



# The Column

Editor-in-Chief: ANTONIO PEREZ

## THE POSSE FOUNDATION Written by: **Jonah Vazquez**

**The Posse Foundation | Info + My Experience.** The Posse DAP (Dynamic Assessment Process) interviews have become one of the most transformative experiences in my life. I can't begin to fathom the words of how appreciative I am of Posse. I went in trying to learn more about the program and left with a new perspective on life. I've never felt more welcomed, embraced, loved and challenged simultaneously. It's insane— I physically cannot recommend such an experience to anyone more than I already do. I love it. It's more than money to me, and hopefully I can share my passion and inspire others to consider Posse as a path for themselves.

### **Posse's Three Goals:**

1. To expand the pool from which top colleges and universities can recruit outstanding young leaders from diverse backgrounds.
2. To help these institutions build more interactive campus environments so that they can be more welcoming for people from all backgrounds.
3. To ensure that Posse Scholars persist in their academic studies and graduate so they can take on leadership positions in the workforce.

The Posse Foundation was founded in 1989 when a student said, "I never would have dropped out of college if I'd had my Posse with me." This message resonated more than anything with me. The one thing I hadn't thought about going through the college process was having a support system. I was so consumed by the idea of college that I hadn't realized the most vital thing I'd be missing: A support system. As a first generation student, I'd have no one to relate my problems to. I understood college wasn't easy, and feeling isolated throughout my time at college wasn't in my best interests. Posse drew my attention immediately as they send you to university WITH a support system (9 other students apart from yourself). This is just one among the many reasons I was drawn to Posse. The process is Early Decision binding, but that isn't something to worry about until making it to the third round. Entering an Early Decision agreement indicates that upon acceptance you agree that you will absolutely attend the university in the semester you applied for. Again, I wouldn't worry now about the binding factor of the Posse scholarship. That's something that comes much later in the process, and it's very important to keep your options open.

Posse selects the scholarship recipients through a 3-Round interview process: The DAP/Dynamic Assessment Process.

### **Prior to the first interview:**

Your guidance counselor at the end of your junior year will nominate you for the scholarship. Ms. Terraferma had told me once upon entering her room that she thought it'd be worth a shot to try and apply for the Posse Scholarship. She had me write a paragraph about why I'd be interested, though at this time I knew very little about the scholarship. You won't hear anything until sometime in the summer through email. This email will give you access to your portal, which will eventually update with the date of your first-round interview. Once you get access to your nominee portal, be sure to start working on it as soon as possible. The earlier you start working on it, the more time you can spend reviewing and strengthening your application.

### **Interview One:**

My interview was set to take place on September 12th, shortly after school had begun. There were pros and cons to having my first round interview so early. A con being I was recovering from summer brain, though there wasn't any rigor in attending the first round interview. Given a lack of interview experience, I was very nervous. Not knowing what you're getting into is scary. Luckily, I did have another classmate with me-- It was comforting to know I wasn't alone. The interview was approximately 4 hours long with about 100 people total. Although I had a classmate with me during the interview, I made sure that I spoke to new and different people with each activity. Many of the activities you'll do in the interview require you to interact with other people. The most important advice I could give to you is to be yourself. There might be a time during the interview where you feel like your voice isn't heard. So long as you're yourself, you'll be amazing. (But also, never be afraid to speak up to make yourself known so long as you aren't cutting anyone off.) You'll find out in about 24 hours from your interview as to whether they're moving you to the next round. My love for Posse sprouted that very night. I went in nervous and left wanting more than anything to make it to the next round. It felt as if a welcoming aura was being ventilated through our interview room. There was one activity from the first round that I still love more than anything. Everyone was asked to



The POSSE Foundation Logo.

form a circle (there were many people, so an outer and inner circle was formed) and then we would go around saying one adjective to describe how we felt. Going around the room, the one word I heard the most was nervous. This made me feel much more comfortable, but only because, for some reason, I imagined that I would be the only nervous person. I illogically dehumanized my nervousness in my mind. I feared everyone else had this overwhelming passion and confidence. While some people might've, they were still nervous nonetheless. It was such an eye-opening experience for me and I will forever cherish it in my heart.

