

New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight



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Sanchez has a Purpose for Everything

By Tyler Dunkel, NMAA Sports Information Director

Everything Santa Rosa junior Stephen Sanchez does is with a purpose in mind. From snapping on the chin strap of his helmet, to running down the runway toward the pole vault pit, to representing his classmates on the student council or placing his hand over his heart for the Pledge of Allegiance, Sanchez has a purpose for it all.

Sanchez says that involvement in athletics and activities has helped him to stay focused on his goals and taught him about leadership.

“Being involved in sports and activities has really taught me about leadership and how to not only be a leader but to lead by example, while overcoming adversity. I’ve also learned to set goals and work towards achieving them.”

Playing football since the age of eight, Sanchez has rushed for over 1,000 yards in three consecutive seasons and this past season helped to lead his team to the semifinals of the State Football Playoffs, falling to Capitan by two points. Although disappointed, Sanchez says his focus and goal will remain to bring a state title in football back to Santa Rosa.

“Football is my first love. I started playing football when I was 8-years old and I have enjoyed every single down. I’ve been a member of the varsity since the time I was a freshman and have rushed for over 1,000 yards each year, including this season.”

He continued by saying, “To bring a state title back to Santa Rosa not only would mean so much to this team and the school but to the community. Obviously, that is ultimate goal. Receiving a bye in the first round of the playoffs this season was a great accomplishment for this team and the program going forward. We were so close this year to making the championship game but I know we left everything we had on the field. We’ll be back next season.”

Sanchez has tasted victory as a state champion before, winning the pole vault his freshman and sophomore year. He also won the triple jump in 2017 but hopes that he can be a four-time state champion by the end of his high school career.

“I’ve been a state champion in the pole vault my first two years of high school and I’m looking to make it three this coming season. If everything going right I hope to be a four-time state champion after my senior year.”

He continued by saying, “I really can’t describe the feeling when I went over the bar for the final time, knowing that I just won a state championship. I had put in so much hard work and it finally paid off. Right before that I had captured the state title in the triple jump as well so I was really flying high with lots of confidence.”

In addition to his success on the field, Sanchez feels it is im-



portant to give back off the field, which is why he is a member of Santa Rosa's student council, a responsibility he takes seriously.

"I was nominated by my peers and to represent my fellow students is an honor. Being a part of student council has given me an up-close look at what really makes the school run and decisions that have to be made, sometimes for the good of the student body. I have attended student council conferences in the past and I hope to attend one this year, sometime during basketball season."

"I take being a member of the student council very seriously. As a student council member, I have a responsibility to speak for the students I represent. I just want to help make a difference and be a voice for the students."

Following high school Sanchez wants to attend New Mexico State University and pursue a degree in Civil Engineering. Most people would head out into the workforce and begin to earn an honest living but Sanchez feels he is being pulled to do more.

"I plan on attending New Mexico State University and pursuing a degree in Civil Engineering. After that, I want to join the Air Force and serve my country. My family has a strong background in different branches of the armed forces. My dad was in the Army and I feel compelled to continue the tradition. It would be an honor to serve this great country. Every Friday night, I run out on the field carrying the American Flag and to put my hand over my heart and say the Pledge of Allegiance means so much."

