock concert, Explorerpalooza, being a staple of this tradition. From Mr. Marinelli taking over the mic to sing "All the Small Things" to Mr. Ulloa going all in on the guitar solo for "Free Bird," there wasn't a dull moment watching these teachers play their hearts out on Oct. 16.

The Walkathon Fundraiser helps raise money for different causes around the school and is an important school tradition, evolving from a normal raffle fundraiser to what it is today. But more than just the walk, the teacher rock concert has become a student favorite. Teachers, who students usually only see in the classroom, turn into rockstars, giving everyone a chance to see them in a whole new way.

"Explorerpalooza is a celebration of everything that made Walkathon so popular." English teacher and guitarist Mr. Ulloa said. "It's weird, it's wacky, and it's wild. As students back in the early 00's, we all loved the insanity of Walkathon and how much the teachers bought into that insanity. It's just faculty and staff having fun and raising money for their students."

Ms. Medico and Her Love for No Doubt

During the No Doubt performance, Spanish teacher Ms. Medico joined in to sing the vocals for the song "Spiderwebs." She has always been a huge fan of the band since the '90s and wanted to use this opportunity to try something different.

"I actually don't sing, I wanted to do something different and it was one way to I guess break out of my comfort zone and that was quite impressive. I did that," she said.

Mr. Ulloa Stole the Show with "Free Bird"

Mr. Ulloa has been playing the guitar for the past 25 years and his talents really shined through that evening, especially during the "Free Bird" performance. The song's iconic four-minute-long guitar solo was played in its entirety by Mr. Ulloa in dedication to a faculty member who had recently passed away.



Photo Credit: Evin Diaz



Photo Credit: Evin Diaz

"To me, I mean, the finale was awesome. You can't go wrong with "Free Bird" and Ulloa shredding on the guitar. And it was dedicated to our faculty member who passed away, Foyo, that was his favorite song," said Mr. Marinelli.

Mr. Ulloa's skills on the guitar were impressive, but what made the moment even more special was seeing how far he had come. His performance showed just how much he had grown as a musician over the years.

Mr. Chacon and His Musical Talents

Mr. Chacon lent his vocals to every song played during the concert. But besides singing, he's also played the piano and guitar from a young age.

"I've been a musician for a very long time. Pianist since the age of 5 and then I started picking up the guitar in high school and then I was in a bunch of bands in college," he said.

He also reflected on the deeper meaning of the event beyond just the music.

"We are such a special faculty," Chacon said. "Our willingness to get outside of our comfort zone and do something totally outrageous for the school community is amazing in and of itself. Yes, we are an academic institution, but we are also a family like no other."

A Special Connection to Students

For students, seeing their teachers in a new light is part of what makes this event so special.

Mr. Ulloa, reflecting on the student reactions, said, "I think students love this because we, the faculty, are not people to them. I don't mean that we are disrespected, but that they think of us as characters in an ever-evolving narrative of Christopher Columbus High School."

As the concert ended, it was clear that this year's Walkathon concert was not just about the music, but about the connection between the faculty and the students.

The event was a reminder that while school is about education, it's also about community and family—and sometimes, that means rocking out on stage for a good cause.



## A less distracted student, a more digitized Columbus

Gabriel Orlano • Staff Writer

**F**inals and AP exams came to a close in May and June as Columbus students eagerly prepared for three months without ties, loafers, and IXL – total freedom. June and July quickly passed, and it was suddenly orientation week in August. Underclassmen and upperclassmen sat in the gym's bleachers for a grade-wide assembly as they took off their AirPods in fear of detention in week 0, immediately thereafter notified that that was the last time they'd have earbuds in their ears during school.

Amidst headlines of New York and other states clamping down on students' phone usage, Columbus began the school year by implementing their own two, new technology restrictions:

1. Enforced phone pockets in every classroom
2. No headphones ever unless for class activities

Phone pockets have seen a significant increase in popularity amongst teachers in the past two years, and what was becoming the norm is now law as all students must tuck their phones away in their designated pocket before class starts – a routine now as familiar as the per-period prayer conducted by most teachers.

Though most students are already unappreciative of being forced to spend over five hours with their screens in pockets other than their own, they're not even experiencing the whole policy. As per the student handbook, phones are also prohibited in all hallways and restrooms, with no specification of being exceptional to class time.

Senior Karim Abdul acknowledges that while he'd rather keep his phone on him, the rule "definitely removes the distractions of notifications and constantly checking for texts." While Mas student Matthew Mosquera adds that, "it's annoying, but it helps us break our addictions."

These same mixed feelings are mirrored in the second novel restriction, the headphone ban. This amendment to the student handbook follows last year's one-earbud rule, all with the intent of ensuring students' maximum awareness and attention in the event of any emergency or important announcement.

Many students live with their headphones as attached to them as their phones if not more. As a result, they'll forget they're even wearing them and constantly walk into class with them on, much to teachers' disdain. The new rule attempts to combat this phenomenon as well by removing the possibility of any headphones in the first place.

Student-musician Mauricio Coronel believes there is value to the ban, but that it goes too far.

I get that [headphones] can stand in the way of teachers' and administrators' instructions, directions, announcements," he recognizes, "but the fact we can't listen to absolutely any music between classes doesn't make sense to me." School policy does allow students to use their headphones during lunch, though, unlike many other schools. While Columbus started off the year pulling students away from their beloved devices, it itself embraced new technologies.

"Explorer" became the new default Wi-Fi for students through a setup process on their MacBooks. Those who missed the various emails or their homeroom teacher's instructions for using the new networks struggled in their first few days back as the previous "Adelante" server became increasingly non-functional.

Students were also greeted by a new OnCampus "Assignment Center" layout that features a weekly calendar view at its forefront and the ability to be filtered by class and assignment status.

The school's final technological advancement came in the form of the new ConciergePad Hall Pass system – the technological response to 30-minute bathroom breaks and mid-class campus strolls. Students' out-of-class activities are completely tracked as their locations and time spent are recorded.

The beginning of the 2024-2025 school year saw Columbus embracing its increasing digitization. These changes are not at all surprising, as they clearly reflect current U.S. trends around decreasing digital distractions, as well as the growing prevalence of all kinds of electronic innovations in our lives.

## Is Despicable Me 4 a Fresh Take or Just More of the Same?

Ignacio Chazarreta • Staff Writer

**D**espicable Me 4 was recently released and well, I felt it was a little bit repetitive like the rest of the Despicable Me movies. Although the plot is good and the new characters are an exciting choice to say the least, the lack of minion content was definitely evident in my opinion. The setting was better than the other ones, but remember the reason that the reason people watch this series is for the: Banana!