### **Interview Two:**

This DAP assessment was much more interview-like: 2 staff and myself, whilst dressed in business attire. This second interview took place sometime during the first week of October, a month after the initial interview. While my meeting was scheduled for 12:45 pm, I was already in the city at 10 am. Though it may have seemed ridiculous to be there so early, it worked in my favor. This worked in my benefit as I got to speak to many people sitting and waiting for their interviews, which calmed my nerves. Usually reaching out and just starting a conversation would've never been something I could do. But at the office I felt comfortable reaching out and making connections with people. It was such a beautiful experience just sitting with others before my interview. Everyone there has an amazing story and distinct character, it's insane. Although I did say this round felt much more interview like, it was much more of a conversation than a one-way question and answer interview. Make sure what you choose to speak about is what you're truly passionate about. During this interview, they'll ask you directly about your SAT score,

mention past grades, class rank. If you have any fluctuations in your grades, they'll most likely ask you about them. They will most definitely ask a plethora of questions about yourself. But don't be scared, because what they're looking for is to better understand you as a student. For example, when my SAT score was brought up, I made it my business to discuss the difficulty I found when studying for the SAT. I told myself time and time again that so long as I left knowing I did all I could, I would be happy no matter the result.

### **Interview Three:**

It takes about a month to receive a response from Posse in regard to whether or not you've made it through to the next round. In that email, they'll indicate which school you're selected to be a finalist for as well as when the mandatory family meeting will be. The most notable thing is that you have just about a week to confirm your spot as a finalist, which also enters you into the ED binding agreement (This is the point at which the binding agreement I mentioned much earlier will directly affect you). The mandatory family meeting is nothing to worry over as its solely informational. You'll see familiar faces and the other finalists for your chosen college— it's a great time. There's much to do after your meeting, so be sure to utilize all your school resources! I spent a lot of time in Ms. Terraferma's office trying to understand many of the documents they require. You, in fact, will be applying directly to the school you've been selected for. So applications such as the CSS profile come into play to account for extra aid from the university (Which you should complete as SOON as possible!). *When you make it to the final round, you're also granted an option to sign up for Posse Access: a program that sends your profile out to all other Posse partners if you don't make it past the final round.*



**The Posse 31 Scholars for Vanderbilt University.**

Now, about the actual interview. The final interview is another group interview, except with the personal aspect of the 2nd. Again, the interview will last 4 hours. It honestly never felt four hours long only because the entire time I felt like I was surrounded by amazing, talented, and beautiful people. Everyone there had their own distinct character and story; I was amazed the entire time. What made me most nervous was knowing that the admission officers were going to be there. At that point, they've read your Common App application as well as over the notes Posse collected on you throughout the interview process. At my interview, there were 25 finalists total, 3 admission officers and 4 Posse Staff. Make yourself comfortable and reach out, talk to other people. In that very room will be the 10 selected to move on to be named Scholars. This round was the MOST personal round. You'll essentially be retelling your story to your peers as well as getting the opportunity to listen to theirs. Be supportive, attentive, and yourself. I honestly believe I held nothing back at this interview. The scariest thing was being put in front of admission officers. I tried my best to again treat it as if I was conversing with them. There will be moments that you'll be asked what you're most interested about in your school, so be sure to have research done on the institution.

At the end of it all, you made it far. Be happy and proud of yourself. Knowing that I had put all of myself on the table, I left the interview happy. I gave everyone a hug just in case it was my last time. I really do love Posse and I am more than thankful for this amazing opportunity. There are certainly so many details I may have missed, so if you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at my student email (Jonah.vazquez@whsadstudents.org).

