Reality over normalcy: Hybrid learning

Benny Benavides | December 15, 2020

With the switch from in-person to digital school this past March, I was one of those people that looked forward to going to school. I enjoyed the morning routine, meeting up with my friends in the cafeteria, and greeting my teachers in the hallway. I still reminisce about the normalcy of last year, especially as a Senior. As much as I miss my normal routine, it would be naive to ignore the reality of our situation. Amidst a pandemic, it seems foolish to meet in large crowds, yet school seems to be the exception.

The administration of D214 and Wheeling High School is doing the best that they can to follow COVID safety guidelines. They're regulating classroom sizes, making masks mandatory, and performing temperature checks. Yet, the question remains: Is that enough to truly ensure the safety of the students and staff? I applaud the administrators for all the work they put into creating a safe environment, but it's unrealistic to say that it's a COVID-free environment. If masks and temperature checks alone were enough to prevent the spread of COVID, the U.S wouldn't be in such a dire situation. The matter of fact is, masks and temperature checks are the bare minimum protection. It's better to wear a mask than to not wear one, it's better to perform temperature checks than to not do them at all, yet these two things alone can not prevent the spread of COVID.

Furthermore, the school can only control what happens within the school. Unfortunately, the biggest danger lies out outside of school. Students and staff are free to break COVID safety guidelines and thus put everyone at risk. There's no one mandating masks, social distancing, or even small groups. Another undeniable fact is that at least some portion of hybrid learners are engaging in activities outside of school that put them at risk for COVID. What makes this situation even worse is that students tend to be asymptomatic due to their young age. A student can unknowingly have coronavirus and then spread it to their peers. Additionally, it seems unfair for teachers to put them in this situation. Students have the option to opt-out if they feel unsafe, but teachers are required to be in person unless they fall under special circumstances.

In a survey issued to WHS students, only 38.9% of the respondents reported that they were doing in-person learning. Whereas 36.1% of responses said they felt completely safe at school, there was 25.9% that said they didn't feel safe at school at all, and another 33.3% that stated they only felt safe at school part of the time. It was also reported that only 19% of respondents go to school every designated in-person day in comparison to the 11.4% that reported that they don't go that often and the 24.2% that stated they don't go at all. One respondent wrote, "Irresponsibility kills in these times, and it's unfortunate to say that not many students are responsible enough for me to feel safe returning to school." This respondent couldn't have said it better. The only way to ensure the safety of everyone is through self responsibility, but it's apparent on a national level that not enough people are being responsible. The disregard for the danger of COVID is what puts everyone as a whole at risk.

It's safe to say that everyone longs for a sense of "how things used to be." However, with rising COVID numbers, it's ignorant to pretend that things can just go back to normal.

Student leadership in the COVID era

Kiannah Hayes (left) celebrates senior night with Johana Veloso (right).   Photo courtesy of Kiannah Hayes

Kamila Walus pictured with seniors on the Spokesman staff.

Ani Perez-Brennan | December 15, 2020

Covid-19 has proved to be a test of perseverance for all. In terms of extra-curricular, it has put student leaders in a difficult position. As leaders, we are expected to be role models and be a beacon of encouragement. How do we do that in a time where the future is so uncertain, and our year has been anything but ordinary?

Debate Captain **Geneve Halfman**, Senior believes adjusting to this year's circumstances means adjusting your priorities.

"When you get to your team, you have to have that social interaction in place," Halfman says.

"That could mean going to breakout rooms on bigger teams so that you're able to talk in a group… and that could mean being the one to initiate it. Because a lot of people are afraid to speak up on zoom, and crack a joke or tell a weird story because it seems targeted like you're presenting and not chatting. So I think it's really important just to establish that this is an environment where that's okay. Where you're not off the task for socializing."

Through remote learning, the lack of student social interaction, bantering, and bonding is extremely evident. Halfman continues, "We're only interacting in this debate setting so the things that would bring us together before are a lot more challenging because it's not a natural part of the conversation." The mute button has done its job well - fewer people are talking with their peers and as a leader, it's hard to encourage this interaction over a screen.