### Setting

Probably the best part of this movie was the new environment of the movie. In most minion movies, we see Gru try to hatch out his master plan, which then goes sideways, or he has to go on some special mission for his job. But in this new edition they completely flip the status quo, and bring us to this new suburban neighborhood that puts Gru way out of his comfort zone. He seems like a fish out of water and goes from trying to be the best villain there is to being placed in a suburban neighborhood where he doesn't fit in.

The setting also allows many older audiences who might have younger children to relate to Gru's experience. Life goes from being very liberating, free and doing what you want with your loved one, but the next moment you're stuck in a house with kids trying to adapt to this radical change. I believe that the setting really does a lot in this story, in addition to creating some of the many new characters we see in the film.

### Characters

The characters in this movie bring back lots of old and known protagonists like Gru, Lucy, Margot and even Dr. Nefario. But the new face we see is Máxime Le Mal, the antagonist in the story who is presented as a childhood rival/enemy of Gru. This not only adds to Gru's mostly unknown backstory but also shows what being a villain in their universe is like. It's practically a whole culture to be a villain, almost like in Harry Potter, which if you are a wizard you live in a whole other world. My favorite part of this character is just how much they antagonized him, with his angry French accent, his cockroach army and his overly extravagant clothing.

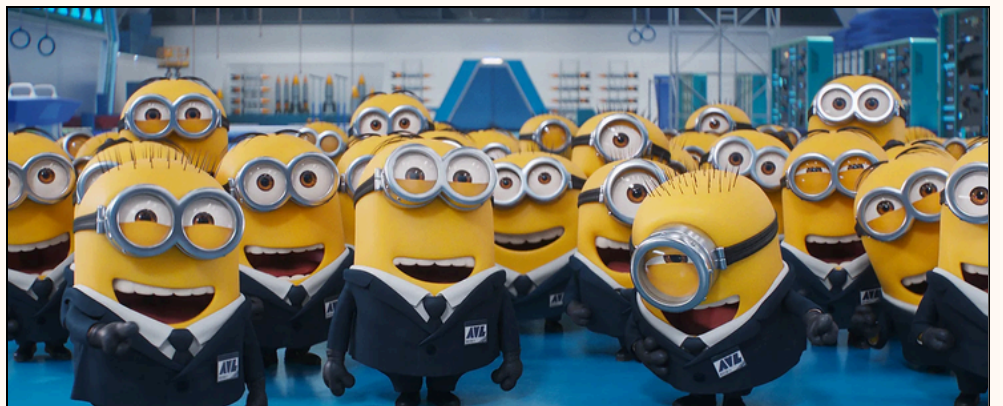
However Poppy Prescott, a young neighborhood girl who aspires to be a villain, also becomes a big influence on Gru. She brings out Gru's past and makes him remember his old self of being a villain. However, Perry Prescott (Poppy's dad) does the exact opposite, by playing the typical suburban rich guy. It is funny just how different he is from Gru in clothes, hair, house, activities and his overall personality.

### Plot

The movie's plot, although simple, is satisfactory for a kids movie. It introduces a main villain with a backstory for context, creates a conflict and then it gets resolved by the main character. It is entertaining throughout the movie and does give you a good chuckle, however not the funniest thing I've seen. Although in the movie Gru does go through some of the worst nightmares of any parent of getting their child kidnapped, its nothing that really left me in awe. You could say Illumination played it safe and even though it lacks some uniqueness, it's simple, well done, and enjoyable.

### Final movie rating: 6/10

I do believe this movie was ok, although when you see the ideas it brings it really does have lots of relatable topics with the characters and setting, but again the lack of minion moments was severely disappointing.



Minions (voiced by Pierre Coffin) in "Despicable Me 4." (Illumination & Universal Pictures/TNS)



# Destructively Seductive: “Challengers” REVIEW

Robert Chica • Staff Writer

**R**leased on April 22, 2024, as Luca Guadagnino's (Call Me by Your Name & Bones and All) 7th directorial outing. Starring Zendaya (Dune), Mike Faist (West Side Story(2021)), and Josh O'Connor (The Crown). Original Score by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross, and shot by cinematographer Sayombhu Makdeeprom. Original Screenplay by Justin Kuritzkes.

## Plot Synopsis :

Tashi Duncan, a former tennis player turned coach for her husband, Art Donaldson, aims to end his losing streak by enrolling him in a challenger event. Unbeknownst to her, she sets him against his former best friend, Patrick Zweig, who was also once Tashi's boyfriend. This situation reveals the intricate dynamics that led the three of them to this moment.

## Review:

Challengers has truly become one of the more surprising films of the year for me. After watching the trailer, which almost came out a year ago, I assumed we were going to be prepared for a provocative and cliché film that was going to be lackluster and bland. We got the exact opposite of this assumption.

## The Acting

Justin Kuritzkes understands how to write messed up but captivating characters, and Mike Faist, Zendaya and Josh O'Connor know how to play them as he intended.

Zendaya unarguably gives her best big screen performance to date as Tashi Duncan, she truly has come a long way from her "Shake It Up" days, and this film shows not only her versatility but also how she can be a powerful and seductive character while also having undeniable chemistry with the two other leading men.

Josh O'Connor plays Patrick Zweig perfectly and I completely forgot he was British. O'Connor makes us, the audience, confused as if we should like him or not, and that is truly what makes his performance all the more interesting to watch.

Mike Faist hasn't had too many films to get us familiar with him yet, but this film proves that his name will appear much more often in the credits of great films. His quick and witty way of speaking along with O'Connor's facial expressions and Zendaya's line delivery elevates the well-written dialogue.

## The Directing / Editing

Luca Guadagnino and Marco Costa, the editor, knew that they had a difficult job of capturing the intensity and tension felt between the two players on the court. The amount of POVs the film throws at us is astonishing and deserves all the attention it is getting, but without the aggressively fast, and in-your-face editing, it wouldn't make you feel as engaged feeling as if it was a real tennis match. Costa made the difficult-to-follow film so much simpler and rewarding to understand with his fast and timely jump cuts and transitions.

## The Original Score

Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross created possibly one of the best scores this year, so far. Their blend of pop and electric synth fits perfectly in intense and tame moments in the film. Although the score was a huge standout, I thought it did overlay over some dialogue which was not often but was distracting.

