

# triple threat

Personality, passion, performance make for fan favorite with students

The gym held its breath as the basketball flew off sophomore Jacob Shaw's fingertips. The ball sailed to the net in slow motion before gracefully falling through. And at that moment, the whole gym erupted into cheers. Some people jumped up, some people whistled, but every single person had a smile on their face. He had sunk a 3-point shot.

"I felt really good after hitting those threes," Jacob said. "because I didn't know if they were going to go in. I was happy that the whole school was cheering me."

Being the MVP of the game meant a lot to him, but he liked coaching the student team the most.

"I gave the whole team advice, while I was coaching, to play hard," Jacob said. "Getting to call the time outs and getting to tell them to keep playing hard was my favorite part."

Coach Jennifer Hodnett, Jacob's teacher and coach of Partners PE, initially thought he would only be coaching.

"The special ed. teachers discussed it and thought it'd be a good spot for Jacob because he loves sports," Coach said. "We thought he could be the coach of the student team. That's all I thought he was going to do. But the players, the boys and girls on the student team, actually asked him to see if he wanted to play. And so, that's when one of them switched a jersey with him, and he got out there."

*"I felt really good after hitting those threes, because I didn't know if they were going to go in. I was happy that the whole school was cheering me."*

When he hit the three, she could not have been more proud.

"I was thrilled, I had my phone out, I was videoing and taking pictures," Hodnett said. "I was thrilled more so because the kids asked him if he wanted to play. That was probably the highlight of the game for me. But then, on top of that, to have him shoot and hit a three? I didn't know it was in him. So, it

was pretty awesome to see."

Varsity basketball player Alex Villarino just wanted Jacob to hit a three, and passed him the ball as much as possible. After a couple of missed shots, his passes turned into assists that resulted in four 3-pointers.

"It was really cool for him," Alex said. "I really wanted him to get an opportunity to play because he doesn't usually get an opportunity to play in front of so many people. So, I thought it was pretty good he got to get out there and take some shots. We really just wanted to see him score. That was our main goal."

Players on the student team weren't his only supporters. On the sidelines, senior Morgan Inglis, his partner in Partners PE cheered.

"When I got to see him in front of the whole school, I was really happy for him," Morgan said. "I couldn't stop smiling. I was just so proud of him, that he was having fun, and just to see the reaction of the whole school actually cheering him on was really cool."

She loves his determination in sports because she believes he is a great person in general.

"I just encourage him to always do his best, and, say he didn't make a shot, I'd have to tell him, 'It's okay. It's not always about winning—it's about having fun,'" Morgan said. "So, he went out there and tried to make the best of it, no matter if he made shots or not. And he's so sweet, he's so funny, he's always trying to make jokes."

His sweet personality and enthusiasm were evident to everyone that day, and Coach Hodnett felt beyond happy that the student body appreciated it. "It was another thing to make me proud of being at McKinney High—the whole student body was cheering," she said. "I mean, the gym was packed. There were no available seats. And the entire student body was one, paying attention and noticing someone different was on the floor, and two, was cheering for him to score. And then when he scored, the place just went nuts. I think that says a lot about the student body here at McKinney High School, and how we are very different from other high schools."

by Neelam Bohra



Aleyam Velazquez

## beat the half

During half time, senior Dominic Daniels dances to "Rainy Day" by Tincup. He thought it would be nice to put up a show in front of so many people. "I was nervous at first, but then I just did my thing," Dominic said. "The game was pretty good, and I think my performance was OK"

## raw game

After scoring against the teachers, senior Shawn Pitts and junior Tony Lyons jump in excitement. Shawn thought his \$2 ticket was worth it. "Some of the teachers weren't as good as they thought," Shawn said. "They showed me something I've never seen before."



Ulises Velez



Aleyam Velazquez



Aleyam Velazquez

## team home

Sitting among her friends, seniors Demi Davenport, Katy Kidd, Lauren Cram, and Haley Price cheer on the student team. "I think the purpose was to create a more friendly-competitive environment," Demi said. "It kind of just brought the students together in the gym supporting each other."

## ready for show

At the basketball game against the faculty, senior Tanner Bouk lays up to score. Students paid \$2 to watch the game sixth and seventh periods. "It was exciting to bring the school together," Tanner said. "I thought it was a good warm up game."



Ulises Velez



Ulises Velez

## still winning

Huddled around coach Jacob Shaw, seniors Alex Villarino, Isaias Sanchez and sophomore JaMiya Braxton talk strategy. As expected, the students won the game. "They were good, but, of course, we were better," JaMiya said. "If our coaches had played, it would have been much more intense."

## the other side

On the sideline, Mr. Michael Bennett, Ms. Bridget Dunsmore, Coach Phillip Meaker, and Officer Curtis Logan, cheer on their team. The faculty wanted to show the students they were more than just educated. "We can have fun, not just be serious in class," Coach Meaker said. "We can be humble by showing our talents and joke around about it."