With extracurricular activities that were meeting in-person during the First Quarter, there was a different obstacle. Student leaders have had to make decisions about whether or not to be there for their peers because of the Covid-19 health risks.

For sports leaders like **Kiannah Hayes**, remote learning is a setback to practices, but it also provides some surprising opportunities. Hayes, a senior on the varsity girls' volleyball team, tries to keep a positive attitude despite not being able to see her teammates face-to-face.

"I feel like we all knew that there would be pieces missing from us," Hayes says. "Whether it's through sports, whether it's through music, whether it's through band… we all tried so hard to catch up, so I think that brought us together. But I think a lot of people needed this time to reflect on themselves and who they are, and so they're just taking that time to figure [it] out."

Rather than focus on her loss of volleyball time with her team, Hayes searched for new opportunities to be a leader. She organized Unity Day with friends, became an AVID ambassador, and joined a student board with the principal to discuss racial equity. Whatever she does, Hayes tries to reach out. "Now I have time for myself, but I need to find a way for me to make time for other people so that [they] know they're not alone. I'm kind of battling with my mental health personally… it became hard, but I wouldn't trade it for anything," says Hayes. She may not always be able to lead on the court, but she can still set examples in her own life.

Spokesman's editor-in-chief **Kamila Walus**, Senior, has found a different set of challenges during the pandemic.

"Through Zoom meetings and emails and a lot of online stuff, trying to be a leader and trying to be there for people who depend on me can be a little bit hectic at times," says Walus.

"I know there's only so much we can do through the internet, but also I think that leads to a lot of opportunities." Walus collaborates with several journalism students to organize the website you see here. Everything from articles to logos to polls will most likely pass her examination at some point.

All that organization requires Walus to address the entire class often, which she says is much less stressful than getting up in front of a physical room full of students. This allows her to find a balance between different topics and people.

"Working in a team can be difficult sometimes… Trying to work through hardships is the most important thing. Not everyone's perfect," Walus says.

Remote learning has also impacted the vocal program time and time again. I am grateful for how we have kept singing at home, but our chances to perform are slowly draining away. A huge part of choir— aside from the music— is built on personal connection. My fellow soprano section leaders and I have found it tough to motivate our classmates through a screen.

Luckily, the choir has found new ways to communicate through breakout rooms and various group chats. Though we can't hear each other sing due to Zoom lag, we still offer questions and feedback to each other. Plus when we aren't hard at work, we can talk about fundraisers or favorite memories or how the sopranos should be on Shark Tank together. In a way, we've preserved a piece of choir through our friendships.

It's no mystery that Covid-19 has shut down many of the outlets students use to lead our peers. Through it all, we keep finding new challenges and possibilities to inspire the people around us. Hopefully, we can continue to adapt to this uncertain future.

Politics

Prioritizing people instead of politics

Ben Williams | September 28, 2020

In the United States, political disagreement has devolved from a source of intelligent debate to a source of name-calling and personal attacks to a source of death threats, assault, and murder. As this extreme political tension has normalized the dehumanization of people we disagree with, I urge the WHS community to maintain decency and respect for our fellow human beings while we fight for a better world.

In the WHS and D214 community, I've seen political division grow immensely toxic, primarily on social media. Namely, many have posted things along the lines of, "If you support Trump/don't support Black Lives Matter, block me." This has even extended to calls on social media to break up with one's significant other for these same reasons. This kind of behavior is counterproductive. Generalizing all people with the same political position fails to take into account how unique every person is. Especially when it comes to supporting a candidate, one's positions can't be immediately assumed. In a republic like the United

States, we support candidates that best represent our views, not candidates that align perfectly with our every opinion. Brushing over all people in one political camp as being the same ruins any chances of compromise or agreement between opposing parties or other political groups; it paints other groups of people as "the enemy". Additionally, when rejected by society, people tend to become bitter and unstable. As if ruining a person's mind isn't bad enough on it's own, these feelings make them easily fall victim to the negativity and dread that extremists and hate groups thrive off of.