## Overall

The film as a whole felt raw and fun to follow, with it being my favorite 2024 release of the year thus far, I think that this hip and steamy nature makes the film feel so rewarding to understand and you can get a kick out of some certain moments in the film that might make you either cringe, laugh, or feel for these characters. What I found weird, was the direction that they went with making all the characters toxic and horrible for each other, and the way the ending was so abrupt. Other than those flaws the film was nearly perfect for what it was: a look into an intimate and toxic relationship with dreams and love in the way. I would recommend this film to someone looking for something intense and raunchy, but I would not watch it with a parent.

## Rating: 9/10



Movie Poster for the film

# RISE OF THE HOODIE

Ignacio C

The dress code is a school rule that Christopher Columbus High School students knows a lot about. From wearing your shoes like “Chancletas,” not having a belt or tie or wearing the wrong pants, many students check all these boxes. But this year, we saw our schools policy lean into the students ideologies for something that they have been wanting for years.

And it has finally come into our school to shake the dress code.

Right as the new school year rolled around, students received various emails and some very interesting info for a new policy. This new policy brought a new player into the school’s dress code and completely changed for the better, so let us introduce: Hoodies!

Due to students expressing a very desperate desire verbally and visually (by wearing their own hoodies), the word was heard from the higher ups. Since then school branded hoodies have sold off the shelves at Br. Kevin's Clothing Store and online, in an instant, and with the original 250 hoodies that were produced being a complete underestimate. Since then hoodies have filled our schools atmosphere and have now become the schools new iconic piece for students to wear.

What makes these hoodies so popular is many things from comfort, style and just how well it fit the demand like a puzzle piece. Mrs. Marti, from the marketing team at Christopher Columbus, says that there were a few key factors that made hoodies sell out so fast and become so popular:

1. Hoodies are timeless staples—practical and versatile—so they fit well into students’ daily routines, whether they’re in class or attending extracurriculars.
2. Additionally, trend forecasting played a role in the design; by analyzing both broader fashion trends and feedback from upperclassmen, we made sure to create something that resonated.
3. The Columbus Heritage navy blue and red designs are modern, sleek, and reflective of what today’s Explorers want to wear.

Furthermore, the popularity of hoodies is very clear to see and students are very happy for their appearance. You can truly see its popularity when you walk in the halls, and you immediately notice that almost half the school is wearing a hoodie.

One junior who recently purchased one of his own hoodies, David Lopez, tells us: “The hoodies are really to comfy to be honest like when you put it on you just want to fall asleep which I don’t know if its a good things, but again it’s just too comfy to not wear every day.”

Now transitioning into the hoodies style, the diversity is really extensive and impressive. When they came out there was the original blue navy color way and due to its popularity, new color ways released. In such a short period of time, the marketing and production got back to work. We saw red hoodies, some football exclusive hoodies and even a new special release.

“In addition to those, we’re excited to announce the launch of a limited-edition dark grey hoodie that is truly unique and different from the current lineup,” Ms. Marti said.

With new hoodies coming out and many more still in the shop lets talk a little more about buying these hoodies. Br. Kevins has recently been filling up their shelves with more and hoodies in every size you can think off. The color ways have been filling up the shelves and there’s lots to buy. Its the perfect spot to shop for your hoodie try it on and most importantly see if you like it.

# THE NEW TREND?

hazarreta

Now talking about policy again, there is something else that came sneaking in behind the hoodie policy that some have been discussing lately. It's the fact that you can't wear the hood of the hoodie in school. Now to some these sounds very ironic since there's no point in a hoodie if you can't even wear the fundamental aspect of the hoodie. On the other hand others agree with administration in the fact that putting on a hoodie does block your face and makes you seem unmotivated. Student Christian Depass took a strong on this saying:

"I have always been wearing the hoodie, since it came out really, and I don't really wear the hood at all. I understand that the teachers don't want us to wear them and that's fine with me since wearing the hood really serves no purpose," he said.

Now after reading these we really have gotten a firm grasp on what has happened with hoodies in the past week. Since its introduction in the summer it has a bang ever since, with the first 250 hoodies going fast. We are seeing new designs and new hoodies come in, along with Ms. Marti giving us some more words of affirmation:

"We have since reordered 3x (750 more) and the stock moved quickly. We have sold out of the original navy option we launched in August. We are in discussions about replenishment based on continued interest from students and faculty," she said.

The hoodie trend is on the rise and doesn't seem to be going anywhere.



Student shopping for new hoodie, taken by: Taro Porshka





# “The Pinnacle of a Professional Educator” - The Story of Mr. Hermida

Sven Stumbauer · Staff Writer

Christopher Columbus High School has a laundry list of history teachers who have cemented their names as legends on campus and among the greater community of Westchester. From Dr. Burrus to Mr. Lynskey and O'Brien, several esteemed Explorers have cultivated their prestige at CCHS by teaching about the past and how it has shaped the present.

However, despite the bar being set astronomically high by previous teachers before him, Mr. Javier Hermida, the current Head of Columbus' Social Studies Department and AP United States History teacher, is on his own track to become forever etched in Columbus lore as one of the school's legendary history teachers, and it all started as a student in the very halls he'd end up teaching in.

## Columbus Life:

As a student at Columbus, Mr. Hermida's experience vastly differed from the one that most Explorers have had over the past 10 years. "There were no cell phones or social media. When I compare it to the kids today, I feel like there was a lot less pressure in some senses. Walking between classes was a bit of a circus since we had to get creative in entertaining ourselves." Hermida said.



During his time as a student, however, Hermida admitted to not being as focused as he should have been. **"I wasn't an athlete, I wasn't an AP kid. There was no Mas Program, but if there was, I wouldn't have been in it. I struggled with grades and focusing in class. I was just trying to figure out life. I was a 7:45 to 2:15 kid; I came into school and left as quickly as possible. The only possible thing on my mind at times was 'Do I have a date this weekend?'"** he said.

That notion was largely present throughout his first two years of high school. But there was one subject where that struggle was never present: History. "As a kid I always had deep questions such as 'why are things the way they are?' and I felt like you can't know that unless you look at the past to understand the present," Hermida said.

His desire to find answers and understand the "why" behind historical events was further nurtured by his family as a child and teenager. "My interest in history was catalyzed by growing up and sitting at the dinner table listening to my dad and his friends talking about politics and history," he said.

