

The Blue and Gold

Malden High School
Volume 112 Edition 1

maldenblueandgold.com

77 Salem Street
October 2026

Producing student journalism since 1915



GoGuardian

Fatima Husain
Managing Editor

GoGuardian and Its Reasons for Implementation

As technology becomes increasingly integrated into modern education, global concerns over youth cybersecurity have grown. To battle these online threats, the United States has implemented two main federal statutes: the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

In accordance with these statutes, the Malden Public Schools administration has decided to adopt GoGuardian, an AI-driven web-filtering program for school-issued devices for the 2026-2027 school year, following a successful trial with three K-8 schools in the spring of 2026, focusing not only on student safety but also on meaningful learning.

"We piloted the program, surveyed educators and students, reviewed multiple products, and used all of that information to inform our decision," shared Assistant Superintendent Komal Bhasin.

GoGuardian was founded in 2014 with the primary goal of creating a secure online environment for students. The program flags harmful or explicit content as inaccessible, but administrators and educators can also restrict or unblock desired websites. Therefore, trigger words relating to violence, sexual content, or self-harm will be filtered.

Teachers are also able to monitor student screens from their own devices and close off-task tabs, but the access only exists during the school day. However, any administrative bans will continue to exist outside of school hours, such as the restriction on YouTube.

Before GoGuardian, the district utilized iboss, another cybersecurity program. The district has not shifted from one to the other; instead, Malden "added GoGuardian as an additional layer of protection," explained Bhasin.

Bhasin noted that iboss was "not designed exclusively for schools," as it does have uses in schools, but is most commonly used in workspaces. GoGuardian provides more nuanced filtering,

Continued on page 3

TANGLED UP AT HOMECOMING



Homecoming collage created by Evelyn Ruan; right: Laurene Pierre-Louis-Pierre and Kayla Charles posing. EVELYN RUAN

Israa Malhouni
Head of Local

Evelyn Ruan
Editor-in-Chief of Web & Mobile

Stepping into the courtyard on October 3rd, students were greeted with hanging wisteria flowers, purple garland, and an array of colorful streamers. As students walked further into the courtyard, a giant sun drawn in chalk welcomed them along with other whimsical, colorful designs, giving students a magical feeling as if they were transported into the

popular Disney movie *Tangled*.

With hopes of bringing a lively and nostalgic atmosphere, the Class of 2027's student council hosted this year's homecoming dance in the courtyard. Under floating lanterns, students had fun, took pictures, and danced.

Many students agreed that the CO'27 nailed this year's homecoming. For many, including junior Jason Doan, the dance exceeded his expectations.

Junior Ayanna Mesidor was fond of the decorations, particularly

the chalk design inspired by the movie, though she hopes future dances will feature a wider variety of music to encourage more students to dance.

Similarly, Doan shared that he hopes "to see more energy, and more people having passion to dance." Despite the lack of energy, the atmosphere was "supportive," and he mentioned that other students encouraged him to set the mood and dance.

In spite of these mixed feelings, homecoming offered students an opportunity to connect outside of school. Senior Kayla

Charles appreciated the chance to dress up; she added, "Even if you're not someone who likes going out, it's a good excuse for walking around with your friends."

Bringing the *Tangled* theme to life required weeks of preparation from the senior student council. Secretary Cat Nguyen said planning began early in the school year, with the council spending weeks organizing decorations, food, and other details.

Social Media Coordinator Anniyah Azhar ex-

pressed that the council was "in between La La Land and *Tangled*," but chose *Tangled* because "there was a lot more to work with and it encapsulated a sort of nostalgia."

Along with selecting a theme, the council found that "the most challenging part of organizing the dance was getting permission to have it on a Saturday," and putting up the decorations.

"People usually do not

Continued on page 4

To read more about Girls' Soccer visit page 13. Photo by YEN NGUYEN



To read more about Field Hockey, visit page 14. Photo by ANTOINE ALCE



To read more about Gianna Cialdea, visit page 7. Photo by YEN NGUYEN



To read more about Jason Asciola, visit page 6. Photo by YINGER CHEN



Spirit Week Collage from top to bottom, left to right: Amelia Berliner, Rosalyn Ruan, Wiam Saadouni, Ruth Jean, Victoria Domiciano (Senior Lead Reporter for The Blue & Gold), Isaac James Aguilos, Sarah Etienne, Nyla Ligon-Chambers, Anna Desrosiers, Vanessa Nguyen, Scarlet De Los Santos, Isabella Ganoza, Amelia Berliner, Imane Agoumad, Wiam Saadouni, Wongel Yohannes. Photos submitted by pictured students.

BOYS' SOCCER STARTS STRONG

Chelmie Hyppolite
Editor-in-Chief

With the 2026 World Cup wrapping up last summer, soccer's growing popularity in North America has reinvigorated momentum, spreading into local lev-

els as well. Malden Boys' Soccer team carried that momentum into its season opener on September 7, defeating the Malden Catholic Lancers 4-1 in an intense start to the season.

Last season, the team finished with a record of

6-7-5—a record that the team hopes to improve this season. Coach of 25 years, Jeremiah Smith, recalled that last season, the team had trouble maintaining their drive, resulting in games where they played excellently and games where they

"really struggled."

Unfortunately, the team only started to gain momentum in the last month of the previous season, causing them to finish "a half game short of qualifying for the state tournament," explained Smith. Alongside the goal

to improve their record this season, which has already been ignited, the team also aims to make it to the MIAA state championship.

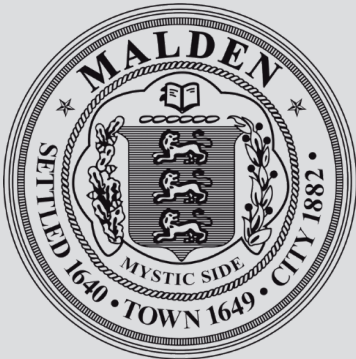
Notably, the Malden Boys' Soccer team has caught media attention

Continued on page 15

From Project to Passion

THE BLUE AND GOLD

77 Salem St.
Malden, MA 02148



Staff

MANAGING EDITOR

FATIMA HUSAIN

HEAD OF SPORTS

ANNA BUI

HEAD OF LOCAL

ISRAA MALHOUNI

SENIOR LEAD REPORTERS

VICTORIA DOMICIANO
MALIYA KAZADI
SAFA NIAZI
AUNDREA OROZCO-CIFUENTES
KEVIN CRUM
BILAL PSARLY

LEAD REPORTERS

AFIF ALAKOUM
ANTOINE ALCE
ABYAN ALI
RIN CLOUGH
ADAM EL FATIHI
ISRAA HOWARD
KHKOLA NIAZI
HARMONIE ORTIZ
PRISCARLA VILLEFRANCHE
WILLIAM YU

REPORTERS

SOFIA ARDON FLORES
LEANDRA ARRUDA
SARAH BIADI
MADISON BRAZELL
ANTHONY CAMPOS PORTILLO
YINGER CHEN
LOUIS FENG
VITORIA FONSECA
CALVIN FONTANILLA
MAEVE MCALEAR
EDRYA MESIDOR
ERICA MUGIMU
TISHA NEUPANE
DEZIYAH RICKETTS
RAIHAN SAIDI
SIMRA SHEIKH
KADY SMITH
SELAM TESFAW
GABRYEL THOMAZINI OLIVEIRA
ELISSA YICK
STEPHANIE ZHAO

ADVISOR

RYAN GALLAGHER

Field trips, funny moments, and school events—these often come to mind when one thinks of their favorite middle school memory. Yet my favorite memory is what unlocked the door to an everlasting passion.

An extracurricular? Performance? Guest speaker? Nope. My favorite middle school memory is a school project. When others hear this, they often respond with surprise; with how bustling and chaotic middle school can be, what’s so special about a project?

For many students, school projects fly by like a breeze you quickly forget, which was the case for me too, until I was assigned to report events from The Giver as a final seventh-grade English project by Mrs. Walsh.

At first glance, reporting an event in an English book as a project seems boring, right? But the immense freedom we had in the project was the exact opposite of boring. The list of ways we could report on an event seemed endless: a parody, creating a song, acting out the scene, writing a letter, and so much more. This list was a breath of relief in contrast to our usual five-paragraph essays after finishing a book.

From this long list, one option piqued my interest: news reporting. As a 13-year-old, I had never truly thought about the news. I mean, thinking about the news felt like a “grown-up thing”—my mother watched it, my teachers did; why would a 13-year-old even think about the news when I could easily entertain myself on my phone or watch High School Musical: The Musical on Disney.

How would it feel to be a news anchor? The question rang non-stop in my head like an alarm with no snooze options. I desperately tried to block out my curiosity as my friends chose the “funner” options like creating a song or acting, but the ringing wouldn’t stop. In this tug-of-war, the news reporting won the tough battle, ding-ding-ding!

Although the option did seem boring, at least I got to dress up—that was my motivation. However, the boring appeal quickly dimmed as the lack of guidelines allowed my imagination to run wild. I quickly drafted my professional script detailing the events of The Giver as a significant local problem, while I plummeted into a rabbit hole of news videos. I spent hours watching clips of news anchors and stories on YouTube to replicate my project in real-life examples of news reporting.

Once my script was done, I dressed in my mother’s best business apparel: a pink button-down, navy blue dress pants, and a white suit jacket decorated with red,

pink, and blue flowers.

The excitement I felt when I began recording on my Chromebook while reading my script from a homemade teleprompter was intense. I had never found myself so invested in a school project. I had finally answered my question: being a news anchor felt great.

This was the first time I enjoyed a project instead of hyperfixating on its perfection. I completed every step of the project with a smile on my face—even its submission.

I loved reporting. Throughout this project, I realized that I was capable of truly enjoying something academically related.

Now, as an Editor-in-Chief of The Blue and Gold, this project served as the foundation of my journalism passion. It’s what’s inspiring me to continue my love for journalism for my bachelor’s degree. Who would’ve thought a simple project would lead to an everlasting passion, one that continues to blaze through tough winds and rain.

Projects like this serve as a reminder that education isn’t just about completing assignments and establishing academic skills—it’s about forming passions. With the increased priority of standardization within education through standardized curricula and testing, what happens to these projects that spark student passion?

Having the freedom to be creative and embrace assignments or projects rather than grades is something students need, as stated in Protection or Restriction? GoGuardian’s Introduction into MPS Sparks Debate by Fatima Husain. The embrace of creative assignments can lead to students’ passions flourishing.

It should be a part of a student’s goal to find their passions rather than just academic success, not only at Malden High School, but everywhere. In his recent press conference with The Blue and Gold, principal Michael Sabin shared his goal for all students to find their passions and be involved in different opportunities that the high school offers (or doesn’t offer yet)—even ones that aren’t so obvious.

What can students, staff, parents, and others do to help Sabin achieve this worthwhile objective?

Throughout this edition, the editors decided to highlight student life as a means to inch closer to this goal. Through the inclusion of various sports, events, and clubs throughout this edition, we hope that one article contributes to the spark of a passion for students everywhere.

Chelmie Hyppolite
Editor-in-Chief



Chelmie

Chelmie Hyppolite posing with
DC News Now Emmy-nominated
reporter Tosin Fakile for a photo.
CHELMIE HYPOLITE

CAN YOU FIND NEDLAM?

Marie Hyppolite Family daycare
www.mariehyppolitefamilydaycare.com

Marie Hyppolite : 26 Home St Malden Ma, 02148
Family Daycare : mariehyppolite@yahoo.com
: 781-249-7963



Editors-in-Chief

Chelmie Hyppolite & Alexia Lima



Editors-in-Chief of Social Media & Print

Kyle Dang & Yen Nguyen



Editors-in-Chief of Web Design & Mobile

Evelyn Ruan & Emily Weihrach

Editorial Policy

The Blue and Gold is an open forum for student expression. It is produced by students for the school and the community. The views presented in this paper are not necessarily those of the advisor or the school administration. The views presented in the editorials are those of the editors-in-chief or guests. The goal of The Blue and Gold is to inform and entertain students as well as the community regarding issues that we feel are important.

We strongly encourage readers to respond to material printed in the form of signed letters to the editors. No libelous, malicious, defamatory, obscene, or unsigned material will be printed. The Blue and Gold reserves the right to edit the letters. Names may be withheld upon request. Not all letters will be printed.

Although The Blue and Gold appreciates the support of advertisers, we may refuse any advertisement that violates the above policy or that promotes products questionable to student use.

Any correspondence concerning this publication should be directed to Mr. Ryan Gallagher’s room J387 or to his mailbox in the main office.

The Blue and Gold
c/o Malden High School
77 Salem Street
Malden, MA 02148

SCAN FOR MORE CONTENT!





Continued from front page
meaning inappropriate content gets blocked while legitimate educational content can still get through,” Bhasin expressed.
Bhasin expanded upon another key difference between iboss and GoGuardian, as GoGuardian grants both the district and educators the ability to override a specific site’s block, which was not possible with iboss.

Additionally, an administrative decision made by the Malden School Committee was to block access to YouTube on Chromebooks and school accounts. The YouTube ban was not linked to GoGuardian (although implemented through it), but was influenced by the company’s refusal to protect student data.