Beyond this, a person is so much more than their political beliefs. A liberal can be an upstanding citizen, a caring friend or a loving significant other just as much as a conservative can because not everything is about politics. Besides, even if everything was about politics, we have little control over our own beliefs in the first place. Political beliefs are shaped by socialization: a person's upbringing by parents, the friends they surround themselves with, the media they're exposed to and more. These are all contributing factors in a person's beliefs, much more

than any conscious decisions to think a certain way; thus, it's no more fair to ostracize someone based on their political beliefs than their race, religion, sexual orientation, economic standing or any other factor out of their control.

Even former Vice President Joe Biden knew to put politics aside after the death of President Trump's brother, Robert Trump. He offered the president his condolences on Twitter, empathizing over the common tragedy of losing a loved one. If a presidential candidate can be kind and understanding towards his mourning opponent, I believe it's not too much to ask for my fellow students to respect others with different beliefs.

I understand that the world is a crazy place right now, and I commend my peers who are doing what they can to make it better. However, when you fight for justice, fight with love and remember there's much more to life than politics. Especially in such difficult times, I hope that everyone will understand each other, support each other, and be excellent to each other.

Aftermath of Capitol Riots

Photo via Forbes

Benny Benavides | March 17, 2021

The months prior to Jan. 6, 2021 were filled with tension- a tension that stemmed from the election. When Joe Biden was first announced the winner of the 2021 presidential election in November, claims of a fraudulent election from Donald Trump intensified. Mail-in ballots were used more in this election because of COVID-19. Many feared going to voting places due to large crowds and thus opted for mail-in ballots. Donald Trump then claimed that mail-in ballots were fraudulent and could not be counted as valid votes.

On Jan. 6, in the early afternoon Trump held his rally. The crowd was full of people who felt as if the election was stolen from them. Trump was quoted saying "We're going to walk down to the Capitol, and we're going to cheer on our brave senators, and congressmen and women, we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them because you'll never take back our country with weakness, you have to show strength and you have to be strong."
Many believe it was remarks like this that inspired some of the rally attendees to storm the Capitol. Others draw attention to Trump's closing remarks, telling his supporters to protest "peacefully and patriotically". Whether it was Trump's intention or not, rioters got violent with law enforcement and broke past barriers into the Capitol with Congress still in session.

Some members of Congress were able to evacuate but others were trapped inside the Capitol during part of the riots. Rioters made it into the Senate Chamber and House Chamber. Some rioters even entered the offices of officials like Nancy Pelosi and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and stole items like the podium from the House Chamber.

Rioters were also chanting "Hang Mike Pence" because they viewed him as a traitor for not stopping the electorate count, even though it wasn't in his authority. Rioters had occupied the Capitol for seven hours until mid-evening when law enforcement was able to get the riots under control.
It's notable to add that Trump resisted calling the National Guard and instead told the rioters that they are "very special" and should "go home in peace."

The individuals who stormed the Capitol are now being searched for by the FBI. The FBI has over 400 subject case files and 500 grand jury subpoenas, and search warrants issued. So far, 195 people have been arrested and charged with crimes. Some Republicans have attempted to claim that the attack on the Capitol was not by real Trump supporters, but rather left-wing extremist group Antifa. They believe that Antifa disguised themselves as Trump supporters in order to make Trump look bad, but FBI investigations have not found any ties between Antifa and the Capitol rioters. In fact, some of the people who were at the riots are listed as known or suspected white supremacists in the FBI's database.

After it was safe to reconvene, Congress certified the electoral votes, confirming Joe Biden's victory, and he would go on to be inaugurated. As for Donald Trump, the Democrats in the House impeached him a second time. While the Democrats had a majority in the Senate with Vice President Kamala Harris as a tiebreaker, there was not enough bipartisan support to convict Trump.