Additionally, Hermida credits his teachers both in and outside of Columbus for kindling his love for the subject even further and sowing the initial seeds that would sprout into his decision to pursue teaching. "I had a very good and inspiring Civics teacher in middle school, and since then, I thought of teaching. Then, I had legendary teachers like Mr. Lynskey who made the day look easy. Getting to school by 8 and leaving at 3 felt like a perilous journey for a high school student, and he just made the day look like a breeze. Once again, I thought 'maybe I should get into education and become a teacher,'" Hermida said.

During his time as an upperclassman, though, Hermida's outlook on how he carried himself as a student would change for the better, and it would persist through his junior and senior years of high school and beyond.

"At that point (junior year), I realized I needed to get into college and I put things into gear. So I worked hard and I started doing well in school." Hermida added.

## College and Early Teaching Days

Although Hermida had thoughts of becoming a teacher, they were initially cast to the side as he pursued ways to make a livelihood during his time in college. "When I graduated from high school, the first thought was that I gotta make money, so I explored a couple of majors, particularly business," he stated

Throughout his four years of college, Hermida would end up working various jobs, but ultimately, he wouldn't feel that much enjoyment clocking in and out of them. "I worked at a freight forwarding company and I did sales and I wasn't really happy doing those things. Doing an 8 to 5 and going to school was tough and on top of that, the jobs I was doing just weren't fun for me," Hermida elaborated.

While those experiences caused his desire to educate to reemerge, Hermida still remained somewhat skeptical. "I was still questioning whether I should become a teacher. As I continued college, I started majoring in International Relations and History. I did those thinking I'd work in the State Department or the Government."

However, as fate would have it, he ended up in a classroom; this time, not as a student, but as an educator. "Life just pushed me into a position where I found a job as a teaching assistant at Archimedean Academy. It payed well, and it got me through my junior and senior year of college."

Although he is now known for giving lessons on the likes of George Washington and westward expansion, he initially explored a different subject to teach. "I can't say that I was 100% sold on history. I was actually thinking about exploring math, so I spent two semesters as a math major. But, as I got into it, teaching math bell to bell just wasn't for me," Hermida said.

On a similar note, Hermida would continue spending time teaching after getting his college diploma, as he had a job lined up as a substitute teacher. This ultimately led to him getting a job offer as a full-time teacher. "I entertained the idea to do one year of teaching and then I'd do something in government and politics."

Despite that deal he made with himself, once he realized what his job as a teacher would entail, the rest was, for lack of a better term, "history." "My first planning period where I sat down and I realized my job was to open a history book, read it, and then plan a lesson, that's it, I was sold. I knew I wanted to do it a second year, and then two turned to three, three turned to six, six turned to 12, and now we're here at year 15," Hermida exclaimed.



Hermida teaches a class via zoom during the pandemic. (Photo Credit: Mr. Hermida)



### Back In The COnce More

Hermida's time teaching would lead him back to his Alma Mater, Christopher Columbus High School, and it would serve as a demonstration of the school's proudly professed brotherhood. "When I came back to Columbus, it was just open arms. It didn't feel like I left at all," Hermida said.

Over time, he would become head of the school's Social Studies Department, and faces a few challenges but with good humor. "My biggest challenge is probably troubleshooting all of Mr. O'Brien's tech issues," Hermida said jokingly.

Regardless, Hermida loves leading the school's Social Studies Department, and he believes that the department and its teachers are a community where educators can learn from one another. "We have the best teachers. I'm essentially a liaison for them. I don't necessarily need to lead, I just need to facilitate their desires. The department is just full of great minds such as Mr. Benitez, who is our resident Samuel Adams. We have teachers willing to take the initiative like Mr. Cody McKeon who stepped up to moderate Rho Kappa, the National Social Studies Honors Society. We have guys like Mr. Landera who's willing to teach any elective thrown at him. Guys like Mr. Pino and Mr. Kumer inspire me to prepare AP lessons and crush pass rates. It's more of the teachers inspiring me and it gave me a window into the ways that other teachers teach. I think everyone should be department head at one point so they can see how other educators do their business."

Hermida's positive feelings towards his peers in the Social Studies Department are mutually reciprocated. As a colleague, Castaway, and Class of 2000 alumnus, Mr. Pino has massive admiration for Mr. Hermida. "Besides being a great friend of mine, he has also been a great mentor. Although we are from the same generation, his willingness to take the lead for the Social Studies Department has been a great example to me. The way that me, Mr. Kumer, and him collaborate often on AP skills, particularly writing, is invaluable to me as a teacher," Mr. Pino stated.

### A Castaway Against Cancer

Hermida isn't just known for his activity in the classroom. He is also a valued member of Columbus' well-known nonprofit group, the Castaways Against Cancer. Notably, he was an avid admirer of the group and its ventures and had a goal in mind to become part of the group.

"The one sure thing I knew I wanted to join when I became a teacher at Columbus was the Castaways Against Cancer. I remember O.B. (Mr. O'Brien) as a legendary paddler when I was a student. The legends and the folklore of these teachers in the summer kayaking from island to island was something we all thought was amazing," Hermida said.



Hermida (Middle) poses after a castaways against cancer charity event. (Photo Credit: Mr. Hermida)

That led him to join the group with his characteristic fervor and determination, but little did he know that the world would shut down as he was trying to become a member. "Quickly, I networked, talked, and went on paddling trips with them, and then all of a sudden, COVID hit and those connections were lost," he commented.

However, he didn't let that discourage him as during the pandemic, he would ultimately find a new passion and way for the Castaways to further their cause. "In the midst of COVID, I got into cycling and I reached out to Mr. Pino and I told him that I was considering riding my bike to Key West without any experience. He created a funding page platform for me, and I raised 150 dollars."

Hermida would keep his promise to Mr. Pino and started his solo bike ride from Miami to Key West, taking less than a day to accomplish. "When I showed up at Key West, O.B. was shocked that I even made it down there. Everything was closed, and I didn't get to meet any of the Castaways that day, so I ended up at a Five Guy's or Fuddrucker's, I ate some burgers, sipped on some sprite, and went home the same day after riding 170 miles," he said.

That initial bike ride would lay the groundwork for the Castaways cycling department, which is now a staple of their annual tours. "The next year, we set up a real team, had 12 guys raise 28,000 and this is now the fifth year of the Castaways having a cycling team," Hermida said.

As a Castaway, Mr. Hermida has continued to make his name known amongst the greater Columbus community, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund cancer research, and has truly been a noteworthy member in such a short amount of time. "He has raised over 150,000 dollars over the past three years, and his ability to put himself out there without knowing the full results early on, is an inspiration for me," Pino said.