Under COPPA, YouTube promised to halt data collection on minor-focused content in 2019 after it was found that the company was actively collecting children’s data without parental consent. However, in August 2025, YouTube changed its policies on how it identifies data collection from minors, creating controversies around online safety.

Bhasin emphasized that “as a public school,” Malden has a duty to protect its students from having their “data sold or exposed,” particularly when websites leverage that data for targeted advertising. However, Bhasin also recognized that when a student accesses YouTube on a “personal device at home,” that is a choice belonging strictly to them and their families, “not a choice a public school district can make on behalf of children.”

In light of this issue, junior Anya Grzegorzewski argued that while she understands that “legally the school has every right to use GoGuardian,” interference with accessing resources and “getting work done” has created an unintended consequence.

Alongside the security factor, educators across the district were challenged by YouTube distracting students from completing assignments. Analyzing student screen time on Chromebooks, Bhasin found that YouTube was one of the most visited sites by students last year; therefore, after its ban, students are “spending more time on tasks.”

Junior Lyra Heining pointed out that this “helps students take more accountability” for how class time is spent.

Pros and Cons

The COVID-19 pandemic was a major catalyst for introducing digitalized education into the school curricula for convenience and efficiency; however, this short-term solution had unintended long-term consequences for middle and high school students. Along with a decrease in social skills, large joint studies from Harvard, Stanford, and Dartmouth found that school districts with longer periods of remote learning experienced the steepest losses in the subjects of reading and math.

The drop in literacy can be linked back to distracting technology use, but also to the rise of artificial intelligence. Having access to AI has made students prone to using the software to complete their work, undermining the academic aspect of school. This prevents the development of core critical thinking and math skills, leaving a gaping hole in student education.

However, with the use of GoGuardian, educators are now able to monitor student screens and prevent AI usage during school hours. AP Seminar and sophomore English teacher Anne Mooney shared how the program has made it possible for her to “switch from paper to the Chromebooks.” Concerned with AI usage and plagiarism in the past, Mooney had resorted to paper assignments, but now, with GoGuardian, she has the assurance that student work produced in class is original thought.

Similarly, AP Chemistry teacher Katherine Shank commented that when students take notes in her class, some will “have the notes up on their computer because they can see it better,” but if she notices off-task

behavior, she “pulls up the notes for them” to remind them of what needs attention.

Mooney, Shank, and Media teacher James Valente all highlighted a rise in productivity among their students compared to last year. With restricted technological domains and constant oversight, students are discouraged from straying away from the task at hand. Valente described it as a “light slap on the wrist,” as it reroutes them back to their “one shot at education.”

This educator access to student screens is also something that the district lacked with iboss. Although both iboss and GoGuardian alert staff when students are on inappropriate sites, GoGuardian provides schools with the ability to directly see “which sites were accessed,” detailed Bhasin.

Despite the educational and security gains, GoGuardian is faced with several technological and ethical issues. The primary concern is teaching students responsible tech use rather than implementing a regulating policy. While the policy prevents off-task and unsafe behavior, it does not build students’ time management or safe tech-use skills.

Valente emphasized that high school is the building block for the next step of students’ lives and that public schools need to prepare students for a future where their device use will not be regulated.

“There is a time and place for everything. You need to learn the time and place here because at the next level it is going to cost you money and time, and you cannot get that back. At least in high school, it’s a bruise; it can heal. [In the future], it’s a limb that gets cut off.”

Moreover, with the YouTube ban, teachers like Shank and Valente, whose lesson plans heavily incorporated the website, are having to adapt to the resource no longer being accessible to students. Therefore, both teachers had to go through the tedious process of uploading the content to a hard drive and saving it in Google Drive. However, the process only works if an individual owns the video—this would not work for a teacher attempting to save a copyrighted video such as a CrashCourse video.

Senior Cat Nguyen voiced how she has witnessed multiple teachers having to “change their lesson plans midway through class because of GoGuardian blocking an article, video, or resource they had been using for years.”

Senior Raquel Ferreira suggested giving teachers “more access to the bypass code” to prevent wasted class time. Ferreira also recalled that over the summer she was trying to access specific websites for her summer work, but “most were blocked or restricted, making it impossible to do any of the work through a school-based Chromebook.”

As a result, some students, such as senior Amelia Berliner and juniors Gianna Bilodeau and Minerva Davenport, have resorted to bringing their personal device to school.

Shank stated that it can be “frustrating” because there is a lot of “good educational content” on YouTube, such as the “Amoeba Sisters for biology,” but the resource is no longer available to share with students. She also highlighted that this creates an issue for teachers who relied on “Edpuzzle assignments” for when they were out, as to give access to the videos, the teachers need to be “physically present in the room with the students.”

Junior AP Research student Sophia Zhang relayed that at the start of the year, “APClassroom was blocked by GoGuardian and so were many research websites, including EBSCO,” but this has since been fixed. To this day, Zhang is “irritated” due to several sites, such as Oxford Academic and Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, remaining restricted.

Junior Ruby Neith Forbes added that it can be “difficult to access blocked websites from home as teachers cannot unblock them.”

Meanwhile, Valente’s class faced issues with accessing specialized media platforms and contacting organizations they have worked with in the past. “My

The Malden Police Department’s tent also contained similar safety resources as well as goodie bags. “It was hectic at first, but once I got the hang of it, it was really nice,” shared junior volunteer Alyssa Lynch, who worked with the fire department.

Sophomore Edom Abhrhame recalled noticing children asking police and firefighters all kinds of questions, which made her “happy” because kids were eager to learn.

When it finally came time to welcome families, Key Club volunteers freshman Winnie Chen and senior Sophia Chen awaited them at the check-in table, which was directly in front of the parking lot. The two were in charge of handing each person a raffle ticket, which they would use to enter the main lobby of the school, turn in their tickets, grab a free pumpkin, and head back outside for the fun.

Soon, the event be-

advanced media class does a lot of work with the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office, but we cannot go to their website because it has the word ‘sex’ in it. Also, when you are working with a deadline, waiting for the technicians to solve the problem is not feasible,” he remarked.

K-8 Schools

While much of the debate surrounding GoGuardian has centered on Malden High School, the program was first piloted in Salemwood, Beebe, and Linden, where educators generally reported positive experiences. For middle school teachers, the platform has addressed many of the classroom management challenges that emerged after the district expanded Chromebook use during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meghan Bowe, an eighth-grade math teacher at the Forestdale School, described herself as a “huge fan” of the program. Having previously taught seventh-grade science, Bowe explained that device use often required constant supervision. “It was just a constant battle of get off YouTube, get off the game, get off whatever they’re doing when they’re supposed to be doing their work,” she commented.

Frustrated by distractions, Bowe shifted much of her instruction to paper assignments. Similar to Mooney, GoGuardian’s introduction has made it easier for Bowe to utilize online educational programs while ensuring students remain focused on their work. She added that, in the past, teachers had to circulate throughout the room to keep students on task, but now they can provide individualized support while maintaining oversight of the entire class.

Likewise, eighth-grade ELA teacher Joshua Titcomb at Linden STEAM Academy noted that GoGuardian has been particularly effective during intervention periods when students work independently online. He observed that “100% of the children are on IXL,” and if a student wanders off task, a simple notification redirects them. While Titcomb has largely moved his curriculum on paper due to concerns about AI and plagiarism, he acknowledged that the monitoring tool has contributed to greater productivity when Chromebooks are used.

Similarly, James Workman, a seventh-grade social studies teacher at Beebe, explained that while he has largely transitioned back to paper-based assignments because many students struggle to manage the distractions that come with having a Chromebook constantly available, he has still seen a “significant uptick” in productivity when GoGuardian is used.

Although Workman believes students must eventually learn to navigate digital tools and emerging technologies, he viewed GoGuardian as a practical “middle ground” that prevents diversions and preserves access to resources.

The Big Picture

Ultimately, the debate surrounding GoGuardian reflects a much larger conversation taking place in schools across the district. While educators generally agree that technology is now an unavoidable part of modern education, many remain concerned about how quickly digital tools are being introduced into classrooms without fully understanding their long-term effects on student learning.

Mooney argued that schools need to be more cautious as AI and educational software become increasingly embedded in daily instruction. “I just think we need to slow down,” she expressed. “We don’t know enough, and I really worry about how this is impacting students.”

Although she acknowledged that students must be prepared for a technology-driven world, she emphasized the importance of carefully evaluating new programs before placing them at the center of students’ educational experiences.

Teachers also stressed that technology should enhance learning rather than replace it. Valente noted that some of the most important aspects of education occur through face-to-face interactions, where students exchange ideas, read body language, and engage in meaningful discussion. While he believes tools such as ChatGPT can be useful when used appropriately, he warned against allowing them to do the learning for students.

As a result, GoGuardian’s success will depend less on its ability to restrict students and more on whether it helps them develop the judgment and independence to succeed without those restrictions.

Safety and Slices

Israa Howard
Lead Reporter

Who says learning about safety can’t be rewarding? The City of Malden proved otherwise at the Eighth Annual Safety Day at the Linden STEAM Academy by attracting a large crowd with a combination of free pizza, popcorn, and a raffle that sent five win-

ners home with free iPads.

Though the event began at 11:00 A.M., preparation began hours earlier. The Malden Fire Department set up bouncy houses, tents, and a fire truck that catered to the children. Inside one tent, a throwing game let you earn a prize with consecutive bean bag throws into a hole. In the second tent, there were boxes full of safety manuals, pencils, and red or pink miniature firefighter helmets.

came lively with music played by a DJ, pizza being made and served out of an actual fire truck, and the “touch-a-truck” opportunities where children “climbed on fire engines and ladders, police cars, an ambulance and the DPW (Department of Public Works),” according to the City of Malden’s press release from the event. But what created the most noise was when the children were climbing into the street sweeper to honk the horn.

While everyone settled in and enjoyed all kinds of activities such as the bouncy houses and the face-painting station, junior Cortez Thou prepared to be the main attraction of the event by dressing as the Malden Fire Department Mascot ‘Sparky’.

As soon as Thou finished, Sparky made his way out of the school, where he was met by children eager to meet and take photos with him.

Continued on page 4

Safety Day
at Linden

Continued from page 3

Making his way around the event, Sparky made it to the DJ booth, where he was announced to the entire event. After a couple more laps around, Sparky went back inside for a break, and in the middle of the plaza, the Massachusetts Special Tactical Operations team (STOP) let children try on their vests and shields, teaching them how the equipment protects them.

To the left of the door Sparky entered were Key Club volunteer, ninth-grader Selam Tesfaw, who is also a reporter for The Blue and Gold, and junior Fikir Tesfaw, manning the rubber duck table where children played with plastic ducklings in a miniature pool. While the fun continued, the DJ announced, “Mayor Christenson has stopped by to say hello!” which was followed by Christenson making his way to the firefighters for a quick photo while reminding people to get raffle tickets.

At 12:00 P.M., families made their way inside the school to the main lobby for a dog show, where a STOP officer showcased the skills of his experienced K-9, Newman.

He first detailed the extensive experience and training Newman had before showcasing his brilliant tracking abilities, which were demonstrated by having the audience release five drops of a substance in different areas around the main lobby.

As the audience figured out where to place the droplets, there was an interesting introduction between Sparky and Newman in the hallway. As soon as they encountered each other, Newman attempted to lunge at Sparky many times. Sophomore volunteer Meklit Daniel described the event as “inclusive,” and a “really nice way to get the little kids entertained.”

Throughout the last thirty minutes of the event, the fun and games remained. The face-painting station left children happy with designs such as flowers, rainbows, and animals. The firefighters let children use their hoses to spray at a wooden board near the field, and the free popcorn and slush filled stomachs.

“My favorite part of the day was meeting all the people and seeing them smile,” Lynch concluded.

While Safety Day only happens once a year, the fire department uses the week of the event to do their annual smoke and carbon monoxide detector installation for senior citizens.

By the end of the event, children and families were sent home with profound knowledge of the importance of safety and protection.



Maliya Kazadi
Senior Lead Reporter

Graphic designed by Kyle Dang

With time to spare in the Tangled-themed Homecoming, the Class of 2027 brought their spin on Spirit Week to count down the days until the official dance.

Posted on their Instagram @maldenco27, the senior student council announced themes the student body would represent throughout the week leading to a night under the lights in Malden High’s courtyard. With the five days and varied themes, students and faculty put in the effort to show their creativity.

The first day, marking the start of spirit week, was Disney Day. Students were to dress as their favorite Disney character to pay tribute to the Disney movie-themed homecoming. Despite the gloomy weather, many came in wearing hair accessories or similar costumes to existing Disney characters.

Students went on to dress up as many different Disney icons such as Moana, Minnie Mouse, Stitch, and a plethora of other characters, displaying the connections and adoration for the characters they grew up with.

“I was Max last year, and I can never get sick of it,” shared Senior Activities Coordinator Raquel Ferreira, who dressed up as Max Goof from the animated series Goof Troop. “It makes me look back at all the things I miss because of nostalgia,” she added.