# NFL MVP

Written by: **Silas Rodriguez**

This season sophomore quarterback of the Baltimore Ravens, Lamar Jackson, took the NFL by storm, quickly becoming a fan favorite. His deadly one-two punch of passing and running has made his team's offense seem utterly unstoppable and put them as Super Bowl front runners going into the postseason. As a result, he will more than likely win the MVP



**Seattle Seahawks Quarterback Russel Wilson.**

with little contest. And though his season will go down in the books as one of the most successful in NFL history, breaking several records, I would boldly claim he is not the real MVP this season. That honor should go to Seattle Seahawks QB Russell Wilson. Wilson is the definition of a franchise player. Not only does he have intangibles like leadership and maturity, but he is one of several quarterbacks who have truly mastered the position. Few throw a better deep ball than Russell and, even with a horrible O-line and cluster injuries every other week, he finds a way to make a play he just shouldn't be able to make. But why should he really win it over Lamar? Obviously Lamar and his team have had much more success this season, absolutely dominating teams. But to me it's not about his talent. It's about the true meaning of MVP. Most Valuable has seem to have lost its meaning over the course of this season, instead becoming Most Impressive Player. Week in and week out Wilson takes unknown receivers and turns them to stars all while constantly running for his life in the back field to make an improbable pass to keep their drive alive. That's the biggest reason Wilson should win. The Ravens had a record tying 12 players voted as pro bowlers this season. Five of whom play with Lamar on offense. The Seahawks had only two. Quarterback Russell Wilson and Linebacker Bobby Wagner. Two players who don't even play on the field at the same time. Not to mention the Ravens have the 4th best overall defense in the NFL while the Seahawks are ranked 26th in that category. Now I'm not saying the Ravens would be 14-2 without Lamar, it's hard to deny that with 11 other pro bowl talents an average to good QB can't take them to a positive record, especially in a division with two dysfunctional organizations and a team who switches backup quarterbacks every other game. Also have you ever noticed that every time it seems like Seattle has lost, they find a way to come back in the 4th quarter despite being down multiple scores?

Somehow Wilson is able to bring his team back from the grave and keep every game close. The Seahawks without Russell Wilson have no identity. They would without question be last in their division, which compared to Lamar's, is the most competitive in the league being that only one team did not have a positive record. But because Lamar is the newest commodity in the league, sports media will bandwagon him till the next new sensation comes around. But it's not just this season that this will happen. In fact it's not even just the NFL, but the entirety of American sports. Almost every season we become infatuated with players who are having insane statistical seasons or players who have a great story. At the end of the day it is still entertainment. Media will do whatever they can to sell the newest sensation and craft compelling stories for fans to eat up. In the NFL this season the story of Lamar is, "He was doubted his entire life and as the last pick of the first round he's better than everybody who was picked before him!" Every day a new story is released about how some guy in another team's draft room told everyone else to draft Lamar, and got mocked. Lest we remind everyone even

coming out of the draft Lamar was a QB who couldn't throw, but was a hell of a runner. He was the definition of a project and nobody could have predicted him developing into the player he is now. In the end, what I'm trying to say is that somewhere along the line we confused most valuable with most impressive and players like Russell Wilson who literally carry their organization on their backs, lose out on the respect they deserve.

## Senior Sports Profiles

Written by: **Chandler McLaurin**

**Synopsis:** *The interviews below are dedicated to Senior athletes who participated in either Track and Field, Volleyball, or the Basketball team throughout their four years at WHSAD.*



Andre Rose - WHSAD Senior (Pictured on the Left)

### Andre Rose

What motivated me to join the Track team was that I always was fast and athletic and I wanted to showcase my talents. I also always wanted to be on a track team in high school, and to be better than my brother at something. Joining the

Track team has changed me as a person because it's made me very calm and stress-free because of all the exercise from running every day. It also made me focus on both my mental and physical strengths. I would go into Track and Field as a career because if I practice and strive hard enough I believe I could make a career out of it.

### Collin McKoy

What motivated me to join the Track team was that I did track throughout my childhood. Also, my father encouraged me to join the track team in High School. My father has been my main support going into this. Joining the Track team changed me as a person because I am less arrogant and more humble to people assessing my behavior as a person. I would go into Track and Field as a career because it has become a part of my daily routine and because of this it has become a habit to me.



The Harry Van Arsdale Track & Field team.

### Quiller Augustin

What motivated me to join the Volleyball team was that during Freshman Year, Ms. Huguet, and a former senior, Malachi, asked me to join. I also wanted to play sports in high school. Although, I was bad at first, with a lot of practice I got better which motivated me immensely. Joining the volleyball team changed me as a person because it has made me get close to my teammates. This has led to me helping my teammates out and because of this we've become one big family. I would go into Volleyball as a career but before I do that I would need more practice. Although it's definitely a dream of mine.