### Geography Club

In addition to the Castaways, Hermida is also involved with Columbus' Geography Club, serving as the club's moderator. However, his journey with the club started in a fairly unlikely fashion. "My journey with the Geography Club started because I was teaching in Mr. Cunningham's classroom when I was a traveling teacher without my own room, and he wanted an assistant for the geography team. So I offered and I started out by bussing the team around."

His position as an assistant turned into heightened involvement as he saw the passion in one particular student to pursue his geographic dreams. Marcel Van Hemert, Class of 2020, was so gung-ho about it, so I helped facilitate his focus on geography. After he graduated and Cunningham retired, I got a group of new guys that wanted to carry on the geography club, so I facilitated their dreams too," Hermida continued.

When looking back on it, Hermida gives another reason why he continued with the club for so long: a reason beyond involvement alone. "It was something that I saw the students were passionate about, so I helped them in pursuing it, and made sure there was a space for those kids' motivations."

Through the Geography Club, Mr. Hermida has continued to make a positive impact in the lives of young Explorers and has set a precedent that his impact is present both in and outside the classroom continued with the club for so long: a reason beyond involvement alone. "It was something that I saw the students were passionate about, so I helped them in pursuing it, and made sure there was a space for those kids' motivations."

Through the Geography Club, Mr. Hermida has continued to make a positive impact in the lives of young Explorers and has set a precedent that his impact is present both in and outside the classroom.



## Columbus Students, Alumni, Administration and Legends Love Mr. Hermida

To say that Mr. Hermida is loved amongst members of the Columbus community would be a massive understatement.

Senior Matthew Moreno, who is the President of Columbus' Pre-Law Club and the Brother Edmund Sheehan Chapter of the National Honors Society, was particularly moved by Hermida's ability to make his AP United States History class one where everyone can participate. "Hermida always did a great job of looking out for the students who needed help the most. He always kept them very engaged and had that unique ability to do so," Moreno noted.

This sentiment is also shared by Class of 2023 Alumnus Alan Munsch, a current sophomore at Cornell University and Valedictorian of his graduating class. "Mr. Hermida made APUSH (AP United States History) fun and accessible for everyone in the classroom," Munsch commented.

Additionally, students such as senior Tyler Campos, who is president and founder of the Learn Mas Club, were quick to note his dedication and enjoyment of being an educator. "He's a great teacher who clearly loves his job and everything about it," Campos stated.



*Hermida makes his appearance in Westchestermania.  
(Photo Credit: Mr. Hermida)*

The aforementioned quality was also recognized by Patriot Club President and Model UN Vice President Benjamin Pagliery, who also notes his selflessness and positivity. "Mr. Hermida is one of the most dedicated teachers when it comes to the development of his students. He prioritizes the genuine growth of our young men and truly embodies the spirit of a Columbus educator. When I was left without a moderator for my club, he stood up and took on the responsibility on top of his normal work load, which would have been sufficient for two teachers. Despite his incredible responsibilities, he always started class with a smile and the occasional incense if he was feeling daring. We all knew that we were in for a memorable period when he started off by saying 'Should we light one up?'" Pagliery mentioned.

Moreover, students are big fans of his more casual nature which makes history accessible for the large amount of students that take the class in their junior year. Senior Andrew Pena says that his easygoing attitude in the classroom is what makes him great. "I'd definitely say that he's a great teacher because his teaching style is more laid back. He's able to teach in such a way that most people can understand the lesson. He's able to balance going fairly easy on his students whilst managing to teach them effectively," Pena wrote.

Another way that Hermida is seen so positively amongst students is his ability to foster discussion amongst his students. Notre Dame freshman and former Debate President James Sacher notes how his teaching style has helped him in college so far. "Mr. Hermida was a really good teacher. He prioritized in-class discussion and that skill has helped me a lot in my classes now where all my history courses are discussion based. I feel very well prepared to participate in classes here at Notre Dame and Mr. Hermida was a big part of that," Sacher wrote.

Other Columbus alumni are also quick to comment on his ability to be a facilitator of multiple facets of school and family life. As Martin Seals, Helmsman of the Class of 2024 and a current freshman at Morehouse College said: "Mr. Hermida is a true Columbus guy. His relaxed and engaging teaching style made APUSH one of my favorite classes in high school. Hermida always makes the concerted effort to tap into Columbus culture during events like Walkathon, which led to me playing my first game of 'Coco Swing' (Linfors approved!). Additionally, every trip I have ever taken with Hermida has been a move-worthy adventure. Whether it was a road trip to the University of Florida for a Model UN conference or the Close Up trip to Washington, D.C., Hermida makes every trip a blast. Last but not least, his long involvement in the Castaways is the cherry on top and shows that you can make an impact, work hard, and have great fun with friends and family," Seals said.

When asked to comment on Mr. Hermida, University of Florida freshman, Benacquisto Scholar, National Merit Scholarship Finalist, former President of Geography Club and Model UN, and Class of 2024 alumnus Gonzalo Palenzuela laid out a litany of praise. "I mean where do I begin? He's one of those teachers that encourages you, that helps you with your goals and dreams, and he makes you feel like a friend. Not only was he a great teacher that helped me pass an AP exam, but he was a mentor that helped me get through the hardest parts of high school. He's one of those Columbus teachers that are more than that, he's a Columbus legend who I'll ask future generations whether they had him and laugh at the good times I had in his class." Palenzuela wrote.

Alongside students, Columbus' administration is well aware of Hermida's efforts to be the best educator he possibly can be. The school's principal, Mr. Pugh, had many praises for him. "He is a true Marist educator and a leader and a guide for young men. He sacrifices his time and energy for his students and is respected by students and teachers alike. He is disciplined, compassionate and empathetic to the needs of his students, and there is nothing he won't do for his school community," Pugh said.

The positive reception of Mr. Hermida is also shared by Columbus history teachers, colleagues, and legends. In particular, Mr. O'Brien is very optimistic about a CCHS that has him at the helm of the Social Studies Department. "He's the pinnacle of a professional educator. Quite frankly, he's an old soul, and I know that Columbus will be in good hands with this younger generation of history teachers," O'Brien said.

In addition to O.B., Mr. Lynskey, a member of the Class of 1978, a legendary history teacher who had previously taught Hermida, and Ambassador of Alumni Affairs, is proud of Hermida's journey to teaching in his former classroom and becoming the head of the Social Studies Department like he was. "When I think of Mr. Hermida, I'm taken back to the time when he was a student in A22 and how attentive and focused he was, and how much he enjoyed history. To me personally, it's very rewarding and gratifying to see him excelling as department leader in A22 where we met all those years ago," Lynskey said.