Despite the number of costumes, many students were not able to dress up due to the weather. The gloomy, rainy day resulted in some students feeling less motivated to dress up—feeling that it was too much effort. Even so, the next day was going to be something more convenient, resulting in more students getting involved.

Next was Adam Sandler Day; dressing in baggy, comfortable clothes matching the style of the popular actor Adam Sandler. Students were able to express themselves in a simpler manner compared to Disney Day.

“I had fun being able to dress down,” shared senior Kailey Bae. “Even if it took the least amount of effort, I had fun with my friends and taking pictures,” Bae remarked. Many students arrived in baggy sweatpants, jorts, oversized shirts, baseball caps, and slides to mimic iconic outfits that Sandler had worn throughout his career, movies, and red carpets.

On Wednesday, the theme was Dress as Your Grade. Everybody was assigned different ages to represent their grade. Freshmen were

babies, sophomores were toddlers, juniors were adults, and seniors were senior citizens. The school was scattered with walkers and pacifiers, as students were able to express themselves in humorous ways to differentiate their grade level.

Being able to rewind in time, the theme on Thursday was a 2016 Throwback; students were able to be nostalgic and take the fashion trends that were popular a decade ago. Distinct digital-age aesthetics like Tumblr and Instagram, skinny denim and leggings, chokers, jumpsuits, and crop tops were all articles of clothing that defined 2016 fashion.

“This was the theme I was most looking forward to,” senior Event Coordinator Wongel Yohannes shared, who dressed in a denim jacket and black leggings. She continued by sharing how she and her friends coordinated their outfits to demonstrate their spirit and enthusiasm for the day. 2016 was a major hit, not just due to the nostalgia many students felt, but also through a form of shared connection: many students were too young during this time to follow the trends they saw, and this theme allowed them to relive an era they were too young to live to the fullest.

To end Spirit Week, Friday concluded with Bikers vs. Surfers, honoring last year’s Class of 2027’s Junior Varieties theme. Picking a side between being a surfer—decked in Hawaiian shirts, tropical prints, cropped tops, retro swim trunks— or being a biker—clad in leather jackets, denim, and aviators.

The theme carried on through the Homecoming Football game, as the Tornados were pushed in a hard-fought game against Everett’s Crimson Tides; bikers and surfers filled the stands and cheered while watching the heated rivalry between the two teams.

Although the game did not go well for the Tornados, Malden students brought highlights to the game by cheering in faith for their team by rising when senior Akre Akre was able to return a kickoff and score a touchdown, giving Malden a form of hope and enjoyment to what Friday Night Lights can be for a Homecoming night.

All the spirit carried over to Saturday night, as the Class of 2027 would transform the courtyard into an amazing space for the Tangled-themed dance. Students came dressed head-to-toe in sparkling purple dresses, with some blending medieval styles and styles popularized in the 2020s showing the various ways that students express themselves.

HOMECOMING GLEAMS AND GLOWS

Continued from front page

host [homecoming] on a Saturday,” Azhar noted. Also, the council had to “assume that the weather would be nice” since they held the event after a long cold week.

Volunteers and council members arrived early to hang streamers, lanterns, and banners, working together to transform the courtyard. The Fine Arts Club (FAC) also volunteered by face painting requested characters and designs. Their contributions helped bring the Tangled-inspired setting to life.

According to Nguyen, who is also the president of FAC, the effort paid off. She described the event as “lively, stunning, and enchanting,” adding that the council and club had worked hard to create an enjoyable experience for students.

Along with the decorations and dancing, the announcement of the Homecoming Courts gave students another reason to have fun and celebrate. President Alexia Lima, who is also an Editor-in-Chief for The Blue and Gold, called each of the courts by grade and crowned them, giving the spotlight to seniors Aiden Tarantino and Emily Weihs, who is also the Editor-in-Chief of Web & Mobile for The Blue and Gold, sophomore Anna Batres, and freshmen Laura Lenares and Ava Garcia.

Lenares voiced that she was shocked when she found out she was crowned, adding that she nominated herself “for fun and did not expect to win,” but felt “very grateful.”

“Being crowned means that I have gained proper relationships with the right people and that you can always overcome your rough past if you just let it all go and start fresh,” Tarantino said.

Although students had different perspectives about the dance’s energy and decorations, many appreciated the time out of school and the chance to make memories with friends. This year’s Tangled theme brought a touch of childhood nostalgia to the courtyard, but students hope future dances will pair creative themes with an engaging atmosphere as this year’s homecoming did.

“It was very lively. I wouldn’t mind paying more in order to have a better experience,” sophomore Ruth Mekonnen concluded.



From left to right: Seniors Angela Lam, Lilian Fang, Jhillian Dumo, and Yingyan Xia posing for a group photo during the Homecoming dance. ISRAA MALHOUNI

To watch Antoine Alce’s recap of Class of 2027’s Tangled Homecoming Dance scan the QR code below:



Malden's Transportation Commission



Under the roof of City Hall, Malden residents and city officials coming together for the Transportation Commission's first meeting on September 28th. SAFA NIAZI

Safa Niazi
Senior Lead Reporter

Malden's work on transportation is not new. "The Transportation Commission is a group of city officials and residents who work to make Malden streets safe and efficient for everybody," explained Alexander Pratt, director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development. The commission replaces the city's former Traffic Commission, which had been in place for decades. Pratt explained that the new commission was created to

"modernize that process" and give more people a role in transportation decisions. The commission held its first meeting on September 28th at City Hall, bringing together city officials and residents to discuss transportation concerns across the city. The new commission is also meant to look beyond cars and traffic. Its work includes issues involving pedestrians, bikers, public transportation users, and disabled individuals. Pratt explained that "the priority is not only traffic control, but transportation work broadly, which brings in topics like safety, equity, and multimodality."

Transportation in Malden has also changed in recent years, with Pratt pointing to changes after COVID-19, including different bus and Orange Line ridership, and the growing use of E-bikes and E-scooters. "People aren't always commuting at the same time in the morning [and] at the same time in the evening," he said. The commission's first year will include both urgent transportation requests and longer-term planning. Pratt mentioned that the Commission will need to look at safety problems and identify areas where improvement may be needed in the future. "There are a lot of

needs across the city, and we have to figure out a way to prioritize," Pratt stated. "Funding is a big challenge for the city right now," Pratt said. He added that some new projects may take longer if the city has to wait for more funding. Parking was also one of the main concerns raised by Malden City Councilor Ari Taylor. Taylor said, "I probably handle more parking requests than anything else." She also pointed out speeding, running red lights, and crosswalk safety as major concerns. One issue Taylor wants the commission to focus on is the residential per-

mit parking problems in specific areas of the city. Looking ahead, Taylor wants to "improve safety at all the crosswalks and ease the accessibility for getting on and off public transportation and kind of the general flow of traffic." As the new commission begins its work, it will have to balance immediate concerns, prioritizing parking and crosswalk safety, with longer-term transportation planning. "The city is embracing the challenge of planning, and transportation work head-on," Pratt concluded.

Malden High Back to School Night

Khkola Niazi
Lead Reporter

On September 10th, Malden High welcomed parents to Back-to-School Night. Some of them entered the school for the first time, and other parents returned for another year as their children moved a year closer to their graduation. However, this year felt a little different with the addition of the new principal, Michael Sabin. Parents came into the building with a lot of questions, excitement, and also curiosity about how the new principal would contribute to the new school year.

The night began with Sabin welcoming all the families before they visited their children's classes and teachers. The school's auditorium quickly filled up, and parents had the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting.

Superintendent Timothy Sippel stated that the large turnout was one of the things that stood out to him. "It seemed like people were very attentive. They appreciated the clarity of the information that was presented," expressed Sippel.

After the welcoming parents spread through the building to find their students' educators, student volunteers were also an important part of the evening, as they led families to find the right classrooms.

Erwin Estaban and his wife, Gloria Cabrera, were among the parents who attended the event. They spoke with student volunteers who helped them find their way and answered their questions. The interaction was one great example of how students and families came together throughout the night.

Teachers waited and prepared in their classrooms to meet parents and let them know what a certain course is about and what they need in order to connect with the teachers.

For Sippel, Back-to-School Night is more than just meeting new teachers. He believes that it gives parents an opportunity to know more about what their kids every day might look like. "I think having students' parents know and being able to get to know the teachers is really important," Sippel concluded.



The Class of 2027 posing for a class photo at Senior Sunrise. EVELYN RUAN
Emilly Weihrauch Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile

Many commitments students make throughout high school are done reluctantly, from waking up early in the morning to attend school to staying up late to study for a test the following day. Malden High's Class of 2027 is finally in their final stretch of high school commitments, and they celebrated the beginning of the end on September 7th at the annual Senior Sunrise celebration. At Senior Sunrise, students joined together to celebrate the commencement of their final year of high school. Students gathered at MacDonald Stadium between 4 and 5 AM to watch the 6 AM sunrise amidst a plethora of speakers playing nostalgic tunes, students taking pictures with posters and signs, ath-

letes playing with their friends, and fun conversations among one another. To watch Emilly Weihrauch's recap of Senior Sunrise, scan the QR code below:



Class of 2027 officers posing for a group picture. EVELYN RUAN



Jason
Asciola +
Math = A
Class with
Pizazz

Edrya Mesidor
Reporter

Yinger Chen
Reporter

Vitoria Medeiros
Reporter

Malden High School is lucky to welcome returning math teacher Jason Asciola. Asciola has returned to MHS for his 26th year of teaching after moving back from the Salemwood School. Since his return, Asciola has been teaching Math 1, both CP and Honors, along with AP Statistics.

“At some point, I just realized that I would really enjoy coming back to the high school, to teach some high-level math, and to work with some students who really have a high motivation and desire to learn,” Asciola expressed.

Kelle Griffin, a business teacher who teaches Sports Marketing that is located across the hall from Asciola, said, “Even certain students going down the hall to a different classroom stop and say hello to him. So, he clearly has a strong relationship with his students.”

When Asciola is not in a classroom environment or playing his favorite video games, he’s outside. Asciola enjoys gardening, looking at different flowers, finding all sorts of insects, and just exploring the world around him. “Even in the winter, I’ll be outside as much as I can,” Asciola mentioned.

His passion is only amplified when he teaches. One of Asciola’s students, senior Rosalyn Ruan said, “he always ensures that we understand the lesson, and if we don’t, he’ll keep trying until we do.”

Principal Michael Sabin enjoys the phrase “hit the ground listening.” Asciola has clearly managed to do this with the students he’s already connected with in such a short period of time. Ruan added, “Asciola helps me become the best version of myself by just setting an environment where I know he’ll walk me through the concepts and the lesson. I think it’s easy to feel intimidated in an AP math class, but he’s able to help reduce some of that intimidation.”

“Hilarious, talented, kind, devoted, patient, amiable, positive, and charming” were some of the words used to describe Asciola by other staff members. Many pointed out his great sense of humor and positive energy.

“I’m drawn to the classroom,” Griffin concluded.



SOOD'S NEW MOOD TO ENGLISH CLASS



Simra Sheikh
Reporter

Kady Smith
Reporter

Sarah Biadi
Reporter

Amrita Sood helping Wallace Huang on his assignment. SIMRA SHEIKH

mix of German Shepherd and Poodle. “Most of my day is work and then her,” said Sood.

When Sood was young, her mother gifted her a chalkboard set, where she would pretend to teach her brother math. This set her passion for becoming the experienced teacher she is today.

Sood originally planned to pursue a science career. In college, Sood majored in biology due to her love for science and math. During her college career, she tutored students in a writing center, which is where she discovered her love for helping students write. She stated that “a lot of people were like, ‘you’re really helpful, no one’s been able to help me write an essay before,’” which led her to take an education class on it.

Sood may be new to

Malden High School, but she is not new to teaching. She previously worked at Neighborhood House Charter School for eight years, which was her first job after college. After spending so long at one school, she decided it was time for a change. What attracted her to Malden High was the sense of community and diversity. She expressed that “everyone was telling me how when you ask a teacher why they love working here they always say the kids are great.”

Freshman Sara Munir, one of her students, said that “the classroom is a comforting space.” Sood wants her classroom to be a place where students feel comfortable expressing themselves. “I don’t want this to be a place where kids feel like they can’t speak up or they can’t share their thoughts,” she explained,

“that they’re being forced to talk when they don’t want to.”

Sood’s personality is welcoming and kind. “She’ll fill any room with laughter,” described her co-teacher, Mitch Abbatesa. “She’s realistic and she also has some flexibility,” Abbatesa added.

“She actually teaches and makes sure you understand,” mentioned freshman Melany Portillo. Ariana Portillo, another fellow freshman, also thinks “She’s a great teacher,” and “definitely knows how to teach.”

Holland House principal, Brian Bates, stated she shows “a ton of patience” and “knows how to connect with students.” If a student is having trouble or doesn’t understand, she makes sure the student receives the help they need, and instead of running out of patience, she will work with you

mindfully and respectfully. She walks around the room and helps students with questions they are stuck on.