### Johnelle Pierre

What motivated me to join the Volleyball Team was when Ms. Huguet saw me at Orientation Freshman year and she said my height can go far in Volleyball. She asked me to try out and because of my height and ath-

leticism, it worked out. Joining the Volleyball team changed me as a person because I've learned how to read people and, most importantly, become a team player. I would go into Volleyball as a career because this high school team has opened doors for me on a whole another level. I am going to Dominican Republic to represent the U.S as part of another team outside of the school.

### Albert Rodriguez

What motivated me to join the basketball team was honestly that, I grew up with people in my family playing basketball, with my friends surrounding me and I fell in love. They motivated me to take my love for basketball to the next level because of my skills sets. Joining the basketball team changed me as a person by keeping me busy and out of the streets. It has also made me more aware that in a tough neighborhood it [basketball] was my savior. Honestly I would not pursue basketball as a career because I know my limit and I have different opportunities I want to pursue in the future other than basketball.

### Shane Igbanovia

What motivated me to join the Basketball team was that since the 7<sup>th</sup> grade I have been playing basketball and I always wanted to continue playing in high school. I played in a tournament and it opened my eyes to much more of what Basketball offered. Joining the Basketball

team changed me as a person because it has kept me out of the streets, and out of trouble. It has also made my parents proud for watching me develop into a stronger minded person. Yes, I would definitely pursue Basketball as a career, because my idol is a professional basketball player and I want to follow in his footsteps. In addition, I would be the first in my family to ever do something huge like this.



The Van Arsdale Cardinals.

### Milo Scheve

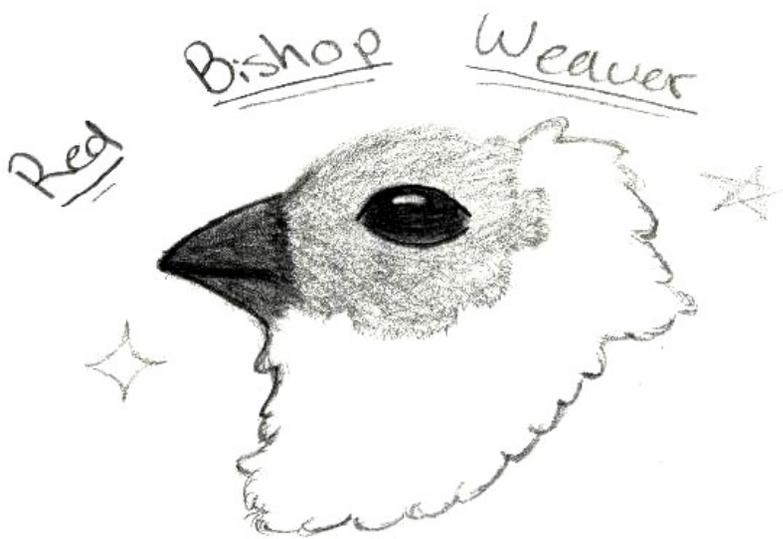
What motivated me to join the basketball team was that I always wanted to play high school basketball and I was up for the challenge. I also told myself that when I would be in high school I wanted to play sports to keep me active and fit. Joining the basketball team changed me as a person because it has made me more mature. It also gave me an eye opener to the world and into meeting new people. It especially helped to get me more in shape, and gave me mental toughness that I can use throughout life. Yes, I would go into basketball as a career because I like what comes with becoming a professional basketball player, and it also gives me a great platform to show off my skills that I have learned throughout my years of playing.

### Errin Mickels

What motivated me to join the Track team was my friends. I also, wanted to try something different in school and join a team. Joining the Track and Field team changed me as a person because I have gained a lot more patience towards my approach to everything in terms of my everyday life and routine. I also, got motivated to do certain things such as workout and most importantly have more fun. Yes, I would definitely pursue Track and Field as a career because it would be a chance of a lifetime.

# Student Submissions

Curated by: Benito Montalvo II



**Anonymous**  
Red Bishop Weaver



**Kevin Garcia & Elliana Duran**  
Demogorgon



**Leins Barthe**  
Tarnished Beauty



**Silas Rodriguez**  
Si wonders why?