Ironically, the only thing these rioters achieved was leaving the president they so adore with an even worse approval rating and making more moderate Republicans and Trump supporters more welcoming of the new administration.

Lowering college tuition during a pandemic

Muskan Naqvi | May 4, 2021

Within the pandemic, one of the biggest challenges to students has been the transition from in-person education to online. It's no surprise that college tuition in the United States is taxing on students with the average student loan costs reaching 1.5 trillion last year. The Covid-19 financial crisis itself has caused a few strikes among students such as those from Columbia University this past spring, and it's clear that students no longer view those high costs as fair. Luckily, many colleges have lowered tuition slightly amid e-learning with costs at public in-state decreasing from a reported average of $20,770 to $11,171 from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021. With this, I believe that colleges should continue to lower tuition for e-learning or students in the 2021-2022 school year.

With most places shutting down, the pandemic has caused a surge in homelessness and unemployment with about 4-in-10 workers being off work for more than 6 months. Before 2020, the average college tuition cost had nearly doubled since the 1980s with the means to pay them off staying nearly the same. The high tuition costs were an issue before the pandemic and only continue to grow as more and more people lose their jobs. By lowering tuition, it would allow students to be able to access higher education (something essential for most jobs nowadays) with less financial strain—especially if they don't even have access to specialized college facilities.

College costs most often go towards facilities outside of teaching (usually to pay for part-time faculty members along with dormitories, advocates, and others). Most of the money also goes to non-teaching personnel and research institutions—things that online students wouldn't necessarily have access to because of Covid restrictions. If students are no longer using these facilities because they are studying from home, the costs should not be included in their bill.

Another benefit of lowering tuition prices for e-learning would be decreased covid transmission rates as more people could opt in to stay at home. When students are paying the same price for online education compared to in-person, they'd be more inclined to go on campus to 'get their money's worth'. If given another option for a cheaper price, a number could choose to stay online to be safe and also for a better economic deal.

Considering all this, I believe that colleges lowering their tuition for e-learning options would be beneficial for students financially and health-wise. The average lower tuition costs of the 2020-2021 school year prove that it is an option and is possible to do as the pandemic continues, and it could potentially help bring more students to get an education at the school itself. As the pandemic drags on and as students continue to study, it's vital that the best action be taken for their future and security.

Trending

WHS students essential at Mariano's

Erica Hayden | February 17, 2021

It's been 383 days since our first confirmed COVID case in America, and students have been struggling to keep up with remote learning, family & friends, and work. Some students have even worked through the initial spread of COVID back in January of last year. Recently, a lot of students have seeking spots at the grocery store Mariano's.

The students themselves have their say in how their experience being an essential worker and a student collides.

"I would say I am pretty indifferent, as my need for money isn't as high as it should be. Since I am a high school student, the need for money is just to have cash in my pocket. The pandemic had honestly put my work at ease, as many did not feel safe to enter the store at that time. So really, it was just free money at this point. Socially, I wish it would have been different. Academically, it has its advantages and disadvantages," **Ethan Panganiban**, senior, said.

Now, as we've been living through this pandemic for more than a year, we have a good grasp on the stages of reopening in the US. With the constant back and forth of having to transfer through stages, some students have found it difficult at times to work.

"For me, COVID-19 is the reason why I got a job since there was nothing to do. I'm grateful for this job, but also wish the world was back to normal. School activities are not the same, and we're still on pause. So in a way, it affected me both positively and negatively. I feel like working during COVID is difficult because we have to be very careful trying not to get close to people, and always making sure you feel healthy," **Jorge Gutierrez**, senior, said.

However, some workers feel pressured at Mariano's due to an increase in online shopping.

"Since Covid, working in this department has become more hectic and chaotic, since more people shop online. However, this job has positively affected me due to this job helping me become qualified for the vaccine," **Sarah Levin**, a sophomore at ISU, said.

Between juggling schoolwork and being essential workers, WHS students have been proving to stay positive throughout a pandemic.

