



ROBERT Mierow

HEADHUNTER SPONSOR TAKES SIDELINE GAME ONE LEAP TOO FAR

story by **JAILYN SERRANO**
photo by **LANDRY RAYMOND**

After weeks of practicing their new stunt, the headhunters were finally ready to debut the new game

they had been working on: leapfrog. On Sept. 13 at the football game against J.J. Pearce, they took turns jumping over the line of students – some landing with grace, and some not.

Algebra II teacher and headhunters sponsor Robert Mierow made a last-minute decision to try and jump over the line of students ahead of him. Once he completed leaping over and clearing eight students, he landed perfectly with his legs bent in a leapfrog position. Cheers echoed across the student section, but his excitement was instantly replaced with excruciating pain.

His right leg felt like it had been contorted around his backside and his right elbow and wrist ached as he fell sideways on the track.

"I honestly didn't expect him to get 3/4 of the way, but he made the entire jump," senior Danny Eaker said. "And when he landed, I thought he just made the jump and I was cheering thinking 'This is amazing.' Then I looked over at him on the ground and I knew something was wrong."

Danny tried to help him by pulling him up by his arm, but Mr. Mierow's pain was

too severe to even stand.

"Nope. Nope," Mr. Mierow said. "I'm just going to stay here on the ground for now."

After the game finished, Mr. Mierow, with help from Danny and junior Jack Holmes, hobbled onto a golf cart and slowly made his way onto the headhunters' bus. Mr. Mierow's wife, an ER nurse at Medical City McKinney, was able to call ahead and have the doctors and nurses prepared to help.

After many jokes from his wife's coworkers and a painful x-ray, Mr. Mierow soon found out that what he thought were just sprains were broken bones. By Monday, he had an appointment with an orthopedist who performed an MRI. They discovered that he had broken his tibial plateau and torn his ACL and meniscus. Mr. Mierow was put in a splint for his arm and a full cast for his leg.

"All of my injuries were on my right side so I couldn't use crutches or a wheelchair efficiently," Mr. Mierow said. "So, I spent a while in a rolling chair, pushing myself with my left leg or hopping around my house."

This wasn't the first severe injury for Mr. Mierow. Before he became a teacher, he spent 3 years in Argentina as a missionary in 2008. Into his second year as a missionary, Mr. Mierow suffered another accident that would shape the rest of his life.

His apartment in Baigorria,



Robert Mierow at a home game against Plano West. Photo by Elizabeth Chan

a small city on the outskirts of Rosario, had been having lock issues for a while and they had called a locksmith twice already. After being locked inside his apartment, Mr. Mierow decided to take matters into his own hands. He started pushing the glass door to try to get it to open. After three pushes his left hand burst through the glass panes, spilling glass and blood all over the floor of their apartment. His companion recalled the blood sounding like someone had just turned on a faucet.

They ran over to the local grocery store and held up his hand and cried for help. A butcher used some spare towels to wrap his bleeding wrist and a customer at the store offered to drive them to the hospital.

"Luckily, there happened to be someone at the shop that had a car," Mr. Mierow said. "Most people don't have cars like that. They usually have bikes or motorcycles instead."

However, in Argentina, hospitals are more like clinics. The equivalent to American hospitals are sanitariums. After a few hours at the hospital, it was determined that they didn't have the technology or knowledge to help him, so he was moved to a sanitarium in Rosario, which was about 15 minutes away. Luckily for Mr. Mierow, there happened to be a hand specialist on call at the sanitarium that night.

"I believe God was there,

protecting me," Mr. Mierow said. "Even though it sucked and it was a bad injury, he was there making sure that I made it through and keeping me alive."

Mr. Mierow cut his artery and damaged tendons and nerves in his left hand. He spent over a year in Rosario going to physical therapy three times a week. He still doesn't have full range of motion in his left hand, and probably never will.

But that didn't stop him from staying involved.

"I like the excitement and energy they bring to the games," Mr. Mierow said. "I try to cultivate that environment and get them to be more outgoing."

Even though he was in a wheelchair, Mr. Mierow still made it to every football game and had the same energy as he did before his fall by leading chants and organizing activities for the headhunters.

Mr. Mierow never let his injuries hold him back from living life – including a round of leapfrog at a high school football game.

"Lots of people will say, 'Bet you won't do that again,'" Mr. Mierow said. "And I definitely won't anytime soon because I physically can't. You can either live your life safe and not have any story to tell, or you can try things – maybe they blow up in your face and you are completely injured for a while, but at least you've got a good story to tell."