

PUSHING FOR

Junior Graeme Hobbs wrote to the Kansas City Star about bowling and the unfairness of self-transportation

"I am a junior at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School. One thing I have noticed is the disproportionate amount of money allocated to programs. I especially notice this difference as a member of our school's bowling team."

On Jan. 28, junior Graeme Hobbs sent a letter to the editor to the Kansas City Star about the "disproportionate" attention the bowling team gets in comparison to other sports such as basketball and football. He expressed this by detailing his frustration with the school's transportation policy. He claimed the bowling team "can't even get" one bus to transport the team to and from meets.

"On the bowling team, we have a lot of passion and love for what we do," Graeme said. "I think it's unfair that it feels like we get overlooked, even though we put a lot of time and effort into [bowling]. I'm frustrated with not just transportation, but lack of recognition. We don't get mentioned at pep rallies for our records or achievements like other sports do."

The letter was originally written for an Eagle Scout requirement, however Hobbs' concerns had been on his mind for weeks.

"I had to think about something I wanted to fix [for the project] and this issue came up," Hobbs said. "I don't think it makes sense that having a car is almost a requirement of being on the bowling team, especially with the younger guys on the team who can't find rides."

After writing the letter, Hobbs' teammates expressed their approval and gratitude for publicly expressing what teammates had felt since they joined the bowling team.

"Everybody in my family was surprised and proud of me, but not very many people know about it," Hobbs said. "Not many people my age read the Kansas City Star. From what I heard, it was well received and people were glad I was pushing to make some kind of change."

None of Hobbs' teammates or coaches

knew the letter had been written or sent before they saw it in the Kansas City Star.

"Coach [Billy] Dent said that he wished I had talked to him before sending the letter," Hobbs said. "[Athletic director Angelo] Giacalone talked to me in his office and explained the bus driver shortage and transportation issues. Other than those two interactions, I haven't gotten much other feedback."

Hobbs said he didn't do any research about the topic prior to writing the letter, instead relying on his own experience..

"The whole picture was not portrayed," Giacalone said. "Bowling is not the only sport that self transports. We are not the only district that self transports. All of this stems from the fact that there is a bus driver shortage. If we want to have athletics, we've got to be able to get creative with it. That's the picture that needed to be out there [for] everybody to see."

Due to the bus driver shortage, buses are only available before 1 p.m. and after 4:30 p.m. Most bowling meets begin between these times. If the team was picked up before 1 p.m., they would have to wait for hours before the meet would begin.

"[Knowing what I know now], I would've written it differently, but I still believe in the purpose I wrote it for — not necessarily the contents of the letter," Hobbs said.

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