Overall, Mr. Hermida is known as a phenomenal teacher, colleague, moderator and friend. His story is still playing out within the halls of Christopher Columbus High School and he is certainly one of Columbus' many teachers who defines students' experiences and helps them pursue their passions within the school's walls and beyond.



*Hermida visits the Museum of the American Revolution. (Photo Credit: Mr. Hermida)*



# Explorers Head into Playoffs with 6-3 Record: Season Recap

Eddie Lopez · *Editor In Chief*

**T**he reigning back-to-back 4M State Champion Explorer football team faced their toughest schedule yet in the 2024 season. Despite multiple comeback efforts and early challenges, they've secured a 6-3 record in the regular season. Now, the team aims for another deep playoff run.

## Recapping the season so far

Take a deeper look into the journey the team has faced throughout the season.

### Southridge Game: 17-14 Columbus win

Players of The Week

- Offense: Jason Barket and Agyeman Addae
- Defense: Bryce Fitzgerald
- Special Teams: Gabriel Galvez

Despite being down late, the Explorers were able to walk into Southridge and take home a win. The game was headlined with stellar performances from cornerback Bryce Fitzgerald who got Columbus the first score of the game with a 92-yard pick-6, cornerback Jalani Reams with 6 total tackles and 2 tackles for loss and running back Agyeman Addae who ran for 103 yards on 24 carries. It was the Khamari Marceus and Jason Barket combination who led the team to the game winning touchdown. The final score being 17-14 was the first of many hard fought battles for the Explorers.

### Our Lady of Good Counsel: 10-14 Columbus Loss

Players of The Week

- Defense: Hector Chavez and Ethan Barosela
- Special Teams: Jonathan Nua and Shaddai Carter

Fighting with all they had, this game was a heartbreaker. Linebacker Ethan Barosela made his Westchester debut and did not disappoint with 3 sacks, 4 tackles for loss and 9 total tackles. Not far off was linebacker Hector Chavez who did what he always does and racked up 13 total tackles, 2 tackles for loss and even went up to snag an interception off of the Good Counsel QB. Both were named defensive players of the week. Despite allowing a punt return for a touchdown, the special teams unit scored the single Explorer touchdown on a blocked punt by safety Shaddai Carter which was recovered and brought in by defensive tackle Jonathon Nua. Both were named special teams players of the week. Alexander Ftizgibbons also kicked a 38 yard field goal to add on to the lead. Despite their struggles, the offense managed to put up some great drives led by both quarterbacks Vicente Gonzalez and Jason Barket. The final offensive drive for the Explorers was propelled by a "Randy Moss-esque" catch from running back Joseph Triana. An interception would unfortunately cut the drive short. The Defense brought their best on the last drive and forced the Good Counsel offense to a fourth down, when a controversial call sealed the game. The final score was 10-14.



The defensive line gets ready to pressure the Saint Thomas offense.  
(Photo Credit: Eddie Lopez)

### Saint Thomas Aquinas: 6-42 Columbus Loss

Player of The Week

- Defense: Hector Chavez

Traveling up to Fort Lauderdale, the Explorers faced their second ranked opponent of the year in the form of football powerhouse Saint Thomas Aquinas. Both sides of the ball were in good shape until about midway through the 3rd quarter when Aquinas began to pull away. The offense scored on a 19-yard rush from RB Agyeman Addae but struggled to come up with an answer for the St. Thomas Aquinas defense, not scoring for the remainder of the game. On defense, senior linebackers Hector Chavez and Dylan Gill combined for 19 total tackles and Bryce Fitzgerald was able grab an interception to set up the Addae touchdown. Unfortunately Columbus took their second loss on the season to a tough opponent.

### Palmetto: 17-14 Columbus win

Players of The Week

- Offense: Entire offensive line
- Defense: Ethan Barosela
- Special Teams: Bryce Fitzgerald

Columbus and Palmetto marked their calendars for the Battle on Bird in Tropical Park. In a nailbiter, Columbus pulled away with the win and it was no surprise that the defensive unit was the difference maker. At the line, Ethan Barosela and Jonathon Nua combined for 3 sacks while the secondary showed out as well with 3 passes broken up from cornerbacks Cayan Lamothe-Arice, Bryce Fitzgerald and safety Shaddai Carter who also snagged an interception. Fitzgerald returned a kickoff for a touchdown in the start of the second half with the help of great blocking from defensive end Walter Hall. Jason Barket scrambled for a 31-yard touchdown and finished with 51 yards rushing on the night. RB Agyeman Addae only added on to the run game with a total of 74 yards rushing on 16 carries. Alexander Ftizgibbons came up huge for the Explorers with a 42-yard field goal, the longest of the year. The Columbus Defense sealed the game causing Palmetto to kick a 45 yard field goal which was ultimately short.

### South Dade: 43-15 Columbus Win

Players of The Week

- Offense: Jason Barket
- Defense: Entire defensive line
- Special Teams: Justin Rowell

This game was the spark the offense so desperately needed. The offense, totaling 3 touchdowns passing on just 8 completions and 3 touchdowns rushing on 24 carries for 105 yards, was rolling the entire game. The success on offense can be traced back to Jason Barket who threw for 2 touchdowns and passed at a high rate with a 71.4 completion percentage. Barket also did some damage scoring with his legs as well rushing for 34 yards and a touchdown. Bryce Fitzgerald had himself a game with 2 touchdowns on just 3 catches and an average of 11.7 yards a catch. Agyeman Addae ran for 64 yards and a touchdown on 15 carries proving once again to be one of the top running backs in the state of Florida. Although the offense was the main story of this game, the defense was the one who allowed for great field position. An interception by safety Jalani Reams set Barket and the offense up for the first score of the game. The defense would do the same multiple times throughout the game. The special teams unit also held it down for the Explorers with a blocked punt from junior linebacker Justin Rowell which laid the ground for Addae's first touchdown. It was only a matter of time before the offense connected and considering that 6 of the 9 offensive touchdowns this season came from this game, it was a perfect showing.