From teaching her younger brother on a chalkboard, to tutoring in college, and eventually finding her love for teaching, Sood’s journey to Malden High was far from a straight path. As she begins her first year here, Sood is still learning about the school herself with hundreds of other students and staff members. The transition from her previous school has been a big change, but she is still excited to learn more about Malden High and the students. Even though she misses her old staff members and students, she hopes that Malden High welcomes her with open arms and shows her what a great place this is.

Social Worker Mauren Masters Encourages
Students to Master High School

Rin Clough
Lead Reporter

For many students, high school can be incredibly challenging, whether it’s socially, mentally, or academically. It can be scary to talk with adults about personal issues, but the new Jenkins House social worker, Maureen Masters, welcomes students warmly as they open the door.

Masters grew up in Lynn, Massachusetts. She described herself as “unbelievably shy” during her K-12 educa-

tion, something many students today can relate to. “I realized that I had to pretend at first to be tougher than I was because I was going to get eaten alive as a sweet, shy human, so I ended up joining the drama club at that time, and that helped because it was a group of kids that were like-minded,” Masters shared.

She explained that high school was not easy for her, which is why she wants to bring the comfort of a support system that students feel they do not have at Malden High. Her job’s ability to help

others without expecting anything in return is what motivated her to become a social worker.

Her interest was piqued at 17 years old, and she dedicated herself to Salem State University. She began her career working for the Malden Public Schools 26 years ago, and soon began at the Early Learning Center on Mountain Ave 23 years ago when it opened. When the district eliminated the social worker position, she transferred to Malden High. “I have never in my life met such warm, welcoming, help-

ful people. . . I love it here,” Masters expressed.

Upon entering Masters’ room, you will be welcomed with a giant bulletin board displaying the words, “I’m so happy you’re here.” “I am genuinely happy when kids are here. I want kids to feel safe, so I try to make the space something that conveys care,” Masters emphasized. Her room is comfortable, with complementary candy, string lights, and fidgets.

Jenkins House principal, Jayson Payeur, expressed his positive experience working with

Masters: “She’s communicative, and she does a really nice job of telling me students that she’s concerned about, or students that are on her radar that we need to support.”

“The huge reason why I love it at Malden High is that I already feel like the work that I’m doing matters; it makes a difference. I am in a position where I can positively affect students’ lives and how they feel. That is an incredible thing that I get to do every day, and I have not felt that for a long time,” Masters mentioned.

SAY “HOLA” TO JENNA MENDIOLA



Leandra Arruda
Reporter

Calvin Fontanilla
Reporter

Anthony Portillo
Reporter

A major change of the guard has taken place in the World Languages Department this year, bringing a wave of veteran experience and a vibrant, immersive energy to our hallways.

Jenna Mendiola has officially joined the high school faculty after spending 15 years teaching at the Salemwood School. The sudden move came following an administrative decision resulting in the removal of the Spanish exploratory at the middle school.

To some students, a language class is another period in the school day; to Mendiola, it’s a chance to connect people through communication.

Driven by a career inspired by working with people, Mendiola’s journey into the profession spans across borders. She previously taught English and studied abroad in Chile. Now, she brings that global perspective directly to the building. However, transitioning from a middle school setup to a high school building presents its own immediate, every-

Jenna Mendiola holding classwork while talking to students. CALVIN FONTANILLA

day struggles. When adjusting to Malden High, Mendiola confessed with a laugh that the hardest part about transitioning is “not getting lost.”

Fortunately, she isn’t navigating entirely alone. Fellow language department member Robert Grinnell noted that she is already a highly familiar face to the underclassmen. “She especially has close relationships with a lot of the freshmen that she has gotten to know by having them as students at Salemwood,” Grinnell explained. He added that she has been “a great addition to our department by bringing with her the perspective of working at a different school, but also deeply knowing Malden and Malden students very well.”

Step into her classroom, and you will quickly notice her unique and engaging way of teaching a foreign language. While walking into a high school language course can sometimes fill students with dread, Mendiola’s students find her demanding methods empowering.

“She speaks in Spanish first, and then when we don’t know what she’s saying, she repeats it in English and then says it in Spanish again,

so that we kind of get the key words of that sentence down,” sophomore Clementine Adams, a student who has Mendiola, explained.

This strategy of independent problem-solving is fully intentional, pushing students to actively decode the language. When students struggle with difficult grammar or a large amount of vocabulary, Mendiola uses a hands-on teaching approach.

“She speaks Spanish in a really clear way, so I know what she’s saying in Spanish when she does speak it,” Adams expressed.

Mendiola firmly believes that language learning thrives when students feel at ease, a philosophy that influences her views on classroom design. In fact, if the district ever handed her an unlimited budget to decorate her workspace, she knows exactly what she would change.

Mendiola revealed she would immediately “replace all the desks with couches,” pointing out that she heavily “utilizes comfort and hates how students sit for hours in uncomfortable chairs.” To complete her ultimate “educational oasis,” she would also install “a

smartboard” and “more windows.”

“I know that she does a great job at making students feel comfortable and safe; she has a great classroom environment,” Grinnell shared. He observed that her daily routine focuses primarily on the well-being of her students and making sure that they feel supported. “She goes out of her way to build a connection with her students so that they can feel comfortable and safe participating in the classroom.” This mutual respect helps her keep the classroom organized.

She also builds trust by being understanding when students fall behind or have trouble understanding lessons. Adams shared a recent example of how Mendiola showed kindness and understanding: “She gives us lenience when we miss a homework assignment; it was our first time, so she respected that, and gave us time to do it again.”

When the final bell rings, however, she leaves behind her confused thoughts and moves to the rhythm. Beyond her academic credentials, Mendiola is a passionate dancer who teaches salsa dancing outside of school.

Grinnell noted that

she is “actively involved in a dance studio in Malden and brings that experience into the classroom as well.” Because her curriculum is interactive and fun, she embraces the idea that everything can be fun with her subject.

Grinnell summarized her core personal qualities as being incredibly “caring and empathetic, a great listener, and very much a leader.”

Though she noted she doesn’t have a specific pinpoint memorable moment from her years in the classroom, she explained that she simply “loves when her students have a fun time with learning,” and how she “loves relationship building.”

As she looks ahead to the rest of the academic year, her ultimate objective has less to do with lesson plans and more to do with community. Her main goal right now is simply to feel settled down with her new teaching role and her fellow colleagues, while continuing to enjoy seeing old faces and old students stepping through her doorway.

If you see her outside in the halls, make sure to stop by and say hola!

Gianna Cialdea Joins Special Education

Yen Nguyen
Editor-in-Chief of
Social Media and Print

Entering her seventh year of teaching, Gianna Cialdea joined Malden High’s Special Education department this year. As a resident of East Boston, Cialdea aimed to work close by, which encouraged her to apply to work at Malden High. Her goals for this school year are “to get settled in and get to know people,” as well as get “used to the Malden community,” since “getting to know students” is her favorite part of teaching.

Originally from North Conway, New Hampshire, Cialdea had grown up in small towns her entire childhood. Her first year of teaching was in Maine before she moved to East Boston and started teaching at a charter school in Dorchester, then in Everett Public Schools. “It’s been a pretty big change, going from small towns to big cities. But it’s been really fun because there’s lots of opportunities around,” Cialdea added.

Outside of school activities, Cialdea is “really into fitness and sports.” On the weekends, you can expect her to be at the gym, challenging herself by doing CrossFit, which is a combination of weightlifting, cardio, and gymnastics. She also enjoys rugby and playing with her corgi and two cats.

Just last year, Cialdea was the seventh-grade teacher at Madeline English Middle School, where she primarily taught English and math, in addition to supporting students in science and history. Two years prior, Cialdea worked at a high school where she “had experience as a special education teacher in a variety of subjects such as English, math, social studies, and science.”

This year, what caught her attention at Malden High are the opportunities for students with disabilities here. “I like how many programs are offered here, in terms of different support students might need. Malden seems like the kind of place where everyone can succeed in different ways,” Cialdea expressed.

Alongside student support Jared Greiff and paraprofessional Zahra Farhat, Cialdea is jump-starting her beginning at Malden High by teaching math in her own student group, as well as assisting them in other subjects, such as business. In addition, on Gold days, she will be helping students in art teacher Courtney Gould’s classes. Cialdea is excited for the “opportunity to try out different positions and meet students.”

Outside of her position, she shares a great love for nature, with one of her favorite spots being the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Masters also has a Husky named Sadie, whom she loves taking for walks in Lynn Woods.

One of Masters’ favorite hobbies is playing games that get her mind moving. “Online, The New York Times has these word games I love. I like to play games with my family as well; it doesn’t matter what kind of a game, you’ll always end up having a good laugh.” At this time, Masters is also welcoming her first grandchild.

Among Masters’ admirations, she appreci-

ates how diverse Malden’s youth community mental health programs are.. “The social workers, the guidance counselors, the house principals, the teachers, nurses, they’re incredible. They all have this wealth of knowledge that I can use to help students, which is fabulous,” Masters noted. With other various community resources like the Teen Health Center and the SAFE program in Brunelli, Masters added that her access to these programs allows her to help students even more.

She also encourages students to reach out when needed, whether that’s staying a bit longer in her room for extra help, or involving parents



Maureen Masters posing for a picture next to a gumball machine filled with skittles. RIN CLOUGH

and helping them understand how they can support their child while also respecting a student’s confidentiality.

Masters’ room is located on J370, near the Boyle-Jenkins bridge. With how much enthusiasm Masters brings to her

job, why not stop by for a quick chat? We all could use a listening ear from a different perspective.

Behind Teen Daze: Richie Cortese

Hispanic Heritage Month

Priscarla Villefranche
Lead Reporter

For centuries, the Hispanic diaspora has solidified its position as a global powerhouse with its vibrancy, traditions, and cultural impact. From the rise of reggaeton and its distinctive high-energy sound to the revolutions that have reshaped the Americas, Hispanic culture will forever be a hub for excellence.

This year, September 15th marked the beginning of National Hispanic Heritage Month—its 58th year in celebration.

September 15th is particularly significant to the Hispanic community because it marks the anniversaries of independence for countries including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

National Hispanic Heritage Month was first introduced in June 1968 by California Congressman George E. Brown, who pushed to recognize the contributions of the Hispanic community during the Civil Rights Movement.

Before the observance officially became a month, it began as Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968 under the Johnson administration, then was later expanded as a 30-day period from September to October 15th by President Ronald Reagan.

During the 1950s Chicano Movement, the Community Service Organization (CSO) was essential in helping register thousands of Mexican-Americans to vote. As time progressed, activism and protests against Hispanic racism have become more widespread throughout the U.S., empowering all Hispanic identities today.

“Having a month dedicated to recognizing these contributions allows us to continue to celebrate our culture and feel appreciated,” proclaimed junior Johanna Martinez, who is of Salvadoran heritage.

In 2024, the U.S. reached a Hispanic population of 68 million, making up 20% of the general population. Hispanics largely contribute to the cultural and economic growth in the U.S., with more than five million new businesses across the country being Hispanic-owned, creating around 3.9 million new jobs and generating \$800 billion in sales per year.

With the work of the prominent Hispanic population, the U.S. has evolved into a multicultural sphere with a bustling economy and diverse population. So answer this: Who would we, as Americans, be without the Hispanic community?

“It's important that people recognize that we have done a lot for this country as a whole, and our culture is rich and admirable,” concluded Valencia Montoya.



Richie Cortese while drawing his comics, alongside his personal comic. ABYAN ALI

Abyan Ali
Lead Reporter

Among Malden High School, one of the most notable aspiring creatives is teen cartoonist Richie Cortese, known by most as Richie. Cortese is best known for his contributions to The Blue and Gold with his Teen Daze comics, and also for contributing to The Oracle.

However, there is even more about his cartoons you may not be familiar with, as he has been working on them since preschool, being inspired by many talented artists and authors.

First Influences

Cortese was diagnosed with autism and ADHD when he was a child. When he attended preschool, he was already passionate about drawing during arts and crafts time. He loved drawing pictures of himself, “and the drawings would be different topics,” like him as a doctor, superhero, or even a bug.

his stories “have the most whimsy and the most exaggerated characters I’ve seen,” and also took a liking to the book’s humorous style. “Even though I do find potty humor kind of ridiculous, I find it really good in the Captain Underpants series,” Cortese added.

You can see a fair amount of inspiration from Pilkey in his artwork alone, with similar eye styles, expressive characters, and silly sense of humor. Other cartoons Cortese was fascinated by were works on Nickelodeon & Cartoon Network, movies made by Illumination & Warner Bros. Studios, and the Peanuts comic by Charles M. Schultz.

He also mentioned two more authors he was inspired by, which were Dr. Seuss and Mo Williams, known for their young children’s picture books. “They’re examples of making early reading

to make your own book cover.”

The comic centered on the titular character “Super Guy” venturing on typical superhero adventures, inspired directly by Dav Pilkey. He used a lot of elements from the books, such as the Flip-O-Rama pages.

A year later, towards the end of 2020, when he was in 5th grade, he made his own comic series inspired by Peanuts in a comic book-making book, which had miscellaneous gags of characters doing bizarre things.

