

story by isabel costian

Paul Flachenecker



“Mach deine Eltern und Trainer stolz. So etwas wirst du nie wider erleben.”

As German exchange student Paul Flachenecker stood on the sidelines waiting for his last Texas high school football game to begin, he thought to himself “do your parents and coach proud. This is something you will never experience again.”

Interested in the American culture he heard about in Germany, Flachenecker came to the U.S. to experience high school in America and play high school football.

“I like the school spirit and how it’s tied together with football and that you really have to trust your teammates,” Flachenecker said.

Flachenecker’s parents sent him off with doubts about the consequences of playing football and worries about his newfound independence.

“It was very hard to say goodbye,” father Andreas Flachenecker said. “We were happy for him that his dream became true, on the one hand, and sad to stay at home without him, on the other.”

On September 13th, Flachenecker traveled from his home in western Germany to America, ready for an entirely new experience.

“The first week was pretty hard,” Flachenecker said. “I was so tired after school because of all of the translating.”

Flachenecker lives with freshman Noah Tarantello and his family. He even went to Buffalo, NY with them over Thanksgiving break to visit their extended family.

“We had never really thought about a foreign exchange student before, but we talked about it as a family and decided it would be a cool experience,” host mother Maureen Tarantello said. “We were excited to meet him.”

Flachenecker is on the jv football team and received help from the more experienced players as he was learning to play.

“It’s really nice how the players were helping me out at the beginning,” Flachenecker said.

Sophomore Anthony Peters immediately bonded with Flachenecker.

“Everyone was really nice to me, but he was the first one to take me into the Eagle’s Nest and introduce me to all the people,” Flachenecker said.

Flachenecker said he couldn’t pass up the opportunity to take part in the Homecoming festivities on Halloween.

“The whole dance was awesome,” Flachenecker said. “I was just happy to have the possibility to experience this.”