



Fontana Unified School District

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9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-5000 | www.fusd.net

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Lauren Creiman

(909) 833-9853

Fontana Unified Middle School Student Takes Top Honors in National Archery Competition

FONTANA, CA – Almeria Middle School eighth-grade student Alejandro Irineo waited two years for the chance to showcase his archery skills at the national level. Taking advantage of his opportunity, Irineo shot his way to a sixth-place finish in the middle school boys division of the 2022 Olympic Archery in Schools (OAS) National Championship.

Facing off against dozens of highly skilled competitors from California and Florida at the April 23 championship, Irineo started strong, hitting a bullseye on his first shot, and ended stronger, making 11 of his 19 bullseyes in the final five rounds of the 12-round competition. Irineo finished with 342 total points, only 18 points shy of a perfect score.

The competition results brought joy and relief to the Irineo household. Alejandro's mother, Elice Irineo – who works as an instructional support team teacher at Tokay Elementary School – said she is proud of the way Alejandro maintained his focus during school closures by practicing at home and never giving up hope he would one day return to competition.

"I'm really proud of Alejandro. He works very hard at everything, and puts in 110% effort," Elice Irineo said. "Alejandro has loved archery since he joined the program in sixth grade. Alejandro was determined to finish what he had started and he really wanted to represent Almeria at the national level."

Irineo's performance culminated an exciting year for the Almeria archery team, as it returned to form after two years of inactivity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Almeria's team started from scratch this year with a new coach, Joy Goettel, who replaced longtime coach Wanda Heraldez, who retired after 20 years as a physical education instructor.

"We are so proud of Alejandro. He is very athletic and it's wonderful that he got to show his skills in the nationals," Goettel said. "I'd like to thank Ms. Heraldez for coming back this year to assist me in getting the team going again, and for continuing to mentor Alejandro. She has done so much for OAS archery, mentoring many of the league coaches and helping to start many programs in southern California."

Irineo joined the Almeria archery team as a sixth-grade student during the 2019-20 school year, following in the footsteps of his older sister. Irineo immediately displayed his prowess with a bow and arrow, qualifying for the OAS nationals that year. Despite the cancellation of the OAS national tournament, Irineo never lost faith and kept his skills sharp over the last two years.

"I joined archery because it sounded really cool and I tried to be the best archer I could be," Irineo said. "Ms. Heraldez taught me to shoot and provided equipment for everyone to use."

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OAS middle school competitors use Olympic-style recurve bows – which include modifications not used in standard archery, including stabilizers and sights – and shoot from a distance of nine meters.

“Congratulations to Alejandro Irineo, who showed his true Dolphin spirit in the recent OAS National Championships,” Almeria Principal Felix Jones said. “We are grateful to Wanda Heraldez for all of her years of guidance in developing our program, and to Joy Goettel for continuing the tradition. We look forward to many years of excellence from our young archers.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_ARCHERY: Almeria Middle School eighth-grade student Alejandro Irineo faced off against dozens of highly skilled archers from California and Florida, capturing sixth place in the OAS National Championship middle school division. Irineo made 19 bullseyes and finished with 342 points, only 18 points shy of a perfect score.

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