

Don't highlight the text after "Senior"

Sami Labidi

Senior don't look up the link after the second paragraph of the bio

Hobbies: cooking, Pokémon games, reading books in French, listening to music, lifting, distance running, basketball, clogging the toilet

Clubs: Scholars' Bowl, Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl, Science Olympiad (not related to Physics Olympiad)

Contest/competition experience or honors: AAPL Silver Seal of Biliteracy in French, National Merit Commendation, $F=ma$ and AMC 10 exam repeated failures

Autobiography:

Do you know what it's like to get everything you've wanted? I think I have an idea.

I have to admit that I was blessed from the start. I had a head start as early as kindergarten, when I went to full-day kindergarten. Then, around 3rd grade, I started doing Kumon Math--against my will, actually; I used to go on "strikes" and sacrifice video game privileges to make a point of not doing the Kumon homework. By 7th grade, I was far enough ahead that I skipped a grade level of math and quit Kumon, after which point I loved math. This went further, and my high school let me take college classes including Calculus freshman year. I'm incredibly grateful to my parents and my school for these opportunities (yes, including Kumon).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1DmYcW6Etw&pp=ygUlvaGkubikgblmlTzSlufyBzblmlfwCQ%3D>

But this isn't why I tried so hard to be a part of the US Physics Team. I watched countless YouTube videos about black holes in elementary school and self-studied physics on Khan Academy during COVID shutdowns, but I always wanted more. I decided, or rather my addictive personality decided, that I would continue to learn physics.

Using resources like Khan Academy and MIT OCW, I had fun completing coursework up through some undergraduate physics and math (to anyone aspiring to self-study physics, these are fantastic resources, and they're totally free). I'll admit, I struggled significantly through the harder courses, but the satisfaction of a victory heavily outweighs the pain of the struggle--a philosophy that is 100% the reason why lifting is so fun. I got through most of the available OCW resources, but I wasn't content with just the knowledge--I wanted more. So I shifted my focus to Physics Olympiad, which let me set even more ambitious goals than when I just learned for the sake of learning.

Despite studying hard, I didn't pass the $F=ma$ test the first two times, but the skills I gained along the way make life seem so much simpler and easier to understand--not to mention how studying physics taught me how to understand the physical world. Sometimes I can't go to sleep at night because I'm trying to solve in my head a physics problem inspired by something I saw that day.

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This year, I was optimistic but did not truly expect to get past the USAPhO exam because of "continuity." The day I received the Physics Team Invitation email, I was checking my email in Biology when I saw it and accidentally flung my phone across the room in excitement--can you blame me when I've been studying for this for years?

Like me, you may have wondered what "a dream come true" is like. I vaguely understand now what it's like: I want more.

Again, thanks a million to my parents and my school for giving some priceless opportunities to me. I'm also grateful for the emotional (and financial) support from my family on this journey, which is an important step toward my greater goal of contributing to the study of physics as a physicist. I appreciate the work done by Khan Academy and MIT; their resources are genuine evidence we live in a utopia. Finally, Brobdignagian thanks to Kevin Zhou for his handouts; I will be spreading awareness of these on the internet since they're so helpful.

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