

# Double trouble featuring Cedric Walls

Junior 'Dawg juggles responsibilities on and off the field for both band and football

Sam Vane  
Sports Editor

The first half ends and the football team heads to the locker room.

Except one.

Junior Cedric Walls goes to grab his trumpet and gets into formation to perform at the halftime show with the rest of the Bowie band.

Despite his simultaneous success, Walls' teammates were unaware of his versatility and achievements in both programs, including wide receiver Carmine Elisarraraz.

"I was a bit shocked. I'm not gonna lie, because I thought he was kidding," Elisarraraz said. "I had always heard that he was in band, so when he went out to perform with them at halftime I couldn't believe it."

Walls has performed for the band numerous times throughout the football season during halftime. Pairing these responsibilities with being the starting left guard on the football team would deter many from doing both, but Walls chooses to persevere.

"Honestly, I don't know how I do it sometimes," Walls said. "Even with my busy schedule I still love them both and wouldn't quit either for the other."

Walls' story is viewed by many as an anomaly. The head band director, Jennifer Hanford, can't believe that he was able to do both.

"Some schools don't allow

for people to do both at the same time," Hanford said. "So, we were happy to help make it happen for him this season."

With the ensemble of support that Walls has received, the task of switching between football and band has been easier.

"The band members have always loved football, but we've never had someone who was in the program and in football," Hanford said. "So, now they are even more engaged because they have a friend to cheer for on the field."

Walls has accumulated years of experience in both football and band, coming to learn that he can succeed on both fields.

"I have been playing this amazing game for about 12-13 years and I've played trumpet for about six years," Walls said. "So I've basically been playing both at the same time for my whole life."

Walls' schedule can get pretty hectic. However, he is able to persevere by remembering his original reasons for continuing both throughout his high school career.

"The thought of quitting one to do the other full time has crossed my mind, but the community and companionship that both have are worth the nonstop business and grind," Walls said. "It isn't all bad though, I find time for myself and to have fun with friends."

Since band and football take place in the same season, Walls occasionally has to decide



**AUDIBLE! AUDIBLE!:** Junior Cedric Walls listens for the audible called by the center against Akins. The Bulldogs ended up beating the Eagles 56-7 to pick up their fourth win of the year. **PHOTO BY** Austin Ikard

which practice to attend, but this hasn't caused significant issues for the football squad. The practices he has missed

hasn't caused trouble for the band either.

"It definitely hurts when he's out but we have a really good backup and Cedric always makes sure to keep up with play calling so he won't miss a beat," Elisarraraz said.

Having to miss practice has not only affected the football team. The band practices their show frequently, and Hanford has had to adapt to Walls' absence from rehearsal.

"We have Cedric sharing a spot with another talented trumpet student," Hanford said. "So, in the time that Cedric is not at rehearsal, that spot will not be empty."

Given the rough and physically demanding nature of football, Walls is able to find peace in band that he sometimes can't get in football.

"Band is a relaxing change of pace allowing me to not be afraid to talk and being able to have fun in a different way than I do with football," Walls said. Being in band has also

provided an unexpected benefit, which has helped Walls excel on the offensive line this year.

"In a sport like football you need quick feet," Walls said. "The dancing we do in band allows me to be a little bit more relaxed and nimble which helps me play my best in the game."

With the football team losing a significant amount of starters going into the season this year, Walls was forced to take on more responsibility.

"He definitely became a huge leader this season," Elisarraraz said. "The offensive line lost some guys last year and now the younger guys on the offensive line look up to him and so does the team overall."

With the Bulldogs football making the play-offs the schedule got complicated for Walls. Because the same weekend the first round of playoff starts also happens to be the Bands of America Grand National competition which the Bowie band qualified for. It meant Walls had to make a decision.

"I will be going to the Grand National with the band, meaning that I won't be at the football game," Walls said. "So, the coaches weren't too happy to hear that the team would be without their starting left guard for our first playoff game against McNeil."

This hard decision is one of many to come, however this decision hasn't given Walls any doubts about continuing his journey.