*Offensive leaders Jason Barket and Agyeman Addae get the offense ready. (Photo Credit: Eddie Lopez)*

#### **Miami Senior High: 52-6 Columbus Win**

Columbus kept the momentum from their last game rolling with a 52-point explosion against the Miami Senior High Stingarees. The very first play of the game was a near kickoff return by Bryce Fitzgerald which set up Agyeman Addae for a 30-yard rushing touchdown. The offensive downpour only continued from there with the Explorers scoring 5 more touchdowns on offense with 3 coming by way of rushing from the Addae and Simmons backfield duo and 2 of them coming from the receiving end hauled in by receivers Samuel Barrerio and Khamari Marceus. On defense Justin Weaver showed out grabbing 2 interceptions, one being a pick-6. The linebackers had quite a game with Hector Chavez getting himself 7 total tackles and Dylan Gill being right there with him with 6. The Explorers delivered with another high scoring game and the look to be back in a good offensive state.

#### **Coral Gables: 33-0 Columbus Win**

The Explorers, now in a good groove, put up a shutout win against Coral Gables. Running back Agyeman Addae put on a show with 2 touchdowns rushing on 8 carries. Under center, both QBs brought their best with a passing touchdown each. Barket added to the offensive downpour with a 18-yard rushing touchdown. Receivers Khamari Marceus and Bryce Fitzgerald both had a touchdown of their own to add on to the scoreboard.

#### **Northwestern: 18-23 Loss**

This game was another win that got away from the Explorers who were exchanging haymakers with Northwestern led by head coach and former Miami Dolphin, Teddy Bridgewater. Hector Chavez took an interception to the house for 60-yards. The defense kept their poise and hauled in a muffed snap for a safety. On the offensive side, their only touchdown came from the last play of the game on a touchdown connection between Vicente Gonzalez and Bryce Fitzgerald. The rough game on offense leads Columbus to their next game against Archbishop Coleman Carroll.

#### **Archbishop Coleman Carroll: 35-6 Columbus Win**

Rebounding once again, the Explorers put on a show against Archbishop Coleman Carroll. The offense got off to a quick start with a first drive touchdown from Bryce Fitzgerald, who torched the Carroll secondary all game, bringing in another touchdown soon after. Khamari Marceus later punched his ticket into the endzone with a TD reception from Vicente Gonzalez. The defense made the game a living nightmare for the Carroll offense with stop after stop and a fumble recovery to cap off the night with a win.

#### **Takeaways:**

Columbus faced off against great talent across Florida and even Maryland. In their two matchups against nationally ranked schools in Our Lady of Good Counsel, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Northwestern, Columbus has managed to hold their own and sit 4-0 in district play ranking 37 in the state of Florida. Overall, the team understood the changes needed to be made and put forth the amount of time and effort needed to get the team back into winning shape.

“We had a little rough patch with a lot of mistakes, but we’ve practiced everyday at 5:50 in the morning and have really been putting in the work to get better and push ourselves to our limits so we could get back to states,” said senior tackle Davaughn Russell.

#### **Offense:**

On the offensive side, both quarterbacks Jason Barket and Vicente Gonzalez are more than capable of leading the team to a late playoff push. Barket has shown poise in late game situations. His ability to do damage in both the passing game proves to be an added stressor to opposing defenses. Gonzalez, who has shown resilience and maturity through his appearances, leads the team in passing yards and quarterback rating.

The one-two punch in running backs Agyeman Addae and Antwuan Simmons has been crucial in marching the offense downfield. Addae’s shifty run style has proven him successful in the endzone. Simmons’ powerful run style has seen him carry the offense in crucial short gain situations. On the receiving end, Bryce Fitzgerald, Khamari Marceus have continued to torch secondaries and keep the offense moving.

#### **Defense and Special Teams:**

As seen throughout the game recaps, defense has been the strength of this Explorers team. From the trenches combining to the secondary snagging interceptions, the unit has shown promise and ranks among the best in Florida. Ethan Barosela leads the team in sacks, while Dylan Gill and Jonathon Nua are split with 2 a piece. Hector Chavez leads the team in total tackles while Bryce Fitzgerald and Justin Weaver lead the team in interceptions. The special teams unit has also come with some big return efforts from Bryce Fitzgerald with the help of great blocking.

With their first playoff game looming, the Explorers continue their preparation in hopes to keep their momentum rolling.



*A prayer is said prior to warm ups. (Photo Credit: Eddie Lopez)*



*The kickoff unit gets ready for game time. (Photo Credit: Eddie Lopez)*



# Columbus Explorers Ready to Swing into New Golf Season

Matthew Mejia · Staff Writer

The Christopher Columbus High School golf team is getting ready for what could be the best season in years. Led by Coach Mike Marinelli and having a great mix of veteran leadership and young talent, they look to improve on last year's performance and make an impact on the course, "Out of my 15 golfers, at least 10-12 of them can go to any other team in Dade County and be their number one golfer," Marinelli said.

There are two players in particular that Marinelli thinks will lead the team the best and make the biggest difference through leadership.

"Our two captains, one of them is Hubert Ramirez and the other is Victor Herrera. Those two guys are leading by example. They have been in the program the longest and they do a great job of leading the team," Marinelli said.

The team is not all gone after this year though. Two freshmen in particular are going to fit in this time nicely.

"I mean we do have a really good young core, Jake Williams, who is a freshman is really really good. Another kid Jude Davis is a freshman, he's pretty good and we have a bunch of other guys that are sophomores and juniors who are going to step up, that are very good golfers," Marinelli said. The team is not all gone after this year though. Two freshmen in particular are going to fit in this time nicely.

"I mean we do have a really good young core, Jake Williams, who is a freshman is really really good. Another kid Jude Davis is a freshman, he's pretty good and we have a bunch of other guys that are sophomores and juniors who are going to step up, that are very good golfers," Marinelli said. With a little bit of time, these golfers will turn into the face of the team and mix that with the rest of the young core, the golf team has a recipe for success.

Other golfers like Carl Tegel are very excited about continuing the year and honing his skills as the games go on. He is focused on the team's success, making sure that he carries his part of the weight and plays the best he can.

"So far I have performed pretty good, I have the second-best scoring average on the team and I am happy with the score I have put up, but I want to do even better," Tegel said. Despite the individual focus of golf, the team is working on building stronger chemistry as they head into tougher competitions later this season.

"The chemistry in the team is great, we have seven seniors so we have been building up good team chemistry for a few years now," Tegel said.

With a balanced roster of experienced players and new talent, the Columbus Golf team is aiming to make its mark on the district golf scene this year.