Ethan Panganiban, senior, pictured at work.
Photo courtesy of Ethan Panganiban

Rodrigo's debut single tops charts

Ani Perez-Brennan| February 9, 2021

Olivia Rodrigo made waves when she dropped her newest song, Drivers License. It instantly blew up on Tik Tok and made it to practically everyone's "for you page". As of now, the song sits at over 3 million streams on Spotify within a month of it being released. It tops other artists like SZA, Cardi B, Doja Cat, and even Ariana Grande herself on the U.S top 50 charts. The song is also number one on Spotify's top 50 Global chart. So, what's so special about this song? Is it the melancholy lyrics about teenage heartbreak? Or Rodrigo's beautiful vocals? While these factors certainly contributed to the song's, many theorize that the drama behind the song has factored into its huge success.

Olivia Rodrigo, 17 years old, is one of the main stars on High School Musical: The Musical: The Series (It's a real tongue twister) alongside Joshua Basset, 20 years old. Allegedly, they developed feelings for each other but couldn't date because of the age difference. Basset allegedly wrote his songs Common Sense and Anyone Else about Rodrigo. These songs are romantic and extremely cheesy, but enough to melt anyone's heart. Then, heartbreak strikes…

Fan's start to theorize the Joshua Basset stopped waiting for Olivia Rodrigo to come of age and moved onto the one and only, Sabrina Carpenter. Olivia Rodrigo then drops Drivers License which many speculate is about Joshua. The song says "I guess you didn't mean what you wrote in those songs about me" which could reference Common Sense and Anyone Else. She, later on, goes on to sing "You're probably with that blonde girl who always made me doubt / she's so much older than me" which is theorized to be about Carpenter who is blonde and four years older than Rodrigo.

After the song was released, Sabrina Carpenter released a song called Skin which is believed to be a response to Drivers License. Carpenter starts off the song with the lyric "Maybe you didn't mean it / maybe blonde was the only rhyme" which is in reference to Rodrigo's lyric about a blonde girl. Basset then releases two songs titled Lie Lie Lie and Only a Matter of Time. Although, fans aren't certain of how these songs fit in the puzzle or if they are even about Rodrigo or Carpenter.

This story could be true…but it also could not be true. After all, this is all based purely on speculation. This could just be a major PR stunt created by Olivia Rodrigo, Joshua Bassett, and Sabrina Carpenter. These songs do seem a little too planned out. It's unlikely that we'll ever know the full story, but it is certain that Drivers License is an amazing song.

Photo via The New York Times

Styles challenges fashion on Vogue Cover

Benny Benavides | December 20, 2020

Talented, brilliant, incredible, amazing, show-stopping, spectacular, iconic, and adored are a few words one might use to describe the one and only, Harry Styles. Since breaking off from his former band, One Direction in 2015; Styles has experimented with his music and personal aesthetic. The release of his debut self titled album in 2017 marked a new fashion era for Styles.

He's been known to express a more feminine and expressive style with his brightly colored suits, painted nails, and signature pearl necklace. What really broke waves was his cover for Vogue magazine. Not only was he the first man to appear solo on the cover of Vogue, but he did it in a dress too.

Whether Styles intended to make a social commentary by wearing a dress or not is unknown, but his premiere on Vogue certainly did spark comments. Right-Wing Twitter attacked Styles for his fashion choice but besides that, he heavily was praised.

Harry Styles certainly isn't the first, nor will he be the last male artist to cross traditional gender boundaries. However, his presence is an indicator of a change within our society. Slowly, but surely society is becoming more open or at least more aware of gender roles.

As mentioned, Styles isn't the only artist who challenged gender roles. We also have icons like David Bowie and Prince to thank. They walked so Harry Styles could run.