"The plan is to keep going with band and football and finish high school doing both," Walls said. "One, so I can get my letterman jacket for both, and, two, because a half-football, half-band letterman jacket would go so hard."

Walls motivation to continue looks past this year as he wants to set a precedent for his children.

"I want to keep going so I can tell my kids your dad did band and football so you can do whatever you put your mind to," Walls said. ■



**ONE TWO THREE MARCH!:** Cedric Walls gets into position at halftime of the Bowie-Westlake game. The Bowie band performed at the Bands of America Nationals in early November. **PHOTO BY** Austin Ikard

## Tarleton State commit pioneers sand volleyball program

Micheal Vienneau  
Dispatch Reporter

Beneath the blazing heat of the sun, and the backdrop of golden sand, senior split blocker and defender Bella Parayno skillfully dives and gets another dig, leading to yet another point for her and her teammate.

Parayno is a sand volleyball player for Silver Beach, a local team that started in Austin, Texas. Along with playing sand volleyball year round, Parayno also starts on the court volleyball team at Bowie.

"Sand volleyball is much more challenging in a sense where you have to be very conditioned," Parayno said. "You have to be prepared to play in 32 degree weather with rain and in 100 degree heat. You also have to be very mentally tough to play beach volleyball because it is just you and your teammate. Being able to coach yourself through different plays and situations is much different than court volleyball."

Parayno recently committed to play sand volleyball at Tarleton State uni-

versity, a Division I school out of the Western Athletic Conference in Stephenville, Texas. Tarleton State just recently added sand volleyball to their athletic offerings, and Parayno will be a part of the inaugural team.

"I have made so many memories playing in the junior circuit for beach volleyball," Parayno said. "I will always remember competing in Hermosa Beach, California for two weeks and getting to compete with teams across the country. Getting second place in the Beach Volleyball Clubs of America tournament was also an incredible experience."

In 2021 Parayno made an Instagram account dedicated to her beach volleyball career. She uses the Instagram account to garner the attention of coaches across the country, while also showing her progress over the

years.

"I think one of the reasons I became successful in volleyball is because of my strong work ethic," Parayno said. "I also feel as though I am very coachable which makes it easier for me to learn and pick up new skills that can help me become even better. I want to be better than the people I play against and I just love the whole aspect of competing. I feel as though I am well rounded as a player and I also know how to have fun when I am out there."

Junior Charli Haynes is a teammate of Parayno at the Silver Beach volleyball program. Over the summer, Haynes committed to play Division I volleyball at Florida Gulf Coast University, and will begin playing in 2025.

**“**She is an all-around great player, and she has a great attitude. She radiates a lot of positivity, which makes her a lot of fun to play with.  
**Charli Haynes**  
Junior sand volleyball player

"I love working with Bella," Haynes said. "She is an all-around great player and she has a great attitude. She radiates a lot of positivity which makes her a lot of fun to play with."

Silver Beach has rankings based on how well the player performs in the tournaments they compete in, with the more competitive tournaments being weighted more heavily. In the rankings, Parayno ranks 37th out of 296, in the 18 and under division, while Haynes ranks 8th out of 295, in the 17 and under division respectively.

"Bella and I work super well together even though we are both defenders," Haynes said. "I remember playing with her in a club tournament in California, we played really well together because we communicated with each other. She is super competitive and takes it seriously, but also knows how to have fun."

Senior Kirstin Morris, another one of Parayno's teammates, is an attendee of Smithson Valley High School in New Braunfels, Texas. She has recently committed to play volleyball at Southeastern Louisiana University.

"We have so much fun together," Morris said. "She has an amazing drive to be an amazing player. I have watched her grow so much and she continues to make me laugh while also making me better."

Along with volleyball, Morris competes in CrossFit, and she plans to compete in both. However, like Parayno, she wants to pursue a volleyball career, and has dreams of competing professionally.

"We both have big dreams and aspirations," Morris said. "I know she will do great things and I can't wait to keep track of her progress as she continues to grow as a player and person. She is truly an amazing person."

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