

New Mexico Activities Association

Student-Athlete Spotlight

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Yazzie brings Life to Shiprock Football on the Mic

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

If you sat in the stands of a Shiprock Chieftains' football game during the 2016 season, you didn't hear a familiar voice from past seasons over the loudspeaker. In fact, you might not have even recognized the voice at all, but fans better get used to it because Alex Yazzie, a sophomore at Shiprock High School, could be the "Voice of the Chieftains" for years to come.

It was the opening home game of the 2016 football season and Shiprock Athletic Director Dannell Yazzie was hustling around the press box, preparing for the game. The first year AD had almost everything in order except a PA announcer. Her plan was to ask the clock operator to pull double duty until Alex walked thru the door.

"Being my first year as Athletic Director at Shiprock, I didn't have anyone in place to be our PA announcer," said Dannell. "As I was setting up for the first game, Alex came up to the press box. I asked him what he was doing and he said that he came to do the PA announcing. I asked if he had done it before and he said no but that he wanted to try. So we gave him a shot and he did a great job. Since then, he was our PA announcer for every home game this past season. I'm very thankful that Alex stepped up."

Alex has always loved sports, playing junior varsity basketball for the Chieftains and baseball as an eighth grader. When he heard his high school needed a PA announcer for the football game, he quickly stepped up and offered his services, despite never having announced a single game in his young life.

"We didn't have a person to do the public address announcing for football and I heard we needed someone so I just stepped in. I had never done it before so there was a small learning curve but I got the hang of it fairly quickly. I love being around sports so I thought this was a way to give back to my school."

He continued by saying, "I had been to games before and heard the announcer and it made me want to be up in the press box. After my first game, I just fell in love with it and it made me look forward to every home game after that. I would love to be the announcer for the Chieftains for the next few years. I'm thankful to Ms. Yazzie for giving me the opportunity."

When asked if Alex could be a staple at Chieftains football games in the future, Dannell said yes, but also hopes to get other students involved as well.

"I really want to keep Alex in this position for the next few years. I've also been thinking about doing some live broadcasting of our games and Alex would be a great choice to do that as well. I truly believe that our students are the success of our school. If this is an avenue that Alex might want to do in life then we need to help him accomplish those goals."

So could Alex be the next Vin Scully or Harry Caray? Only time will tell, but his passion for PA announcing and on-air broadcasting is deep.



"I've always wanted to do something with sports and this was just another way for me to stay involved. I can see myself on the big stage someday announcing pro sports but if it is just for Shiprock High School then I'm fine with that too."

Alex doesn't just support his school behind the mic on Friday nights or Saturday afternoons, he is also a member of the Shiprock JV basketball team and feels just as passionate about representing his school on the hardwood.

"I love Shiprock High School basketball, especially the fans. It is a great atmosphere. I also enjoy being part of a team, win or lose. It's great to be a part of the basketball program. It means a lot to play basketball at Shiprock High School. I give my school and teammates everything I have at practice and in games to help us win. I look up to a couple of seniors here at school and I use that as motivation."

But all of his athletic dreams were put on hold during his freshman year after having calf lengthening surgery to relieve the tightness in his tendons. He said that the surgery was necessary but at one point, he missed playing basketball and baseball so much that he wondered if it was the right decision.

"I had calf surgery on both of my legs when I was a freshman and then after the surgery, I developed plantar fasciitis in both feet. It took a long time to recover. I probably could have played basketball and baseball following the surgery but I decided to take the time off and recover fully before trying to play sports again. Now that I'm fully recovered, I'm ready to get back out on the court and on the field."

He continued by saying, "I would sit in a wheelchair at my brother's baseball games and wish that I never had the surgery because I missed being out on the field. But I knew it was the right choice because I was in pain every day. Everything is okay now."

Alex looks forward to rejoining his teammates this season on the basketball court and hopes to play baseball for the Chieftains as well.

When asked about his education, Alex commented that everything revolves around his schooling, knowing that his future plans rest on his success in the classroom.

"My education is very important to me. I made honor roll my first semester. I try everything I can to maintain good grades."

So the next time you are in the stands at Shiprock High School and the voice over the PA system yells, "TOUCHDOWN CHIEFTAINS", know that Alex Yazzie is behind the microphone doing what he loves for a school that means so much to him.