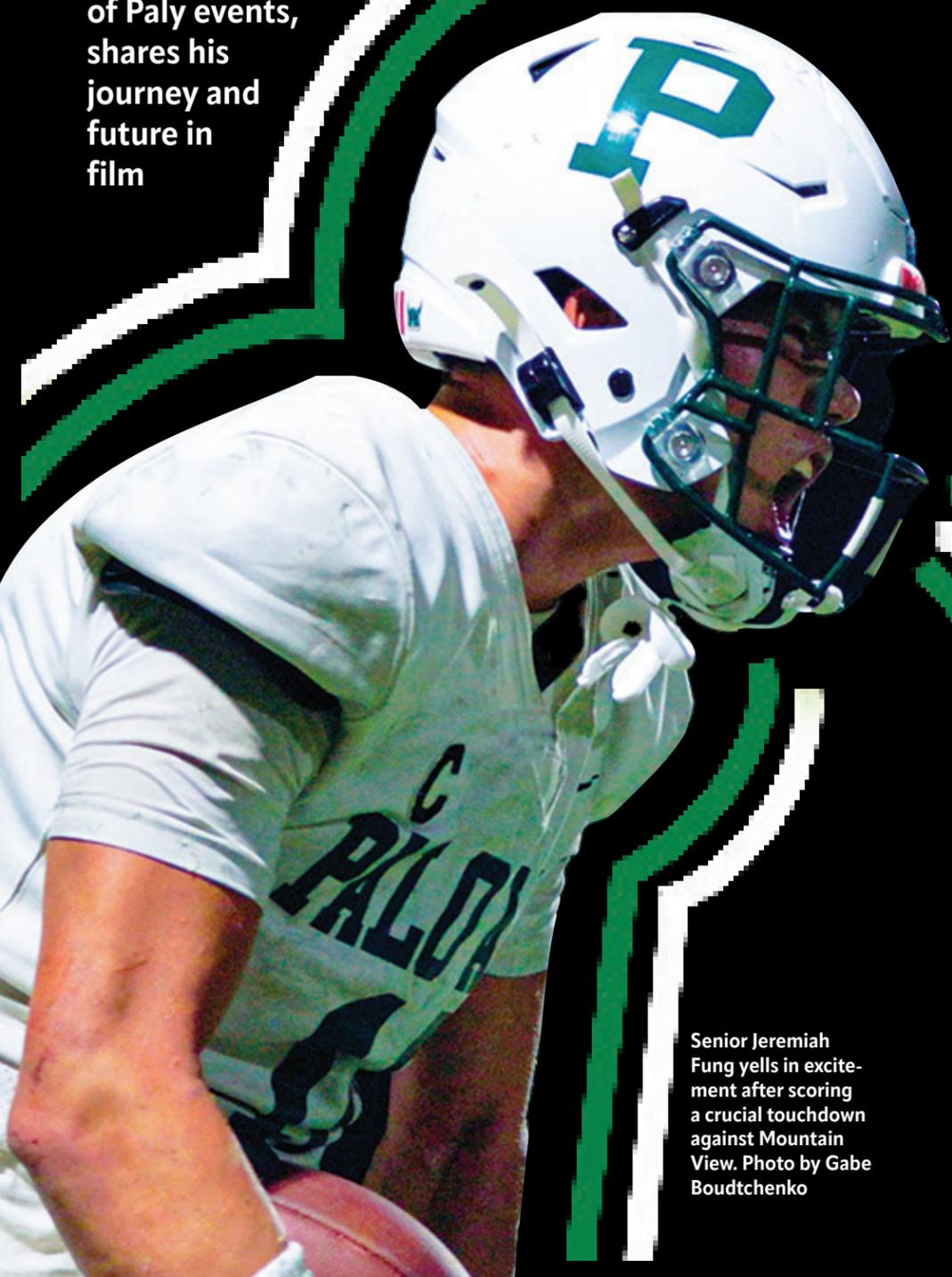


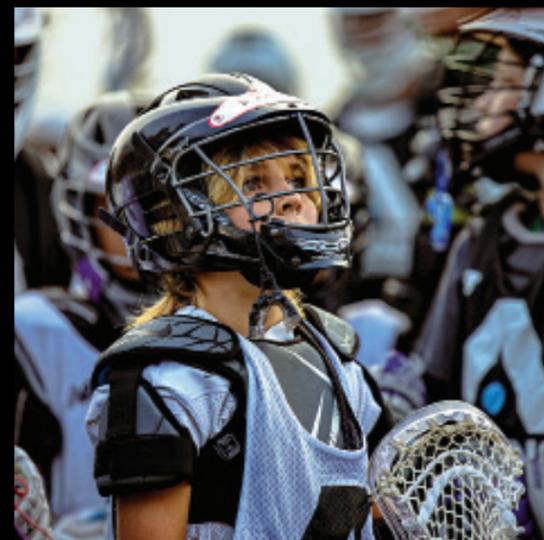
@gabe_films

FEATURED ARTIST

Senior Gabe Boudtchenko, behind the camera of Paly events, shares his journey and future in film