Photo via Dazed

2019-2020 NBA Regular Season Awards

Jesse Carrillo & Liam Murphy | November 16, 2020

The NBA Awards are typically announced in late June at a ceremony that is broadcasted on TNT. This year, due to COVID-19, there was not a ceremony, and we learned the winners of the awards on later dates than we usually would. The six awards that have been announced are Most Valuable Player, Rookie of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year, Most Improved Player, Sixth Man of the Year, and Coach of the Year.

The league's Most Valuable Player award is given to the player who is the best in that season. This year's finalists were Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks, Lebron James of Los Angeles Lakers, and James Harden of the Houston Rockets. Giannis took home his second straight MVP award in his career, averaging 29.5 points, 13.6 rebounds, and 5.6 assists, while getting 85 first place votes out of 101. Lakers superstar Lebron James had another historic year, leading the Los Angeles Lakers to the number one seed in the western conference since 2010. Scoring machine James Harden had another terrific season averaging 34.3 points, 6.6 rebounds, and 7.5 assists.

The Rookie of the Year is determined by who had the best season out of the players in their first season. The three finalists for the award were Ja Morant of the Memphis Grizzlies, Zion Williamson of the New Orleans Pelicans, and Kendrick Nunn of the Miami Heat. Ja Morant won the award nearly unanimously receiving 99 out of 100 first place votes. The explosive and acrobatic point guard out of Murray State University had an amazing rookie campaign averaging nearly 18 points per game, 7 assists and 4 rebounds per game. Morant nearly led Memphis back to the playoffs in the competitive western conference when just one season before, Memphis had one of the worst records in the conference. Morant clearly had an instant impact and he has an extremely bright future. Many see flashes of a young Derrick Rose and Russell Westbrook when they see Morant play, his future is very bright. As for the two other finalists, their futures are quite bright as well.

Many people argue Zion Williamson could have won Rookie of the Year if he did not get hurt, as he had a great impact on the New Orleans Pelicans in the small sample size of 24 games he played. Williamson averaged 23 points, six boards, and two assists per game, and he led the Pelicans to an 11-13 record, which is far better than how they were doing before he took his first step on an NBA court in the regular season. The future is very bright for Zion, who many compare to LeBron James, one of the greatest to ever play the game of basketball.

The future is also very bright for Chicago native Kendrick Nunn. The undrafted Miami Heat shooting guard averaged 15 points per game in 67 games with the Miami Heat. He had a historic start to the season for the Miami Heat when he recorded more points in his first five games than any other undrafted player in their first five games. Needless to say, he is quite good at putting the ball in the hoop. The NBA is full of young talent.

The Defensive Player of the Year (DPOY) award is given to the player who has the largest impact defensively. This can be determined by several defensive statistics, the most important being blocks and steals. The three finalists for DPOY were Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks, Anthony Davis of the Los Angeles Lakers, and Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz. Every single one of the players had an unbelievable impact on their teams defensively. Giannis Antetokounmpo, the reigning MVP, took home the award, and it was well deserved; he led the Bucks to their best regular season record, 56-17. His strength, speed, height and athleticism help him lock down opposing players on the perimeter and at the rim. He also helped lead the Bucks to be one of the best defensive teams in the entire NBA.

Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert, who has won the DPOY award twice, could not bring home his third this year. He had a pretty good defensive season, averaging an elite two blocks per game. Gobert's ridiculous seven foot, nine inch wingspan makes it nearly impossible to attack the rim when he's in the paint; he is one of the best in the league at blocking shots. The next finalist was Lakers big man Anthony Davis. Davis averaged a ridiculous 2.3 blocks per game which put him at third place overall in the NBA in blocks per game. Davis's speed and length make him a nightmare for opposing players to get past and score on. Shockingly, Davis has not won a defensive player of the year award yet in his career; however, he still has plenty of his career left. I believe at some point he'll win one.

