

Back in August we didn't know if there would be fall sports. Should they be postponed or even canceled? Just starting back to school was delayed.. Everything was in flux and oh so uncertain. Now it is November and that is far behind us. We successfully completed our first quarter of school and the fall sports seasons are drawing to a close.

Masks had to be worn. Spectators were few. But the competitive spirit and the team spirit thrived. Memories were made. Records were broken. Teams became family. Despite a worldwide pandemic the Lakers persevered. (Ms. Jonson)

Laker Football -- Covid 19

By Ethaniel Ruiz

This football season has definitely been a new experience for everyone in America. Covid-19 has had such an enormous impact on society and especially the sports world. Football is one of the biggest sports (if not the biggest) in America. The virus shut down every sport for months because players were getting sick. Luckily football wasn't on at the time. Football is a fall sport and the shutdown occurred in spring, but because of the shutdown, there have been enforced regulations to play football. For example, face masks are required to be worn on and off the field unless you have a shield that goes over your nose and mouth. Originally football was set to start in spring 2021, but after a couple meetings it was agreed upon that football was to occur normally in the fall. This has had such a huge impact on us because it brought back football, but it wasn't the same.

Football is so much different than it was before. There are so many different regulations and "laws" that take some of the excitement from the sport. Friday night lights, crowds, yelling and cheering on their team, hotdogs and popcorn for sale, all of these things have pretty much been taken away from us. Trust me it stinks not having as many fans as we should have. They always give us motivation to be better. Having that in a game makes us a better team. When the season started, we were all unsure if it would actually happen or not. We just took it day by day, not knowing what was going to happen next.

Our first game was against Ashley, and it didn't feel like a real game. There was hardly anyone in the stands and it was so quiet. We won, but it kind of felt like it didn't really happen. It kind of felt unreal to be honest. It was weird to win when we didn't have as many fans, it was bad that the others didn't get to enjoy it with us. After a couple more games though, we were able to get used to it and we got back to playing football again.



Bear Lake Lakers' cheerleaders: determination behind the poms.

By Maria Ripesi

Bear Lake Laker cheerleaders continued to cheer on our football team every Friday or Saturday night despite Covid. The team this year had seven girls: Randi Nelson, Dafne Yanez, Leslie Yanez, Dian Green, Kendelyne Schmidt, and two foreign exchange students Maria Ripesi (Italy) and Anna Valls Fluvia (Spain).

Randi was the captain of the cheer team this year and she was a good captain -- giving right directions to all the team which guaranteed an exciting performance.

Unfortunately the Covid-19 imposed some restrictions this year: cheerleaders had to wear masks during practices and games, they had to maintain the social distance of 6 feet, and they couldn't touch each other. For those reasons they couldn't do stunts or acrobatics, but they did their best creating choreographies and dances.

When asked what spirit is needed for practices and games the cheer squad had these answers. *"If you want your goal to be achieved, you need to work for it"* declared Dian, a very sunny and determined girl. Anna, our Spanish exchange student, said: *"Cheer is a way to escape from your daily issues"*. *"A good cheerleader is not measured by the height of her jumps but by the span of her spirit."* wrote Leslie, the senior of the team. *"Being a cheerleader is the experience that every gymnast who comes to the USA dreams of."* said Maria, the second foreign student on the team, from Italy. At last but not last Dafne's quote: *"I do cheer to support my school, and the football players"*.

Everyone agrees with Dafne's words, all the school loves supporting the football team, even if this year was more difficult due to the Coronavirus. In fact for this football season only two spectators for each player and cheerleader were allowed at the beginning. Fortunately starting with the third game a maximum of 1000 spectators were allowed. In spite of everything the Bear Lake cheerleaders always had so much spirit and pep, that it always cheered up the football team, even if they lost a game.

Thanks to our cheerleaders for making every game full of energy and always bringing the show!



Making History by Taylor Sexton

We had quite a few newbies on the Laker football team this year, including two girls--Leah Nelson (#10) and I (#35). The coaches had to start over from scratch and teach us everything. They did a great job! In no

time we knew what to do.

But being a girl on an all boys team took awhile to get used to. We had to get used to a whole different group of people. Despite that, I would not take back a single moment. Our team was so strong and uplifting. They helped you when you needed and when you did something good they acknowledged it. The boys

on our team are such great people; they made me laugh everyday.

Those Friday night lights that I had always heard about, were so amazing. It was a feeling I never had until I walked onto the field for my first game. It was truly one of the best feelings.

I want to thank all the coaches -- Prokes, Sam, Belinsky, and Novak -- for taking the time to help us and our team grow into such a powerful group of people. The uplifting support we consistently had helped us get through every obstacle that was put in front of us. This year's football team was one that no one will forget and not just because we had girls on it for the first time.



Volleyball *by Juliet Austin, Kylie Blatner, and Emma Reynolds*

Despite COVID19, the Lady Lakers have had a blast with their volleyball season.

"It's pretty good, I think we are getting better. There's a big difference from the first game I played from the last game, we are getting better." - Lilli #15

"Volleyball is a fantastic sport because it requires the whole team to work together no matter what. That's part of why I love it so much, with every bump set or spike of the ball, you always have to trust that your teammates have your back. Volleyball brought me closer to my team then I ever thought I could become, we aren't a team anymore, we're a family ." Taylor #17

"Working with this team and seeing us improve everyday is amazing, seeing us become closer is beautiful." - Conzuelo #18

"Im proud of what my teammates and I have become from the beginning of the season and to the end, we improved every step of the way from the first game to the last, we just didn't grow as a team we grew as a family, and that's what I love about my team." Desirae #26

The Lady Lakers had a tough season. Although it was rough, they did their best and had lots of fun. AND that's what Bear Lake Schools is all about, doing your best and having fun while doing it. This is what you will see at Bear Lake, people who become closer together by doing something they all love. This is Laker Pride.