Carl Tegel (far left), Victor Herrera, Hubert Ramirez, Joseph Fernandez and Nicholas Shortal (far right) pose for a picture after taking home first place in the Miami Youth Fair tournament. (Photo Credit: Coach Marinelli)

# Scholer's Bowlers Dominating, Boast a 7-1 Record In Their First 8 Matches

Jake Reed · Staff Writer

Columbus Bowling has begun their 2024 season with a stellar 7-1 record, displaying immense confidence as they advance in the season.

Their head coach Mr. Scholer is not new to winning. Approaching his 35th season, he boasts over 300 wins and only about 35 losses. Impressively, he has missed only 2 matches and 1 practice in his entire career. Scholer's coaching has brought the program over 48 "First Team All-Dade" Bowlers as well as a 12-season long streak of undefeated matches and district titles.

His longevity in bowling paired with his "get it done" attitude, he has created one of the most impressive programs in Miami-Dade.

This current season is no different really. The optimism comes from the 7 wins all being clean sweeps: Columbus taking the victories 7-0. Unfortunately, the Explorers did lose to Ferguson in the same fashion.

One key player is junior Sergio Alonso, who was recognized as "First Team All-Dade," a title given to only 5 players in the county each year. "This year, we hope to become more consistent. If we can work on that, I think that we should be on track to qualify for states," Alonso shared.

"[Alonso] is our anchor. He is having a good season and has contributed to many of our big wins. Seniors Adrian Bengochea and Alec Padilla have come on to be big factors in our wins this year as well," Coach Scholer noted.

Looking ahead, the GMAC (Greater Miami Athletic Conference) tournament will be taking place next Friday. Columbus should do fairly well considering the GMAC is played in the "Baker" format. It basically means that one player from the team will bowl two frames head-to-head against the other school's bowler. This style is predicted to work better than the "Scratch" style in which the score is calculated based on the number of pins knocked down.

Further into the season, regular season play should go pretty smoothly. Although Ferguson remains a challenge, Columbus is still able to contend if they see each other in districts on October 22. A trip to states is definitely within reach, considering the rest of the season and the fact that the top 2 teams in the district advance.

"We always strive to be the best," Scholer emphasized. "We have our eyes out on the GMAC next Friday for now, but more than likely Ferguson and Columbus will be advancing to states from District 17."

Overall, the team is high-spirited, maintaining a great point differential. The outlook for the rest of the season is promising. If you see one of Scholer's Bowlers, make sure to congratulate them on their achievements and wish them luck for the remainder of the season.

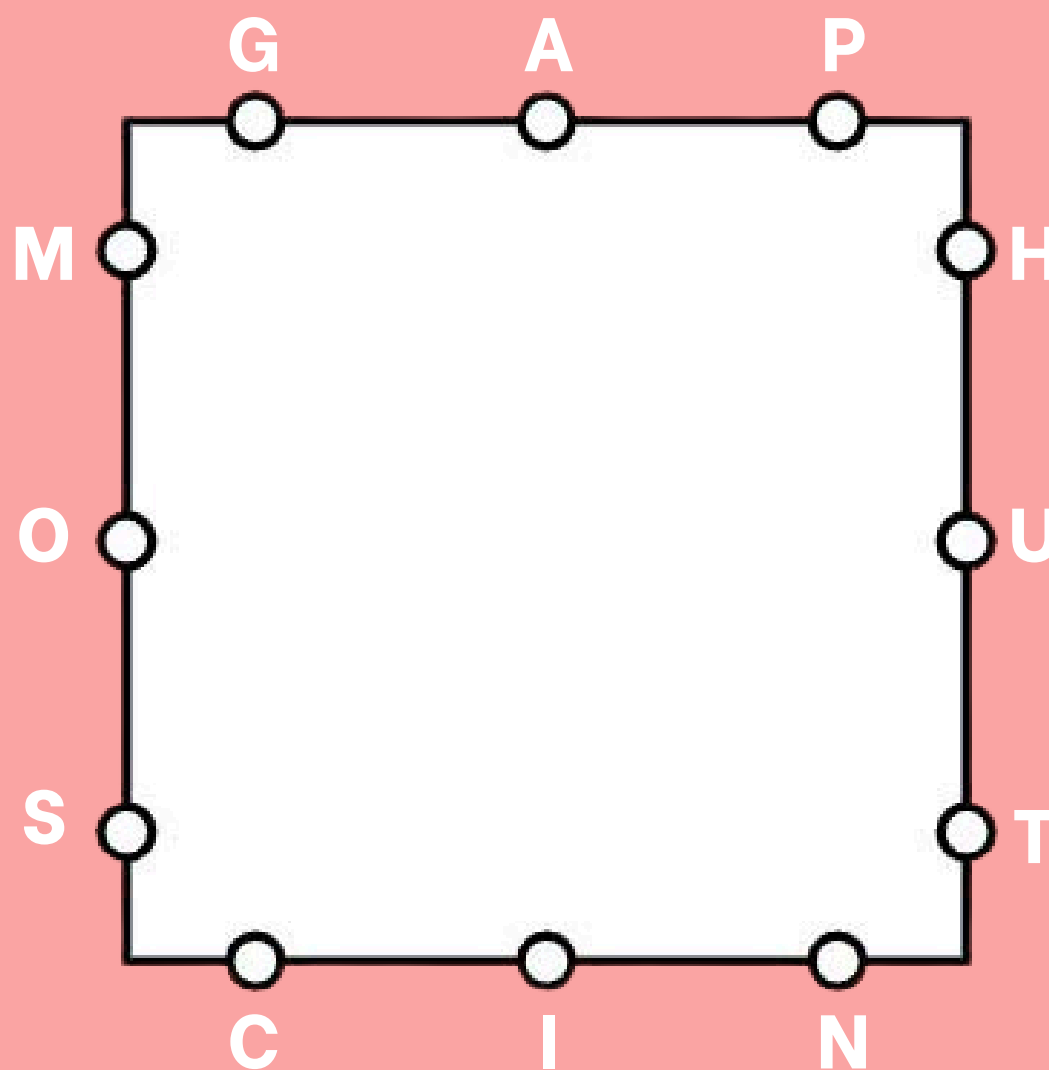


Coach Scholer looks on as his team continues to dominate. (Photo Credit: Maria Benigno)



# WORD BOX

SOLVE IN 4 WORDS TO COMPLETE



- Connect letters to spell words
- Words must be at least 3 letters long
- Letters can be reused
- Consecutive letters cannot be from the same side
- The last letter of a word becomes the first letter of the next word  
e.g. THY > YES > SINCE
- Words cannot be proper nouns or hyphenated
- Use all letters to solve!