



First Person: CHRISTOPHER

In His Own Words

What can you tell us about yourself and your family?

My name is Christopher. I am a freshman at Oak Mountain High School. I am dyslexic and have a hard time reading and spelling. I have to get audiobooks or friends and family to help me with reading. I enjoy hands-on activities like building and drawing. I play football, lacrosse, and I also wrestle.

I have a brother and a sister who are also into sports and, like me, enjoy playing video games. My brother is visually impaired (around 20/600) from cone and rod dystrophy. I have to help him a lot with simple tasks at home and wherever we go. He helps me with spelling and math because he is really smart. He would help me more with reading if he could see better. My sister loves animals and rides English style in horse shows.

We go up to Pennsylvania once a year during Thanksgiving or Christmas to visit my relatives on my mom's side. All of my relatives on my dad's side live in Alabama, so I get to see them a lot.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I spend most of my free time playing sports and video games. For football, I play on the defensive line (noseguard) and started last fall for the Oak Mountain freshman team.

I also wrestle for Oak Mountain High School. Although my weight (194 pounds) is in the bottom of the 215-pound weight division, I sometimes have to wrestle in the heavyweight division (up to 285 pounds) for junior varsity because there is no one else that size on our team. This means that I sometimes wrestle people who are up to 90 pounds heavier than I am!

This is my first year to play lacrosse. I play for the Altamont Knights because my high school does not yet have a lacrosse team. I play "attack," which is the offensive side that is trying to score goals on the other team's defense.

When not playing sports, I like to play on my Xbox 360. I especially enjoy playing online with all my friends. My favorite game is *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2*.

I also enjoy traveling during breaks from school. I have gone to Australia and Europe with an organization called People to People Student Ambassadors. I also go on a lot of fun trips with my family like to Las Vegas, New York, or the beach.

I also volunteer with Special Equestrians where I help kids with physical and mental challenges ride horses. I really enjoy it and have made many new friends.

What can you tell us about your experience at school?

I go to school like every other normal 15-year-old. I take the same classes that everyone else takes except I have a help period where I get extra time for tests and have teachers read the tests to me. My favorite thing about school is seeing all of my friends and talking with them. My least favorite thing about school is homework because it takes me two times longer to do it than regular kids. I also count studying as homework. Unlike all of my friends (my friends don't consider studying homework and don't study!), I will study for several hours, sometimes staying up late at night and waking up very early in the morning before school.

One of my favorite memories of school is yelling my lungs out with my football friends at the pep rallies. My favorite subjects in school are science and history. I have all As in school.

What can you tell us about your work background?

The only work experience I really have is refereeing soccer games. I started refereeing when I was 12 years old. Unlike other jobs, I get to pick my own schedule, and the pay is good. I enjoy working with other referees I have gotten to know. I usually referee four or five games a week when I don't have a conflict.

What do you see yourself doing in the future?

I am not exactly sure what kind of job I want, but I know I want to do something hands-on. I plan on going to college, but I am not sure what my major would be at this