Cross Country *by Sydney Bentley*

The Bear Lake Cross Country team made some big strides this year. There were a lot of firsts this year, too -- from having a full girls' team and boys' team to all the firsts (PRs) for individual athletes themselves and for the team overall. Having to keep everyone safe and away from the virus didn't change how hard the teams worked this season. Even though the team had to overcome many challenges to keep everyone safe, they also have made some big news in the conference. The girls tied for first in the conference championship and the boys finished in second place. Coach Tony Shrum said "Covid has affected us in many ways, but has also made the team stronger without knowing when the season could end. So, we focused on what happened in the present rather than the future." The team is also sending two boys to state this year even with the changed rules that limit how many can go. In the end the team has made a name for themselves and hope to bring two athletes home from MIS with medals.



Lilli Riesenbergr (Germany)

by Sky Love, Conzuelo Magana, Anna Wan Valls

Lilli is a 16 year old from Berlin, Germany. She wanted to become an exchange student to experience something new, change it up from one year to another. She loves traveling and she's been to many places in Europe, but she had never been to another continent before. When asked how it felt to be a new student in a



different country, her response was "It's pretty cool, but it's hard since I'm not outgoing." Despite her not being outgoing, Lilli is playing Volleyball and plans to play basketball and softball. We asked

her what her favorite food in America is so far, and she said "Jeff's macaroni and cheese." Her favorite dish from home is red cabbage with potato dumplings.

Unlike here, she doesn't have any pets and siblings back home. During these nine months she is staying with the Harthuns and so is Anna from Spain. She thinks it's a perfect match. She now has a sister and pets for the next few months. However, Lilli misses the city life and the bread the most from her home in Germany.

Lilli said that high on her bucket list is to ride in a car with a friend driving. She hopes that will happen soon. She was surprised about the high school. She pointed out that except for the coronavirus, it is exactly the way she imagined it. However, the relationship between teacher and student is totally different considering that it is more strict back in Germany.

So Lakers, make her feel very welcome in our amazing high school for 9 months!

Elias Klockow (Germany)

By Alexia Rineer, Kaden Forward, and Zach Griffis

Elias is from Bad Soden, Germany, and he is currently residing with the Eisenlohr family. He wanted to be an exchange student to get out of the city, to learn more about the American culture and the English language, and he wanted to experience the Northern U.S. Winter!

Elias's favorite part of the United States, so far, is that you can operate a vehicle when you are only sixteen years old, because in Germany you have to be eighteen. Elias thinks that the biggest difference between the U.S. and Germany is that the U.S. is more laid back, especially about the pandemic. In his city in Germany if you do not have a protective mask on and over your nose, you will get stopped by the police. Elias's plans after high school include attending a university in Germany, majoring in Chemical engineering, with hopes of later becoming an astronaut for the European Space Agency.

Elias's favorite American food is Pizza because it has more cheese and is so satiating. His dream car is any model Aston Martin or a Tesla. He enjoys listening to German hip-hop/rap and American rock; his favorite band is Nirvana. In his free time he



enjoys hanging out with friends, running cross country, and playing video games with his host brother, Trevor.

Elias thinks that American schools are slower paced than German schools. Elias would like to thank everyone for welcoming him to Bear Lake and giving him the experience of a Lifetime!

Maria Ripesi

by Taylor Merrill and Desirae Evans



As you see this year we have the pleasure of hosting 4 foreign exchange students here at Bear Lake. One is Maria Ripesi from Italy. Maria is 17 years old.

Her hometown in Italy is a small city named Ancona. As far as her exchange family goes, Maria is staying with the Buckner family. Maria says she enjoys trying typical American foods, visiting places she's never been, having new experiences, and making memories with her exchange family and friends.

Maria stated that when she first came to America it was like being in a movie. She wrote that "The route from the airport to home, I felt as if I was in a film. Everything was American; the flat houses, the level lands, and the large roads." Maria says that she is excited to experience some of the American holidays. The holiday she is most excited for is Thanksgiving, she said that in Italy they don't have a feast day like we do, but she is also excited for Christmas because of the atmosphere it brings.

Maria never really thought about becoming an exchange student until last year. She said that she finally decided to muster up her courage and try a new experience so that she didn't have any regrets. Sadly Covid changed a lot of the things that made the differences between the US and Italy so profound, but she wrote that the changes aren't as bad as she thought they would be. We are so glad that you decided to become an exchange student here this year Maria! Welcome to Bear Lake!

Anna Valls Fluvia

by Lilli Liesenberg, Amara Lopez, and Daphne Yanez Chavez

The Bear Lake high school is very happy to have 4 exchange students this year. One of them is Anna Valls Fluvia. Anna (15) from Catalonia, Spain has been here in Bear Lake, Michigan since the 7th of September. She plans to stay here for the whole school year. It's the longest time she has ever been away from home.

Anna chose the US because it is a culture that really got her attention when she watched movies. Everything feels different for her. "The food has for example a lot more sugar and the American customs are totally different to the spanish customs." Four years ago she was in NYC for nine days. Even though this is not her first time traveling in the US, she was still a bit scared to leave her home for such a long time. At the same time, she knew she was going to do something she had dreamed about for so long.

The most interesting thing so far was the Point Betsie Lighthouse. She went there with her host family, the Harthuns, and friends. Things she really likes are photography and cooking. Her favorite sport is track. For 6 years she went 3 times a week to practice.



Anna, we, the Lakers hope you feel welcomed at Bear Lake School and that you enjoy your time here!