

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight

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Wagley Encourages Involvement at School

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

Rayce Wagley, a senior at Animas High School, has always been up for a challenge and willing to step out of his comfort zone to try new adventures. In fact, he credits a lot of his success to his willingness to try new things.

"Being involved in so many activities at school has really taught me to value hard work and the people who are around me. Without support from my family, teachers, coaches and teammates, it would make it hard to be involved in so many activities."

Wagley is a four-year letter winner in the sport of football, earning All-District and All-State honors multiple times while also being selected to participate in the North-South All-Star game. He has also participated in basketball and track and field since his freshman year. Wagley placed fourth in the medley relay and sixth in the 110-meter hurdles at the 2016 State Track & Field Championships.

In addition to sports, Wagley is involved in several activities at Animas, including Mock Trial, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Science Olympiad, One Act Play (Drama) and Student Council. He has served as class president for three years and is a member of the National Honor Society, while taking several honors classes in school.

Outside of school, Wagley is a Big Brothers/Big Sisters mentor and mentors youth at his church during Vacation Bible School.

"I've tried to do as many activities as I can, give my all at whatever it may be and then run to the next thing. I do find myself running late sometimes but I have enjoyed being a part of the experience. I think enjoying what you do helps you balance your time as well."

Wagley thinks that everyone should try to be involved in as many activities at school as possible so that you can soak in the entire high school experience.

"If you thought about trying it just go out and try it because you might like it. You will find yourself trying new things and wanting more. Honestly, I am involved in a few activities at school that I would never have thought I would do. In the end, those activities are some of my favorite. The sooner a person can learn to step out of his/her comfort zone, the more successful he/she will be."

This is true for Wagley with Mock Trial, an activity that he would never have thought he would like until trying it out.

"I never thought I would enjoy Mock Trial but I went out and gave it my best. The first year I was a lawyer and then a witness and I really enjoyed the experience. Now, Mock Trial is one of my favorite activities in which I am involved."

Wagley has never been one to back down from a challenge.



The 5-foot 8-inch senior proved that to be true when he started playing football in seventh grade. Being one of the smallest players on the field, he felt he needed to prove to others that, regardless of his size, he could still compete at a high level.

"I started playing football my seventh-grade year when they offered it as a part of school. I've enjoyed the work that goes into playing football. I'm not a big kid but I went in and played hard and hit hard. I wanted to show the bigger and older kids that even though I'm a smaller player they can't out-hustle or outwork me on the field."

Wagley is projected to be salutatorian of his class this May, carrying a 3.96 GPA. He was awarded the NMAA Foundation's Extraordinary Scholarship this spring and says, although he has been involved in many activities over the years, his main emphasis has been his education.

"My education is more important to me than anything. My mom is a teacher and she taught me early on that school comes first before anything. Your education will take you further in life than anything else and I have taken that to heart. If you work hard in the classroom, you will work hard on the court or field."

He continued by saying, "I'll be attending New Mexico State University after graduation to pursue a degree in genetics and biotechnology. My family owns a farm, fifth generation, and I always loved listening to my grandfather talk about seeds and how much water certain seeds need and why. It has always peaked my interest."

"I started working on the farm when I was about 13 years old. One of my favorite memories is watching my dad and uncle build a chile picker out of an old bean picker. I have learned a lot about hard work for working on the farm."

Regardless of the path he chooses down the road, you can bet that Wagley will be involved in any and everything he can squeeze into his busy schedule.