

OWEN AANESTAD

Photojournalist of the Year

Iowa City West High School

Contributions and what I have learned

Growing up watching countless hours of my brother at youth athletic tournaments, I was always looking for something new to entertain myself every weekend. One weekend I decided to pick up my parents' DSLR camera and set up right behind home plate as I carefully put the lens up against the fence to shoot through. Before then it was hours of sitting on bleachers watching the ball go back and forth. Finally, with photography there was a reward to all those hours, something to have at the end and be able to say I created this and have people want to see it. I was hooked. Photography gave me an opportunity to watch the sports I love, but also be able to be creative and work through all the ways to make a great photo. "You don't take a photograph, you make it," said Ansel Adams. In my first couple of years as a photographer, I would always refer back to this quote. Sometimes I didn't get it in focus, or I used too high of an aperture and didn't achieve the results I wanted. As a photographer, I can't just go in and take the photo, it's not that simple. I learned as I continued to take pictures that I had to get everything just right to really make it, make the picture.

As a sophomore, I found a way to display what I love to do through the Iowa City West High School journalism program as the assistant sports editor, co yearbook sports editor and photographer for the West Side Story and Trojan Epic. In my first year on staff, I had the opportunity to experience and photograph state championships, record-breaking performances, and almost every sport offered. As I attended more and more events, I began to realize it wasn't just the action of the game I needed to capture, but the reaction of the fans and players. This year I really learned to turn away from the court or field and find some emotion in my shots. With two more years left of journalism, I hope to continue to improve and learn in all aspects of being a photojournalist and leader in our publications. Next year, I will be the online sports editor and co yearbook sports editor, and I also plan to photograph as many events as possible and continue to improve and document the sports I love.



Fabian Brown '21 finds a crease in the City High defense for a first down in the second quarter of the Battle for the Boot at Bates Field on Oct. 25. Brown finished with 99 yards and two touchdowns. ([Published in Iowa City West's West Side Story on Oct. 26, 2019](#))

Behind the Photo

I stood on the five-yard line as the team continued to drive towards the endzone to take this photo at 200mm. Runningback Fabian Brown '21 filled the middle of the frame as the offensive guard and tackle create a perfect hole for Brown to put his head down and run while securing the ball. I hit the shutter as Brown approached to capture a football coach's dream of a hole to run through.



Bench players Zach Anderson '21, Nick Zamora '20 and Grahm Goering '21 celebrate a Nick Pepin '20 and-one during the 4A state basketball quarterfinal on March 11. The Trojans' quarterfinal matchup against Ankeny was the program's tenth consecutive trip to the state tournament. The boys' basketball team fell 68-54 to finish their historic season with a 21-3 record. ([Published in Iowa City West's West Side Story on March 11, 2020](#))

Behind the Photo

While sitting on the baseline of Wells Fargo Arena across from the team's bench I was able to catch a crucial moment in the game from the bench perspective at 125mm. In need of a comeback, Nick Pepin '20 drove to knock down the bucket and the foul as the bench and crowd erupted. As Pepin moved out of the frame I immediately panned to the bench as it was flooded with excitement.



Libero Katherine Kouba '22 celebrates a point against City High for the Battle of the Spike on Aug. 27. The Women of the Troy fell to the Little Hawks in three sets in their season opener. ([Published in Iowa City West's West Side Story on Aug. 27, 2019](#))

Behind the Photo

In hopes of having a different perspective of the game, I took this photo from the balcony of the gym at 200mm as the volleyball team came in to celebrate a point late in the third set. Being above the net allowed me to catch emotions like this without having to focus through the net from one side of the gym to another.



Luke Nichols '21 comes up to take a breath while swimming in the 200 yard IM at the Iowa High School Athletic Association state swimming meet in Iowa City on Feb. 15. Nichols finished in a time of 1:59.99 to help his team secure the team state championship. ([Published in Iowa City West's West Side Story on Feb. 15, 2020](#))

Behind the Photo

I found a spot between the other teams on the edge of the pool at the packed state swimming tournament to catch the 200 IM and West High swimmer Luke Nichols '21 in the lane closest to me allowing for a tight and focused shot. At 155mm I held the shutter for a burst to capture him coming up for breath but also his hands as he went through his stroke pushing the water away.



Audrey Koch '21 gets past Dubuque Wahlert's Emma Donovan '23 to break the Golden Eagles' half-court press on Jan. 28. Koch finished with 22 points and 5 steals to put the Women of Troy past Dubuque Wahlert 61-53. ([Published in Iowa City West's West Side Story on Jan. 28, 2020](#))

Behind the Photo

Standing to the left of the Women of Troy's basket I shot this photo at 108mm as Audrey Koch '21 broke the half-court press. I locked Koch in focus as she brought the ball up the floor and pushed the shutter for a burst as she hesitated to get past her defender. Koch cut on her left foot as she absorbed the contact while keeping control of the ball with her right hand to make an acrobatic looking shot as both of the players hair flew in the air.