Both of his early comics, despite being aged and crude, show a genuine, early passion from him. They are full of references to his inspirations, and eventually became a precursor to his later comics.

Cortese also commented on another comic he made around 2019, where he reused the Super Guy character, renamed

whoever drew the best picture would get their art selected for the front cover of the Forestdale School winter contest”, so Cortese got to work, and he ended up winning the contest. One of his rewards was a blue sketchbook.

He also won a participation certificate for an art drawing he submitted to the MWRA (Massachusetts Water Resources Authority), which was an organization dedicated to tracking water quality and systems in Massachusetts. Although he didn’t win, he did make it into the finals, and he was one of 1745 posters submitted.

Work in High School (Teen Daze)

When Cortese started high school, he initially wanted “to be in animation class,” but Malden High did not have any of those. But he was able to join the Animation Club.

One of his teachers, Jessica Depaula, or “Miss Jess” to Richie, “was one of The Blue and Gold editors back in her days in high school.” When she saw Cortese’s work, she recommended he submit it to The Blue and Gold. Cortese took the opportunity, as “it was my chance to show everyone my artwork through the school newspaper.”

In late October 2024, he started the monthly Teen Daze series. These comics were soon “a success with students and teachers,” as they found them hilarious and “wanted to see more of them.” In fact, later that year, “one of them won an NESPA (New England Scholastic Press Association) award” for being the Best Editorial Cartoon.

Cortese was motivated, deciding he “wanted to create more comics for the school newspaper.” Cortese continues to submit Teen Daze comics monthly.

Cortese has also submitted his work to The Oracle for “the same reasons” he created Teen Daze. He remembers looking through “one of

the past Oracles from 2024,” and after seeing a comic, he was inspired to submit his comic to The Oracle. He told Miss Jess, who told him that she “used to make poems for The Oracle, and maybe you should submit work too”.

Characters & World Building

In addition to his comics, Cortese has many characters outside of Teen Daze, each with their own creative personalities and stories.

For instance, he has a dog and cat named “Dig & Casey”, and Cortese described them as his own “Ren & Stimpy,” with Dig being responsible and grumpy while Casey as more energetic, “and like my personality.”

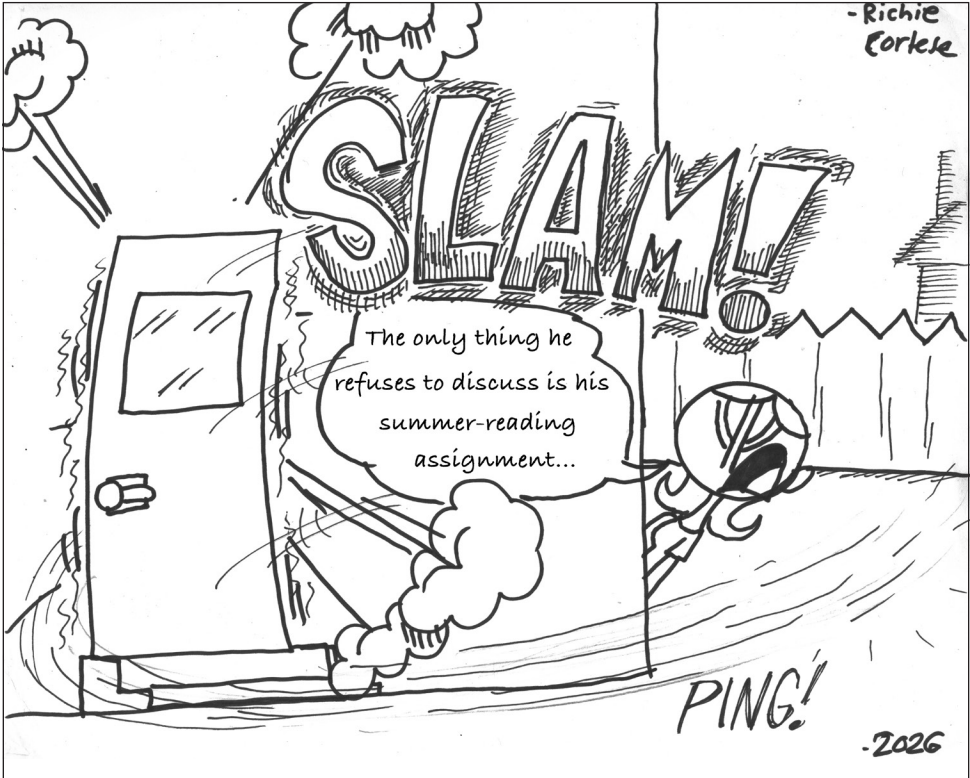
Casey also has a superhero persona, “Cattacker”, a persona which Cortese has filled full sketchbooks detailing stories about him. He inserts a lot of slapstick and superhero actions in his stories. He confesses it can come across as “juvenile humor, but it’s just the stuff I come up with,” and Cortese loves his work.

Final Thoughts

Cortese finished by saying that “in a few years from now,” he hopes to fund an “independent animation studio or a comic studio” and to “become an advocate for creative people with disabilities,” like him.

Cortese has grown vastly as an artist and has been influenced by a lot of sources to make his own work. He used that inspiration to create his own imaginative world. And just because he will be graduating in 2026 does not mean his story is over. If anything, it is just starting.

With dedication to his craft and having support from his family, friends, and the school, Cortese’s story is a great reminder of how far you can come by combining inspiration with passion and commitment.



Teen Daze October Edition. Submitted by Richie Cortese

He later attended Forestdale School, where he started to get into drawing around 2nd grade, when he discovered the Dog Man and Captain Underpants series by Dav Pilkey. The former he had found “from a Scholastic book fair,” and he “fell in love with it.”

Cortese cites Pilkey as one of his main inspirations, describing how

successful,” commented Cortese.

Early Comics

One of Cortese’s first comics he could find was made around 2019, when he was in 4th grade.

“I was on YouTube and was really fascinated with trying to make my own book,” he explained. “So me and my dad went to Michaels, and we got some art supplies of how

Captain Hero. “It was an eight-chapter, homemade comic,” and again, “there were a bunch of Dav Pilkey references.”

Academic Achievements

Around 5th to 8th grade is when Cortese began to receive academic achievements for his work. In the winter of 2020, his teacher “held a drawing contest where

THE LOST TOUR UNPLUGGED



Alexia Lima
Editor-in-Chief

Fans at the main stage barricade passionately singing. Photo taken from @thelosttour on Instagram

Screaming your heart out at a concert as if nobody is watching is a visceral experience connecting fans across different genres. At Phoebe Bridgers’ The Lost Tour, fans were able to be fully immersed in the concert without a single phone in sight.

To many, attending a concert without a phone can seem like an impossible task. In an age where all experiences are expected to be recorded and digitally immortalized, people feel obliged

vulnerability on stage and overall improve the fan experience.

“A lot of people take videos of concerts and never watch them because they like the adrenaline rush. I think restricting phones makes the concert feel more peaceful and allows you to be in the moment. I think it’s genius,” a fan named Kelsey explained.

To achieve this goal, Bridgers implemented Yondr pouches at every stop of her tour, requiring fans to lock away any

first name, said.

The Lost Tour visited TD Garden on October 6th and 7th for two transformative sold-out performances. On opening night, the energy radiating off of fans as they lined up along Causeway Street awaiting entrance to the show was palpable; fans took these last moments of phone freedom to capture pictures and videos of their outfits.

Fans were either clad in hues of aquamarine and alien onesies to follow the celestial theme of the new album, or having paid homage to Bridgers’ previous albums by wearing an infamous skeleton onesie or navy and maroon color combinations.

After scanning their tickets, fans were efficiently led through the Yondr locking stations to part with their screens for the rest of the evening. Inside the venue, fans flocked to the merch and concession stands to complete their purchases before opener Alex G began.

Instead of scrolling pre-show, fans engaged in conversations, sketched the arena, played card games, and ate to pass the time.

“I keep wanting to text my family and friends, but instead I’m talking to new people. This wouldn’t happen if we had our phones,” a fan named Emma noted.

G put on an electrifying performance that displayed the skill of his band on the B stage, a circular platform at the end of the floor section with a strobe-light moon. The main stage housed a large white dome that would be transformed into different sets throughout the show, turning into a UFO, a moon, and a screen for cosmic projections.

Instead of the tradition of swaying along to melancholic songs, waving one’s phone flashlight, many fans brought back the original audience tradition of waving lighters.

Without phones blocking the view of the stage, moments such as these displayed the intimacy and connection between the artist and the audience, no matter where one was sitting in the arena.

During Bridgers’ last song, “Scott Street”, the entire arena waved their arms in synchrony to the

showed that we really are a community; when the lights went on in the arena, you could see

Bridgers brought out her younger brother Jackson Bridgers to join her in singing “I Can’t



Boston fans clad in alien onesies waiting for the show to start. Photo taken from @thelosttour on Instagram

everyone together and singing, and it was really heartwarming.”

While technology can be useful in capturing memories to look back on in the future, fans expressed that they believed they would remember the concert more than they would have if it was captured on video.

Wait” during her first night at TD Garden, and there is no recorded evidence of this duet.

Other fans countered that the absence of phones makes the rarity of special guests feel all the more special, as if the surprise was a gift from Bridgers to them that they don’t have to share with

“The entire concert showed that we really are a community.”

Isabella Pizziferri

to capture memories by filming concerts. Consequently, it has become normalized to watch a concert through your screen instead of putting it away to enjoy the live performance.

The Lost Tour opened on September 14th in Indiana and runs until December 12th, with its final stop in Sweden. Bridgers’ latest studio album Lost Weekend explores her personal grief after the death of her father, leading her to advocate for a strict phone-free concert policy to protect her

electronic devices such as their phones and smart-watches in said pouches. Fans are in possession of their Yondr pouch for the entirety of the concert and are eventually unlocked in specialized areas where staff members are placed throughout each venue.

“I have complete withdrawal anxiety, but it’s also kind of liberating. I’m loathing what I’m missing by not being on my phone, but this is what Phoebe wants,” Janine, a fan who wished to be referred to by her



Fans igniting lighters during “Moon Song”. Photo taken from @thelosttour on Instagram



Fans waving their arms in the air to the rhythm of “Scott Street”. Photo taken from @thelosttour on Instagram

lyrics “Anyway, don’t be a stranger.” After an evening of crying, dancing, and singing side-by-side, the crowd felt connected to each other rather than connected to their screens.

Senior Isabella Pizziferri illustrated the connection built within the audience, explaining how “the entire concert

Negatives of the phone-free experience include payment accessibility for fans, as concert venues normally don’t accept cash and, due to the popularity of tap-to-pay, fans have been forgetting to bring a physical card.

Fans have also been concerned over not being able to record special guests. For example,

the internet.

The Lost Tour’s phone procedure taught audiences that they can enjoy a concert without relying on technology to record their experience. So at your next concert, try putting your phone away until the encore.

Girls' VB
Loss to
Cambridge

Kyle Dang
Editor-in-Chief of
Social Media and Print

On Friday, September 18th, Malden faced their fourth match of the season, holding a 2-1 record. After having a clean sweep against the Chelsea Red Devils, Malden entered the gym that day with newfound confidence, but not without humility.

Facing the Cambridge Rindge & Latin Falcons, they sat at a 3-1 record. The Falcons in particular are a tough opponent for the girls, with junior Setter (S) Jamilah Simbul mentioning how “games against them have always been a challenge for the team.”

Right after school, junior varsity and varsity players headed down to the gym, dividing their hours before the game to warm up and practice their techniques; they had several nets set up and volleyballs soaring through the gym.

Cambridge eventually arrived at 5:00, and with both teams on the court warming up, tension was in the air, and it would only continue to rise from there.

With the JV's game starting and ending in favor of Cambridge at 2-1, high standards were expected from the varsity team to take back the court.

With both teams taking the court, the first set began with great fire from the Falcons. As the scores clashed with one another, Cambridge took the lead, with Malden keeping a close follow as both teams raced to 25. Eventually, Cambridge would win the first match 25-20, but Malden was not far behind.

Senior Setter Ly Nguyen expressed how, despite their loss, “the first set of the game was great,” highlighting how “everyone played as much as they could,” which heightened the spirits and morale of the team.

Nguyen's statement was proven as the second set began; Malden turned the tide around. Coming back from the first set, the second set finished even closer, this time ending at 25-21, with Malden winning the second set.

“Considering that Cambridge is a really good team. We now know that we are capable of playing at their same level,” junior Defense Specialist (DS) Meybelin Guadron explained.

The Tornados and Falcons were tied 1-1, and stress was at an all-time high for players from opposing teams.

As the third set began, Malden's defense began wavering. “Some of our teammates were sick and unable to play; we had to make changes on the spot,” said Junior Captain and Middle Blocker Hadassa Pierre-Rene.