Senior Jeremiah Fung yells in excitement after scoring a crucial touchdown against Mountain View. Photo by Gabe Boudtchenko



The crowded gym goes quiet as the lights dim, signaling the start of the long-awaited video playing on the screen. As the crowd reacts to his 'HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF' basketball introduction video with screams and chants, Senior Gabe Boudtchenko takes a deep breath before entering the gym.

Boudtchenko captures these moments on his camera often at Palo Alto High School's many sporting events. From football to lacrosse to basketball, Boudtchenko is always on the sidelines with his camera, taking pictures and videos of the game, which he then shares on social media.

From a young age, Boudtchenko has shown a natural interest in film, which quickly grew from a hobby to a full-fledged passion.

"I got into videography in elementary school through access to my mom's old camcorder," Boudtchenko said. "I would record my sister's piano recitals, and I would record music videos and make little things with whatever I had access to."

In addition to making these videos, he learned to edit and put together films inde-

pendently.

"I downloaded this free editing software that I watched YouTube videos on how to use, and I worked with whatever I had to make whatever I wanted through watching YouTube videos," Boudtchenko said.

That early self-teaching eventually led him to filmmaking camps, where he learned how to use professional equipment.

Eventually, that led to working at those camps and teaching them. Then in high school I started working in studios and little things like that," Boudtchenko said.

Boudtchenko gives a lot of credit to his progress in creating films for the Paly Athletics community.

"Paly sports has given me the greatest open access to sports to film, so it was a good starting point," Boudtchenko said.

"The Paly community really supports this type of creative expression – starting out in a community [I was] familiar with was very beneficial to my start."

In addition to filming for his own benefit, Boudtchenko helps many athletes improve through his videography. By filming an athlete's plays so they can later watch them, Boudtchenko gives players a chance to notice their mistakes and build on their strengths.

"What I found most valuable is capturing those moments and solidifying them, creating

a memory for someone that they can treasure," Boudtchenko said. "They can look back on it to be happy. Even just the instant smile of them watching back their amazing play, or seeing something they might have otherwise lost in memory, is great. That's why I feel it's very important."

"Oh yeah, that's my kid's video."
Vera Shinsky



Vera Shinsky, Boudtchenko's mother, described one notable moment she is proud of in Boudtchenko's filming journey: when he made a video for Paly's boys lacrosse team's end-of-season banquet.

"He made it [the video] into such a tear-jerk," Shinsky said. "And I'm sitting there with a bunch of other parents, and we're watching his video, and they're all commenting on it. I'm sitting there going, 'Oh yeah, that's my kid's video.'"

Additionally, Boudtchenko had many achievements stretching back years before his start at Paly, including winning the Pride Video Awards, a film festival centered around the LGBTQ+ community and getting a film stored in the UCLA Film Archive in middle school.

"He made the film [Pride Video Awards film] in seventh grade, and submitted it in eighth grade," Shinsky said. "He [Boudtchenko] is always like, 'Oh, that's really old,' but that's an impressive achievement, especially that early."

Although many of Boudtchenko's early achievements in filmmaking date back to middle school, his passion for the craft has only grown stronger over the years. It's clear that the foundation he built at a young age has not faded with time.

Balancing filmmaking with the demands of high school and college admissions is not always easy for Boudtchenko, but he still makes time for his passion.

"In high school, it's more of a challenge to integrate it [filmmaking] into my lifestyle," Boudtchenko said. "Because in the upperclassmen years, schoolwork becomes increasingly difficult and time-consuming on top of trying to fit in filming, editing and

sending out emails for client work."

Boudtchenko finds that planning out each hour of his day and setting achievable daily goals helps him make time for both his academics and his filming. However, no matter the amount of planning, there are certain sacrifices that have to be made.

"If I have a big test coming up, I'm going to study more for that and then delay projects, and then the other way around," Boudtchenko said.

Building on the foundation Clare Antonow helped him establish, Boudtchenko has continued to develop his skills, finding his own style and approach to sports videography.

Antonow, a Paly graduate from the class of 2024 who also pursued videography, helped Boudtchenko in his photography and videography journey during her time at Paly.

"She [Antonow] helped me a lot with getting started at Paly specifically and getting situated as a sports creative," Boudtchenko said.

Antonow worked closely with Boudtchenko through Madrono, Palo Alto High's yearbook and shares what she first observed when he started.