This year's Most Improved Player finalists were Brandon Ingram of the New Orleans Pelicans, Bam Adebayo of the Miami Heat, and Luka Dončić of the Dallas Mavericks. Brandon Ingram of the New Orleans Pelicans won the award receiving 42 out of 100 first place votes. Ingram finished the year averaging 23.8 points, 6.1 rebounds, and 4.2 assists, better than his 18.3 points, 3 assists, and 5.1 assists per game last year. Ingram also made his first all star game appearance. Bam Adebayo went from averaging 8.9 points, 2.2 assists, and 7.3 rebounds a game last year to 15.9 points, 5.1 assists and 10.2 rebounds this year while also making his first all star appearance. Dončić, an already established superstar at only 21, made his first all star appearance and nearly averaged a 30 point triple double this year,

and could be a future MVP in his career.

The NBA's Sixth Man of the Year is given to the best player who comes off the bench. This year's finalists were three-time Sixth Man of the Year winner Louis Williams of the Los Angeles Clippers, his teammate Montrezl Harell, and Dennis Schröder of the Oklahoma City Thunder. Clippers big man Montrezl Harrell took home the award beating out his teammate and Schröder.

The three finalists for NBA Coach of the Year were Milwaukee Bucks' coach Mike Budenholzer, Toronto Raptors' coach Nick Nurse, and Oklahoma City Thunder coach Billy Donovan. All were very qualified, but the award was given to the reigning winner of the award, Nick Nurse. The reigning NBA champions, the Toronto Raptors, maintained a pretty good record of 53-17 despite losing NBA superstar Kawhi Leonard. This proved to voters that Nurse could coach a team that can win games without Kawhi Leonard. The runner up, Mike Budenholzer, who led the Bucks to an NBA best of 56-17, was very deserving of being considered for coach of the year. The other finalist was Billy Donovan who led an OKC Thunder team to the fifth seed in a loaded western conference when many NBA viewers expected them to enter rebuilding mode when they traded away former MVP point guard Russell Westbrook. This was not the case at all. Despite the Thunder having a 0.2 percent chance of making the playoffs according to ESPN, they made it and proved all their doubters wrong.

Giannis Antetokounmpo, named Most Valuable Player in 2020.

Photo via Ellines

Grace's 2020 Stanley Cup Review

Tampa Bay Lightning celebrating their win.

Photo via Raw Charge

Grace Estes | October 9, 2020

As of September 28th, the Tampa Bay Lightning are the Stanley Cup Champions.

Beginning the series with a loss, the Tampa Bay Lightning went on to win the next three games, walking into Game 5 with the opportunity to win it all. But as Game 5 went to double overtime, Anton Khubodin kept the puck out of Dallas' net, but Dallas struggled to get shots on goal. The game fell similar to Game 7 of the second round of the 2019 playoffs, when Dallas took the Blues to double overtime, but lost. Ben Bishop saved 52 of the 54 shots on Dallas' goal that night. But, Corey Perry was able to score for the Stars, and the series continued to Game 6.

In the first period, Point scored, assisted by Kucherov and Victor Hedman for the Lightning. In the second, Blake Coleman scored once again for the Lightning, assisted by Cedric Paquette, and Pat Maroon, who'd won the Stanley Cup with the St. Louis Blues last year. Dallas continued to struggle getting shots on goal, and were unable to get it past Tampa Bay's powerhouse of a goalie, Andrei Vasilevskiy. The game ended in a shutout, and Tampa Bay won the series.

"I've enjoyed the Stanley Cup finals, particularly because of the teams. I have a bunch of respect for the Stars and the Lightning both, so it's been very fun seeing these teams go head to head in the most important few games of the season," **Sean Decoursey**, junior, said.

While both teams deserved to be in their positions, it's clear that the Tampa Bay Lightning had been working for the cup for years. During his time in Tampa Bay, Steve Yzerman worked to build a playoff team from the ground up, and he did. TBL's first line, consisting of center Brayden Point, left-wing Ondrej Palat, and right-wing Nikita Kucherov are a force to be reckoned with.

"Seeing a team like Tampa Bay that has fallen short every year in the playoffs, and an underdog team like Dallas in the finals, is an awesome thing to see," Decoursey said.