TORNADOS OVERCOME BY TIDE
Malden's Rivalry against Everett Entering Its 133rd Year



Malden defenders tackle #3 on Everett to stop them from scoring. HARMONIE ORTIZ

Aundrea Cifuentes
Senior Lead Reporter

On Friday, October 2nd, Malden's Varsity Football team played against Everett. This rivalry is not like any other. In fact, some claim it may be more intense than the

ing as one of the oldest high school football rivalries in Massachusetts, just four years younger than the rivalry between Medford and Malden. They've had over 129 meetings. Everett leads with 71 wins, while Malden has 51, and they have

pressure Malden, keeping the Tornados defense running around the field for several minutes.

Malden had trouble stopping Everett's sweeps and counters, and by the end of the first quarter, Everett had taken a 7-0 lead, mostly through their

half, making it difficult for either side to maintain consistent drives.

By halftime, Everett had added another touchdown and took a 21-0 lead. Malden's offense had struggled to find its rhythm, while Everett's defense continued to keep the Golden Tornados off the scoreboard.

Coming out of halftime, Malden's defense began to adjust to Everett's offense. Early in the third quarter, Malden made an important defensive play by breaking up an impressive throw from Everett's quarterback.

Throughout the third quarter, Malden started to recognize and counter-attack Everett's offensive plays as the Golden Tornados performed better by preventing big plays. Neither of the teams scored during the third quarter. This led the score to remain at 21-0 heading into the final quarter.

Everett opened the fourth quarter with another touchdown, extending their lead to 28-0. Malden quickly responded to this as senior Akre Akre returned the kickoff for a touchdown, bringing Malden's score to 28-6, after missing their two-point conversion.

Later in the quarter, senior Jemiah Charles made

an impressive catch while fighting through four Everett defenders and still being able to maintain his balance. This play gave Malden the energy they needed to continue fighting despite the score.

Everett added one more touchdown before the end of the game, bringing the final score to 35-6.

Even though Malden was the underdog in the game, Malden did not play to their potential. “The moment got to everyone's head, and the game plan we had wasn't being executed properly,” expressed junior Jamal Hakkaoui.

Malden's defense held Everett off during the final few minutes, preventing the lead from growing any further.

“We just couldn't get it done on offense; we weren't prepared,” said Junior Captain Jayden McGuffie.

Junior Jaiden Gonzalez also looked ahead to the team's next opportunity. “It was a tough loss at home, we're hoping to bounce back with a win over Chelsea.”

Their next game against Chelsea will take place on Friday, October 9th, at Chelsea High School.



Malden Golden Tornados and Everett Crimson Tide set at scrimmage line. HARMONIE ORTIZ

rivalry between Medford and Malden.

Although Malden was unable to come away with the win, the team showed more defensive adjustments as the game went on and continued to show their efforts until the game reached an end. With their 35-6 loss, Malden moves to 2-2 on the season.

The rivalry between Everett and Malden has existed since 1893, stand-

6 ties.

This year's meeting was another chapter in their history. Everett started the game with control after winning the coin toss.

Throughout the first quarter, Malden struggled to keep up with Everett's rushing attacks early on.

Malden called for a timeout midway through the quarter as they tried to regroup defensively, but Everett continued to

after a deep kickoff and put together a promising opening drive. However, Malden was unable to turn the drive into points and eventually punted. On its following possession, Malden fumbled, giving Everett another opportunity to attack.

Everett took advantage of the turnover and continued to control the game offensively. Both teams faced about 15 penalties throughout the first

The set would end with a significant gap—with the Falcons taking 25 points, as the Tornados were left at 13.

Despite their previous match, hope was not lost for Malden. The game could go one of two ways: either Malden ties up the score, or Cambridge wins the next set, and ultimately, the game.

“Cambridge is a big game since we are only able to play them once each year instead of twice,” said Rene, who continued: “I knew that it was not going to be an easy game.”

Malden, with hopes of coming back from their last set, persisted in their efforts, playing defensively as much as possible while balancing offensive

strikes from Cambridge. Despite their attempts, Cambridge ended up winning the game, ending the fourth set 25-16.

However, not all was lost for the team. Many players agreed that this loss would not define their season and was more of a learning opportunity for everyone.

They highlighted better communication amongst one another, reducing anxiety while giving everyone further affirmations, and supporting each other in learning new skills and positions.

“The team will continue to fight to show that this loss doesn't mean anything. We will continue to fight for more victories for the rest of the season,” Nguyen concluded.



#11 Senior Captain and Setter Aaliyah Ferreira mid-serving the volleyball over the court; #16 Junior Captain and Middle Blocker Hadassa Pierre-Rene and #3 sophomore Outside Hitter/Defense Specialist Sabrine Harzaguia attempting to block the ball from crossing the net. YEN NGUYEN

CHEER TEAM “STUNTS” INTO SEASON



Malden’s Cheerleading team clapping their hands together while collectively performing a cheer routine. MALIYA KAZADI

Evelyn Ruan
Editor-in-Chief of Web
and Mobile

Kicking off Malden’s first football game against Lynn Tech, Malden’s cheer team, with their vibrant cheers and remarkable stunts, played a massive role in igniting the stadium’s school spirit, keeping the crowds excited for the entirety of the game and following the football team’s first win of the season.

Head Coach Brianna Silva-Couture and Assistant Coach Bianca Scola revealed this fall season’s captains to be seniors Reva Upadhayay, Gloria Alexis, Aundrea Cifuentes who is a Senior Lead Reporter for The Blue and Gold, and Alexia Lima, an Editor-in-Chief of The Blue and Gold, to lead the team.

Upadhayay added that she enjoys being captain and “loves being able to be there for the girls, and help the coaches out,” noting how they make “a great team.” Like fellow captain Upadhayay, Alexis “wants to be a

great role model for the underclassmen and show them what cheering is all about.”

At the start of the game, the cheer team held up a large banner, welcoming the football team as they ran through the paper, making a grand entrance to show off to the crowd. Throughout the rest of the game, the team cheered and hyped up both the football players and the people in the stands, repeatedly shifting the cheers from offensive or defensive to match which football team had the ball. Additionally, they did stunts, such as having three girls lift up a flyer every time there was a timeout being called.

After the first half ended, the cheer team ran to the center of the field to do their halftime performance. As soon as the speaker blasted the music, they started with six stunt groups and continued with a dance routine, including a round-off back-tuck done by junior Hannah Cogswell and freshman Sofia Lamara,

to entertain the crowd while the football team went inside the locker rooms to take a break and recap the first half.

With the music and timer ending, the cheer team waved their poms in the air towards the crowd and made their way back to the sidelines to cheer for the rest of the game.

Coach Silva-Couture mentioned that since it was the first game, the team’s performance had a “rocky start,” but they eventually managed to pull through. Senior captain Alexis also mentioned how the team and herself could’ve done better. “We were working as a team to improve and be more confident.”

Senior Scarlet De Los Santos Feliz is a returning member for her second year. She shared how “it feels amazing to be a returning member” and wanted to apply everything she learned from last season to improve and “teach the new members of the team” how they do things so that they can all collaborate. She hopes to bring the same energy

back from last year, “or make it even better so that we can all have fun and enjoy every minute of it.”

De Los Santos Feliz looks forward to improving her stunts and is also excited for the pep rally, mentioning “we have so much fun practicing our routines and performing it.”

The team also brought in a lot of new members, with coach Scola mentioning how she “hopes that captains and returning members of the team can connect with new members through the love of what we’re doing and build a strong chemistry to ensure a season of success.”

Upadhayay also highlighted how she wants the new members “to have fun and be able to look back at us when they potentially come into our shoes their senior year,” and be able to reference how they did things.

Coach Silva-Couture highlighted how the cheer team is “the enter-

tainment for the crowds and the backbone of support for the football team.”

Junior Arantza Colina Perez, who is new to the team, decided to try out because her friends convinced her to. Colina-Perez added, “I was never expect-



Sophomore Anna Batres and freshman Leyah Rua. MALIYA KAZADI

ing to do cheer. It was a last-minute decision, and it was just like the best decision I could make.” Even with little experience, she “always had

Continued on page 12

Malden Golf Competes against Lynn Classical

Antoine Alce
Lead Reporter

With returning and new players, Malden started their season opener at the Gannon Municipal Golf Course in Lynn. As both Malden and Lynn Classical arrived at the golf course, they unpacked their golf equipment and began practicing their putting.

Starting at the first tee, four groups of players walked up to commence the match. The first group of golfers continued to the area set up with tee markers. All the golfers began swinging their drivers.

“Some people say golf’s not a workout, but when you’re trying to carry a 45-pound-bag of clubs up a steep hill, it’s a little workout,” noted Senior Captain Joshua Mini.

With the first two groups of golfers moving on to the second tee, junior Kyle Nickerson delivered a clean drive into the fairway. “I feel like we are going to have a good game; I went out there yesterday, and I did pretty good,” Nickerson added.

As the four groups of golfers reached the end of their match, Lynn Classical took the lead, giving Lynn Classical the upper hand over Malden.

With the match concluded, both Malden and Lynn Classical entered the club house as they were treated to a glass of cola and sat down. The teams complimented each other’s skills and what they are able to improve.

Although Malden fell short by the end, they still kept showing tremendous effort and good sportsmanship, as they await their next match against Everett.



Boys’ Soccer posing for a team picture. YEN NGUYEN

BOYS’ SOCCER RECORD

9-4-2

*As of October 23rd

*Congratulations to Boys’ Soccer for qualifying for States!



Girls’ Soccer in a huddle for a strategic talk. YEN NGUYEN

GIRLS’ SOCCER RECORD

7-6-2

*As of October 20th



Malden Cheer
Livens Up
Friday Night
Lights

Continued from page 11

kind of admiration for cheerleaders as a little girl.”

“I really like doing cheer. I feel like I’ve made a lot of unexpected friendships with people, and it’s been just so fun to be a part of the team,” Colina Perez mentioned. Although sophomore Anna Batres is not new to doing cheer, as she has been doing since seventh grade, she is new to Malden High’s cheer team. “I decided to try out for the Malden cheer team because I like the idea of discipline and just coming together as a team and cheering people on.” Batres also commented that she loves the work ethic of being in cheer and “the community it brings.”

Batres added, “I love being a new member on the cheer team. I love getting to know all the people and just getting a sense of how different everybody is and the love and community that they already had before I arrived.”

There have been many good things happening, especially with the team making new friendships and laughing with each other during practices. However, there are also many hardships. Being a new member, Colina Perez was frustrated with herself about the stunt formations and getting herself to be sharp with everything. “But overall, there’s been more good than bad during practices or games,” emphasized Colina Perez.

For the rest of the season, “my personal goals are just improving the stunts and the things that I work towards, having a good friendship with all the girls on the team, and having a fun time cheering the guys on. Just making the best of every experience that I get,” said Batres.

Likewise, Colina Perez added that “my personal goals are to really nail down my stunts and really get them good. I feel like working with my stunt group has been very helpful. We’re all learning together as we’re going through the season.”

As the cheer team soon enters the middle of the season, they hope to work together to improve and make a lasting impact by “cheerleading to the fullest,” concluded Coach Silva-Couture.



GOLF
“PUTTS”
LYNN
ENGLISH IN
PLACE WITH
VICTORY

Senior Joshua Mini drives the ball forward at the last course of the match. HARMONIE ORTIZ

Harmonie Ortiz
Lead Reporter

On October 5th, the co-ed Malden-Revere golf team faced the Lynn English Bulldogs at Kelly Green Golf Course in Nahant. The match remained close, but resulted in Malden’s team taking home the victory with a 37-35 win.

The Kelly Green Golf Course can get very windy and cause trouble for some players during their swings and putts. Prior to the match, the players practiced in the windy weather to prepare themselves by taking practice swings.

At the start of the match, both Malden-Revere and the Bulldogs separated into four groups containing four players each; two groups of Malden-Revere players and two of Lynn English players.

The first group was composed of senior Jacob Simonelli from Revere High and Senior Captain Thomas “Tommy” Cronin from Malden High,

showcasing their talents cultivated through the years, pulling multiple victories from the matches.

The group to go after them was senior Joshua Mini and Senior Revere Captain George. These two groups both won the majority of their holes and contributed massively to the total score.

As both groups of Malden-Revere players won the majority of holes, racking up points, the stakes continued to rise.

Facing tough competition, Lynn English took the lead in the third group and gained most of the points for their team.

In the third group were junior Kyle Nickerson and another Revere player, where they battled and came close in multiple matches but sadly fell behind. “The wind made it harder to hit the ball in the direction I wanted,” claimed Nickerson.

This sport may not seem hard, but it is technical and arguably “one of the hardest sports,” asserted Head Coach Richard Malatesta.

With the even score from the matches in the last and fourth group, junior Sophie Tran and sophomore Vanessa Huang brought home the win for Malden High.

“The girls are ultimately one of the main reasons we won today,” praised Malatesta. The match ultimately ended in the defeat of Lynn English. The talent of Malden and Revere’s team to win in a difficult situation brought hope to the team and proved that focus and determination can win a game.