"One thing I noticed was Gabe constantly striving to improve the technical aspects of his work, and I found that unique," Antonow said. "I found a setup that works for me, but he was always driven to improve the quality or make the colors better."

While Antonow and Boudtchenko share a passion for filmmaking, they started off differently.

"Gabe came in with much more of a

technical background," Antonow said. "It's been really cool to see him get more into the cinematics and creative color. I started out with the opposite — I had more experience with the artsy and musical side of it, and it was cool to see him grow in that aspect of film."

Antonow is now attending UC Berkeley with a double major including media studies and is hopeful for Boudtchenko's future in filmmaking.

"Gabe could go in a lot of different directions of filmmaking," Antonow said. "I don't want him to limit himself because people [filmmakers] either keep pursuing it or get bored. I just hope he finds something that fulfills him creatively because that's what I'm trying to figure out right now. I'm leaning away from what I did in high school and exploring new creative work. My advice to him is to always keep things fresh and experiment with his films."

With pursuing a creative career comes a set of obstacles. Boudtchenko's biggest hurdle was navigating Paly's complex system for media credentials and limited field access.

"When I started, the system [media arts system] wasn't set up for students having access to shoot things they wanted to shoot or express their creativity," Boudtchenko said. "I communicated with athletic directors about how photographers and videographers on the field could better support our creatives here at Paly."

When Boudtchenko finally gained access to the field, Paly sports events provided the most accessible environment for filmmaking, which eventually expanded to further opportunities outside of Paly, including paid work for clients.

"When you start filming for clients and for a paycheck, everything changes,"

Boudtchenko said. "Not only are there more expectations for your work, but a lot of the time, if there's money involved, you can lose creative liberty or lose a lot of aspects of the work that you would feel are your personal contributions to it."

Although he describes less personal creative freedom for paid work, he also believes that working for a commission is beneficial.

"I'm very grateful that they [clients] have given me much more creative control than I would have expected," Boudtchenko said. "Working under commission has helped me stay motivated because it validates my work. It allows me to market myself and invest in myself. It's very beneficial and has helped me establish myself as a brand and as a business and build strong relationships with the clients that I have."

Boudtchenko plans to continue his passion following high school — not only in college, but as a career.

"After high school in college, I'm looking to major in film and meet more people that are like-minded and passionate about the same thing," Boudtchenko said. "I want to take that time to explore what section of the film industry I want to pursue — or maybe not the film industry at all."

Boudtchenko is also excited about pursuing film in college because of his previous experience working with San Jose State University.

"For filming athletics, college is going to be great because there [will] be a full community of people that you can grow with and learn from," Boudtchenko said. "It was cool seeing their [San Jose State University's] media team, and finding that [a creative team] at a four-year college will be great."

While Boudtchenko is not completely sure where the film will take him in the future after college, he is sure he wants to continue his career

in the creative industry.

"I like not knowing [future plans] because I'm not setting myself up or constricting myself to any sort of medium," Boudtchenko said. "I hope to just make cool stuff."

Along the journey, Boudtchenko's perspective on storytelling continues to grow.

"Storytelling can be very dynamic and doesn't have to fall into that traditional sense," Boudtchenko said. "By discovering stories and beginning to watch films with different lenses, you can search for deeper meanings, emotions

and personal connections that make them much more meaningful to watch."

Boudtchenko's journey of filmmaking has been one of persistence, creativity and continuous learning.

"Starting out, it was amazing to have a level of community support immediately behind my work," Boudtchenko said.

From capturing childhood memories on a camcorder to standing on the sidelines of Paly's biggest games, his passion for storytelling has only grown stronger.

"It [filmmaking] was more motivating to continue when you see recognition and people watching your work because it's a piece of your creative expression that you're putting out there," Boudtchenko said.

Through every obstacle, wheth-

er it is navigating media access, balancing school with client work or defining his own creative style, Boudtchenko has found ways to push forward, refining both his skills and artistic voice.

More than just documenting moments, Boudtchenko has created lasting memories for athletes, families and his community, turning fleeting moments into stories that will be remembered after the final whistle blows.

"He's seen the impact of his films beyond just somebody saying, 'Oh, that's a cool video,'" Shinsky said. "He has seen the impact on the community and people's personal lives. It's very fulfilling for him, and it serves as a big source of inspiration and affirmation."

As Boudtchenko looks ahead to college and beyond, he remains committed to his craft, ready to explore new opportunities and continue to tell stories that resonate.

"There is a story in everything you shoot," Boudtchenko said. "You just have to try to express it and find it."

Text by KAITLYN GONZALEZ and ELLA HWANG • Design by ELLA HWANG • Photos by GABE BOUDTCHENKO

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