Senior Captain Thomas Cronin adjusting the golf ball and junior Kyle Nickerson swinging his club. HARMONIE ORTIZ



Senior Joshua Mini swings mid-motion as he swings his club. HARMONIE ORTIZ



Junior Sophie Tran sets up in her stance while assistant coach Mark Gagnon helps her. HARMONIE ORTIZ



Field Hockey team posing for group picture. ANTOINE ALCE

FIELD
HOCKEY
RECORD

0-14

*As of October 26th



Thomas Cronin mid-swing. HARMONIE ORTIZ

GOLF
RECORD

2-8

*As of October 13th

GIRLS' SOCCER DEFEATED BY O'BRYANT



Malden Defenders seniors #9 Nyla Pierre, #15 Sofia Vargas, and junior #11 Lyra Heining looking at the ball as it gets passed across the field. YEN NGUYEN

Chelmie Hyppolite
Editor-in-Chief

Last season, the Malden Girls' Soccer team reached an impressive winning record and progressed into the first round of States—for their first time in years. With the start of the 2026 season, the team had undergone significant changes, with many of their key players graduating, such as their center midfielders and primary goal scorer, Mercedes Costa. Under the leadership of Senior Captains Amelia Berliner and Sofia Vargas this season, the team has had to make up for the absence of last year's key players through the addition of a new center midfielder and new varsity players. "We added a lot of new girls to the varsity

team, so we aren't fully used to each other's playing styles yet," explained Vargas. For Berliner in particular, the loss and addition of girls on their team has resulted in her position being moved from center-back to now center midfield—a position that she is still trying her best to adapt to. In their first home game of the season, the team was met with an unfortunate 5-2 loss against O'Bryant. Berliner described the match against O'Bryant as disappointing. Despite this, the team is determined to demonstrate their improvement throughout the rest of the season. As soon as the match started, the Tornados recognized that this would be a difficult match as O'Bryant kept possession

of the ball for the majority of the first half. Malden's defense was also challenged tremendously as they tried their best to block O'Bryant's attempts at goals. Though Malden's goalie, sophomore Sofia Leno, was able to save a few of O'Bryant's swift attempts to score, Malden's "communication was a little off this game," noted Vargas, which resulted in the first half ending 2-0 in favor of O'Bryant. Despite the discouraging first half, the Tornados didn't lose their motivation. With the start of the second half, O'Bryant continued to showcase their strong offense through another goal, bringing the score to 3-0. Yet, Malden demonstrated their determina-

tion as they began to play more offensively rather than defensively; with players such as Berliner and sophomore Khadijah Diagne making offensive plays and scoring attempts, Malden began to find their rhythm. Soon, with their newfound momentum, Diagne was able to dribble the ball past O'Bryant defenders and put Malden on the scoreboard, 3-1. This Malden momentum sparked intensity throughout the rest of the match as players from both teams began playing more physically. This intensity saw O'Bryant score another goal, which was soon followed by Berliner's long goal after the Tornados managed to steal the ball—resulting in a 4-2 score with Malden fol-

lowing. As the match neared its end, Leno managed to continue to block many of O'Bryant's attempts to score, allowing Malden to continue their offensive plays. Yet, in the last minutes of the match, O'Bryant scored the final goal, ending the match with 5-2 in favor of O'Bryant. With a current season record of 2-0-5, the team plans on working on their chemistry with hopes of seeing progress. As most of their earlier matches of the season were against tougher teams, the Tornados are determined to get some wins against other teams. "We are a little slow to find our footing this year, but I'm sure once the team gets used to playing with each other, we will be much stronger," Berliner concluded.

MHS Cross
Country
Home
Opener

Emilly Weihrauch
Editor-in-Chief of Web
and Mobile

As autumn creeps in, Malden High's fall sports have begun to get situated into their routines of long practices and game days. The Cross Country team had their first home meet of the season on September 23rd, against Lynn English which resulted in wins for both the boys and the girls. The meet served as a rebound for the team after their previous meet the week prior against Chelsea, which ended in a loss for the boys but a win for the girls cohort. The 2.8-mile race took place at Pine Banks, where those present could bask in optimal weather under a clear sky on a Wednesday afternoon. This year, the team saw returning captains, as well as new ones, consisting of seniors Ian Ian Ho, Keira Celicourt, Yingyan Xia, and juniors Dylan Huang, Evan Souders, and Andrew Souders. With any new season, the departure of graduated seniors and the invitation of new members of the team invite opportunities for the team to bond, rebuild, and establish their community every fall. Captain Ho expressed that this season is seeing an improvement in comparison to last year's "in terms of team bonding and having a good community." Ho also elaborated by explaining that she feels that "a lot more people are engaged in it, and they're willing to kind of be more like a family." Aside from social goals, many players on the team share the sentiment that they hold goals to improve their times and performances as runners. Senior Angela Lam, who has been part of the team since her sophomore year, expressed that her biggest goal is to get "at least a 24-minute time," considering it is her final year, stating she would like to "end on a good note." The positivity of the team's good performance thus far in the season, along with the great weather, set the stage for a great turnout in the race for Malden. The incentive to continue this season's win record and give their all before it ends is prominent among the runners. The cross country team joined a



Sophomore Midfielder #12 Khadijah Diagne chasing after as O'Bryant Tigers surround her, attempting to defend against her advances. YEN NGUYEN



Senior Captain #15 Sofia Vargas in motion, preparing to kick the ball across the field after isolating it from an O'Bryant Tiger. YEN NGUYEN

Cross Country Captains

Photos by EMILLY WEIHRAUCH



Continued on
page 16

Senior
Angela Lam running

Malden
Field Hockey
Faces Bishop
Fenwick

Kyle Dang
Editor-in-Chief of
Social Media and Print

Field hockey is a game best known for its quick-paced matches of batting a hooked stick against a ball on grass or turf. The local Malden team is fortunate to have a group so diverse and welcoming, consisting of a co-ed team for all genders, as well as being open to interested seventh and eighth graders.

Last year, Malden High School’s Field Hockey team faced difficulty with repopulating the team after the loss of many seniors and teammates overall, all while integrating new teammates. This put them in a particularly rough spot, with a 1-15-0 record. In their upcoming 2026-2027 season, the team hopes to come back from their defeats.

Senior Captain Yawen Zuo wants to initiate the revolution for the new, young team. “My future goals for the rest of the season are to keep improving, along with the rest of the team. I want to see a win this year, maybe a chance at the GBL championship again as we work towards our goals,” she declared.

However, Zuo is not the only captain and won’t be alone on this mission, as she is accompanied by seniors Cathen Fontanilla, Frankie Marengi-Pellino, and Junior Captain Anna Bui, who is also the Head of Sports for The Blue and Gold.

This year, the team’s home opener took place on September 14th at Pine Banks, additionally marking their first game against Bishop Fenwick, who is known for being highly competitive and, overall, a threat.

The first quarter ended in a huge jump for Bishop Fenwick, beginning at a score of 5-0. By the second quarter, Bishop Fenwick would score one more point, leaving Malden down by 6-0. Following the third quarter, the scores remained stagnant, which displayed a better defense and left Malden with hopes of scoring. However, despite the efforts of the Tornados, the fourth quarter, and ultimately, the match, would end in a loss of 8-0.

With a farewell to their opponents, both teams formed a line, running down and clapping the opposing team’s members while applauding “good game,” down the line.

“Bishop Fenwick played a really good game; we did our best. We came out, we played, so I’m really proud of my team. I don’t care if we lost,” senior Karlens Petion reflected. Similarly, senior Kamani Gomes

MALDEN “SETS” SEASON WITH A WIN



Girls’ Volleyball teams going down a line and high-fiving the hands of their opponent after winning the match. FATIMA HUSAIN

Fatima Husain
Managing Editor

In the blink of an eye, summer break has ended, and back-to-school for the 2026-2027 school year is in session. The semester welcomes the start of Malden High School’s fall sports, including girls’ volleyball.

On September 8, the Girls’ Volleyball team marked the start of a successful season with a 3-0 home opener win against the East Boston Jets—identical to last year’s home opener.

Dan Jurkowski, who has been coaching volleyball for eleven years, also organizes summer volleyball in the Finn Gym for incoming freshmen and returning players to practice and hone their skills. These summer practices allow the team to bond and prepare by the start of the season.

Malden and East Boston’s first set began with junior defense specialist Alexis Lee serving the ball. In no time, Malden gained a lead with 3 aces bringing the score to 7-4. The team’s energy was palpable, and each point or mistake was celebrated with enthusiasm, maintaining positivity.

“The chemistry of the team, whether we were on court or on the bench, remained the same—everyone was very supportive,” shared junior defense specialist Meybelin Guadron.

Senior Captain and outside hitter Sherley Jeune and senior outside

hitter Maliya Kazadi, also a Lead Reporter for The Blue and Gold, showed their hand-eye coordination with strong hits and spikes, pushing the score to 16-8. Senior Captain Aaliyah Ferreira’s adept setting made these hits possible by skillfully angling the ball to teammates wherever needed. As a result, Malden won the set 25-12.

Despite breezing through the set, libero Xiaohui Li remarked not to “play down to the opponents’ level” even if it is an easily beatable team. “We still need to play our best,” she emphasized.

In the second set, East Boston took the lead with 3-1; however, Malden caught up with Junior Captain and middle blocker Hadassa Pierre-Rene’s unexpected tip, changing the score to 5-3.

From then on, the Tornados did not let go of their lead, rapidly increasing the point gap. Multiple points were earned through aces, highlighting East Boston’s weakness. However, Malden’s serving still needed work, due to several out balls and balls hitting the net.

“When we play teams that are stronger in our league, we are going to need to serve to score. Also, our blocking will have to continue to get better as we play teams that have more dynamic swinging,” explained Jurkowski.

Pierre-Rene stated, “Seeing as it was our first game of the season, there were definitely some

nerves, but I know once we get into a rhythm our serves could bring us a lot of points.”

Aces from Pierre-Rene and Guadron, and spikes from Jeune, Kazadi, and Sabrine Harzaguia widened the difference to 17-10. Each player was quick on their feet, moving in coordination with the ball, ready to receive, set, or hit. Their sharp and strategic performance won them the second set,

vious sets, the Tornados wasted no time asserting their dominance on the court. Lee, Li, and senior defense specialist Raquel Ferreira showcased sharp reflexes and ball control, turning difficult serves and spikes from the Jets into clean passes for the setter. Their coordination kept Malden’s rhythm steady and allowed the offense to strike quickly. The Tornados led 2-1, which progressed to 8-2.

energy what it is now.”

Ultimately, the third and final set was won by the Tornados, 25-12, bringing the final score to 3-0. An opening win sets the tone for the rest of the season because it shows the team’s preparation paid off. It also gives players confidence, which helps them settle into their roles.

The team’s goals for this season are to make the year memorable for



The team celebrating earning a point when junior captain Hadassa Pierre-Rene #16 blocked an incoming hit from East Boston. FATIMA HUSAIN

25-13.

Jurkowski emphasized the importance of players having a “volleyball IQ,” claiming it helps the girls understand what’s happening, where they’re supposed to be, and what the other team is trying to do. “Even if our physical skills are still improving in certain areas, having that volleyball IQ really helps us,” he underscored.

As in the pre-

East Boston struggled to regain momentum as Malden’s defense held firm and their communication remained strong.

Junior defense specialist Vanessa Pham described the team bond as “amazing” and feels close to the players, making “every practice an enjoyable environment.” She continued, “Each girl is incredible and unique in their own way, making the team’s

the graduating seniors, win as many games as possible, and make it to States and GBL. “Our top priority always is to have fun and, of course, win. I want this year to be as memorable as possible, especially considering it’s my last year,” expressed Raquel Ferreira.

“We want to come out of every game with our heads held high, knowing we gave 110%,” concluded Pierre-Rene.

stated that “they’re one of the top teams in the state, and we stood our ground,” facing the loss with positivity, acknowledging their triumph in doing their best.

Although positive vibes radiated from many players, Zuo stated she felt “disappointed about losing,” but knew the game was a learning moment for all players. She hopes that as the season continues, the team will advance their skills, build momentum for further games, and hone in on specific roles.

With their long-term

goals in mind, the team’s current goals are to “improve on positioning and communication,” to be “confident in making moves,” and to prop-

erly integrate newer players into the team, Zuo expressed.

With

clear goals set for the rest of the autumn, the Malden Field Hockey team is determined to

fight for a better season, disallowing one setback from defining their season’s career.



Seniors Krystalyn Vo, Karlens Petion, and Kamani Gomes posing for a picture. KEVIN PRUM

BOYS’ SOCCER “KICKS OFF” TO GREAT START



Malden circling up to have a pep talk, hyping each other up for the second quarter. Wender De Abreu Moura making a powerful kick to get the ball towards the other half of the field. YEN NGUYEN

Continued from front page

with their current 4-0 winning streak. Massachusetts Sports storyteller and photographer Matt Noonan, who carries more than 10,000 followers on Instagram, has named the Malden Boys’ soccer team as one of the top ten MIAA Boys’ Soccer teams to watch. In his caption, Noonan urged others not to overlook them.

Led by Senior Captains Juan Caballero, Abdul Kalefa, and Junior Captain Adam Namir, the team expressed their mindset, with senior Iyad Doukkali acknowledging their good start to the season but reminding himself that “the job’s not finished, and we have to keep pushing.” “We want to be undefeated, so we’re going to keep winning,” senior Hassan Freeman expressed with adamancy.

For Caballero, being captain has changed his mindset tremendously. “Being captain has made me more mature. I used to argue with the other teams, but now I can’t since I’m supposed to be leading the team through

good examples,” he explained.

Caballero’s hard work has also been showcased in the Boston Globe, with him being named one of the Players of the Week for September 7-13.

In a scrimmage against Northeast Metro Tech, the Malden Boys’ soccer team demonstrated their determination with a 3-1 win, and continued the effort with their first official win of the season against Malden Catholic.

This year was also marked by the first time in eight years the Malden Boys’ soccer team has played the Lancers. This was the result of both the girls’ and boys’ soccer leagues shifting to only playing one match against each team for league standings. This shift “allows us to get more non-league games on our schedule,” Smith detailed, as he added that the team’s upcoming match was against Woburn, a team they have never played before.

As soon as the match against the Lancers began, onlookers could quickly recognize how intense this match would be. Various players on

both teams demonstrated their physicality—not afraid of using their bodies to their advantage. Luckily for Malden, they were able to control possession of the ball, allowing them to get two goals early on in the first half: one by Caballero and the other by Kalefa.

Smith explained that these early goals “made it easier to control the game as it went on.” Yet, the Lancers showed no signs of slowing down as they continued their attempts to get a goal; however, Malden’s goalie Wender De Abreu Moura was not afraid to throw himself to catch the ball. Malden displayed their organized defense several times as junior Carlos Coimbra caused a player to kick the ball out of bounds, Caballero intercepted multiple Lancer passes, and senior Mogos Ghile blocked a Lancer pass.

As the first half neared its end, the physicality did not. The referee’s whistles were often blown as players began to pull one another’s shirts, and sliding for the ball became more frequent. It was quite clear that both

teams had become much more aggressive as the crowd of both Malden High students and Malden Catholic

parents became immersed in the match.

The intensity carried on to the second half as the Lancers fouled and drew a yellow card due to their reaction to the foul card—increasing the intensity and tension even more. Despite the pressure, the Lancers managed to stay determined, scoring their first goal, causing the score to be 2-1 in favor of the Tornados.

Kalefa expressed that his only regret of the match was that they allowed the Lancers to score. The Lancers’ scoring ignited the Tornados as Freeman stole the ball, leading to two attempts at a goal from the Tornados. The match continued to get more aggressive as players from both teams continued to foul by grabbing shirts and pushing. In the midst of the aggressiveness,

junior Giuseppe Vargas was able to swiftly score a goal through the Malden Catholic defense, bringing the score to 3-1.

The goal made by Vargas only set the Lancers further ablaze. The Lancers attempted three goals, two of which were back-to-back, and one of which was very close. Yet, Moura was not distracted in the slightest, saving the ball all three times. This allowed the Tornados to advance the ball up, allowing Caballero to score the fourth goal, ending the match 4-1.

This win displayed the Tornados’ amazing teamwork and communication as they gained praise from many for their smooth passes.

With a current season record of 4-0-1, the Malden Boys’ soccer team looks forward to facing some of their known rivals such as Everett while continuing to demonstrate their improvement as the season advances.

Boys’ Soccer Faces Loss 2-0 against Everett

Victoria Domiciano
Senior Lead Reporter

The Malden High Boys’ Varsity Soccer team suffered their first loss of the season on September 17th, falling 2-0 to rival Everett at Pine Banks.

The Tornados entered the matchup with a 4-0 record after starting the season with wins over Northeast Metro RVT, Malden Catholic, Lynn English, and Somerville just two days before facing Everett. The team had built early momentum heading into the matchup, which made the loss a tough result for Malden.

The matchup against Everett brought a different level of intensity, as it was “a hard and physical game,” Senior Captain and midfielder Abdulmohaimem Kalefa described. The players were familiar with one another, adding extra competitiveness to the game. The tension in the air was noticeable, as both teams battled for possession and tried to create opportunities in the attacking half.

Malden worked to stay organized defensively while looking for chances to move the ball forward. The Tornados continued to compete throughout the game, but Everett was able to capitalize on its opportunities.

“Our team is like a family; it is our second family to us. We motivate each other through our ups and downs, and we stay together as a team throughout everything,” Junior Captain Adam Namir and midfielder expressed.

For Malden, the loss to Everett was a setback, but it was only one game in a long season. “If we had handled our emotions better, we would’ve played better,” reflected Senior Captain and midfielder Juan Caballero.

With the majority of the season still ahead, the Tornados have plenty of opportunities to continue to build up and compete for wins. Despite their mistakes, “We still motivated each other throughout the game,” Caballero added.

Although Malden left Pine Banks without a victory, the team’s 4-0 start conveyed the potential the team has already developed.

The Tornados’ ability to stay motivated after the loss will be important as they continue through the season. “Both the team and I will use this game for motivation this season,” Caballero said.

Looking ahead, the Tornados are already anticipating their next matchup with Everett, “ready to get [their] get back.”



Malden’s Cross Country team. Photo submitted by Rajul Gautam

CROSS COUNTRY RECORDS

BOYS: 5-2

GIRLS: 6-1

*As of October 21st

GIRLS’ VOLLEYBALL RECORD

12-6

*As of October 26th

*Congratulations to Girls’ Volleyball for making it to States!



Girls’ Volleyball team in a huddle. HARMONIE ORTIZ

FOOTBALL
RECORDS

5-2

To read more articles
on the football team,
visit our website:
maldenblueandgold.com

Malden XC Prevails against Lynn English

Continued from page 13

group huddle with coach Michael Nicholson for a final pep talk before lining up for the race. As the team lined up in the western corner of the rugby field, they prepared physically and mentally for the countdown to begin.

Runners at Pine Banks followed a series of loops for their race; starting around a baseball and soccer field, leading to a hill for the first loop, finishing the field loops and entering a forest area right before continuing to the hill for the second, then they completed the race, finishing a few yards down from the start, exiting the hilly area.

From the opening stretch, Malden maintained a strong pace, taking the lead and keeping a large, visible gap between them and Lynn English’s runners. To qualify for a team’s win, the majority of the five finishers of each respective gender must win. In this case, the first five male runners were all from Malden, and three out of the five first female finishers were from Malden.

Junior runner Antoine Alce, who is also a Lead Reporter for The Blue and Gold, and Junior Captain Evan Souders were neck and neck for the race, fighting for first place in the final stretch, attempting to out-sprint each other for the title. Alce led the team to the finish line, taking first place overall with a time of 19:04, while Evan Souders finished two seconds later.

Following not far behind was Junior Captain Andrew Souders, who had a time of 19:44, junior Kim Zeng with a time of 19:55, and Junior Captain Huang with a time of 20:13.

Captain Celicourt took first place for the girls’ cohort by finishing in a time of 24:26. Senior Lam and Captain Xia took second and third place for girls with times of 25:22 and 25:40.

As the final runners and rest of the team crossed the finish line, the team celebrated its first home victory of the season. With this home opener now in the books, the runners can now focus on the meets to come and carry that positive momentum of the start of the season forward.

Junior Satvinder Sidhu expressed that this season has been “better than last year” in the sense that he is “much more involved with the team, which allows all of us to push each other to our best selves.”

MALDEN HIGH FOOTBALL BEATS LYNN TECH

Malden Football Wins 26-20 against Lynn Tech in Season Opener



Malden Tornados facing off against Lynn Tech Tigers at the line of scrimmage for the football. MALIYA KAZADI

Harmonie Ortiz
Lead Reporter

On September 11th, Malden High went head-to-head against Lynn Tech for their season opener. In a 26-20 win for the Tornados, this game showcased the football team’s skills and the work they put in before the season. During the game, senior James Powers had hoped to shine a light on his name, and he did. The Boston Globe highlighted Powers and senior Jemiah Charles as players of the week and junior Captain Jayden McGuffie as a player to watch.

Malden started strong with McGuffie leaping over the Lynn Tech players into the end zone to score the first touchdown of the game. Malden went for the additional two points, but was shut down by Lynn Tech’s defense. Possession was then returned to Malden when senior Joshua Bly intercepted the ball. This turnover started the intense pressure against Lynn Tech’s offense. Juniors Ryann Vieira and

Jaiden Gonzalez and Bly all assisted in forming the wall created by Malden’s defense.

On Malden’s second possession, Powers threw a deep ball that Charles caught for a touchdown. The lead encouraged the players to perform their best and maintain good morale. With one final chance before the first half ended, Lynn Tech attempted to move the ball and score a touchdown. Gonzalez, before the clock ran out, intercepted the ball. Before Malden had another chance to score, the first half ended at 12-0 in favor of the Tornados.

The players went into the locker room cheering and praising each other for a good first half. During halftime, Malden’s cheer team came out and performed, holding the crowd’s attention.

After halftime ended, the boys came out yelling and waving to the crowd, ready to start the second half. “We were confident, and we knew that, overall, it was our game,” expressed junior Nathan

Schonton.

Malden began the kickoff, but Lynn Tech caught the ball and ran with it—not making it very far, with Bly tackling the player. Malden kept up this defense and eventually turned the ball over.

Powers and Charles were ready to score again. After being pushed back some yards, Coach Witche Exilhomme called out a play where Powers gave a handoff to Charles for the touchdown. This riled up the viewers in the stands and the players.

The 18-0 gap put Lynn Tech in a bad position. With new ambition to win, Lynn Tech scored the next touchdown, cutting the 18-0 deficit to 18-6. After this touchdown, they attempted to get the two-point conversion but were unable to.

Malden did not want to lose the gap that they had worked for. Hard fights on defense made them tired, but perseverance kept them going. Eventually, the ball came back to Malden’s hands again. Charles scored

the first touchdown of the fourth quarter after a slow third quarter. Malden went for another two-point conversion, and the crowd saw an amazing hurdle over Lynn Tech’s defense from McGuffie, successfully gaining the extra two points, which left jaws dropped and fans excited. The score was 26-6 with fans on the edge of their seats.

Lynn Tech responded to this play with a touchdown. The tired or injured defenders created an unstable defense, and after the turnover from Malden, Lynn Tech was able to score another touchdown, closing the gap. The score became 26-20 after the extra point, with Malden still in the

lead. Malden went on offense for the last time and put pressure on their opponent. This resulted in Lynn using their last timeout and being forced to forfeit.

The crowd cheered as the game was brought to an end. This home opening 26-20 win for the Tornados proved them to be a force to reckon with. “We’re

strong, and we all have high expectations of what we’re going to do. We come together as a team. We’re brothers, and we’re ready,” concluded Schonton



Junior WR & CB Nathan Schonton

Malden’s Girls’ Flag Football

Israa Howard

Lead Reporter

The Malden High School Girls’ Flag Football team is back for the 2026-2027 season and is already preparing for success from their off-season training with other teams, Open Runs, and practices.

On Sunday, September 20th, the Pioneer Charter School of Science, Bishop Fenwick, Excel Academy, St. Mary’s, and Peabody High School’s Flag Football teams joined the third week of open practices.

The morning began with each team in their respective parts of the field warming up by stretching and doing footwork drills.

As Malden waited for the other schools, they started with passing drills along the field in pairs.

After that, the scrimmages began. Malden faced the Excel Wolves first, where Malden

strengthened their defense and got into the feel of a real game before the season started again.

After all the schools scrimmaged against each other, Malden coach Danny Sullivan brought everyone to the center of the field for a photo and team huddle to end the third week of Open Runs.

The overall goal of this collaborative effort is to persuade the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) to consider Flag Football a varsity sport and also to have it gain more recognition in general. Coach Sullivan claimed that Girls’ Flag Football is “blowing up,” so the Open Runs are dedicated to sharpening their skills in time for the spring.

Junior Anna Desrosiers, who desires to play flag football in college, hopes to gain “more



Junior Mirka Kovacevic-Marinkovic #12 about to throw the football before opponent takes the flag. ISRAA HOWARD

recognition” and to see outside coaches come watch her and her teammates play in these Open Runs and during the season as well.

In 2025, the MIAA voted against instating the sport, but groups like the Patriots Foundation created clubs to expand the sport’s popularity.

Coach Sullivan shared that the Open Runs positively changed into a “small network” of players that are “sending a

message to the powers that be.”

Flag football has only started last year for Malden, but since it began, the team has made various accomplishments. In just their first season, they qualified for the Massachusetts State Tournament.

More recently, senior Andriana “Ani” Rangel, sophomore Kaela Vick, and juniors Nyla Ligon-Chambers, Mirka Kovacevic-Marinkovic,

Desrosiers, and Harmonie Ortiz, also a Lead Reporter for The Blue and Gold, were invited to the Patriots’ High School Girls’ Flag Football showcase.

Though the season is months away, these Open Runs are more than preparation; they’re also advocating for official recognition. As of

right now, there needs to be 27 more schools expressing support to sanction the sport.

“Truthfully, I look forward to the growth of the sport more than anything else. I look forward to seeing new faces come and see what flag football is all about. I had about 7-8 girls take a chance on Flag Football last spring, and we’ve been working hard ever since,” Coach Sullivan remarked.