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President Spencer Freedman? Harvard-bound, Mater Dei guard aspires to highest office

DAVID DORSEY, DDORSEY@NEWS-PRESS.COM

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(Photo: Andrea Melendez/The News-Press)

Spencer Freedman aspires to do something different with his life than the other elite players in the 45th annual Culligan City of Palms Classic.

Freedman wants to become President of the United States.

Freedman, 19 and a senior guard for the Santa Ana (California) Mater Dei High School basketball team, has proven to be one of the best 3-point shooters in this year's Classic, winning the 3-point shootout Wednesday and averaging 20 points per game in three games. But Freedman's 6-foot-1 frame and lack of high-flying athleticism make him a longshot to play in the NBA, he said.

"I'm not sure it would happen as soon as I would like it to," Freedman said of becoming President. "But I really do want to. Living in America, we're so lucky. We have so many opportunities that others don't have. I want to help people get better. I want to overall make the world a better place."

Born June 24, 1998, the soonest Freedman could run for president would be the 2036 election, the first one scheduled after his 35th birthday in 2033.

"I just hope I'm alive to see it," said Mater Dei coach Gary McKnight, 65. "That would put me at 84. He has a great way of connecting with people. All people. Not just the basketball players but the entire student body."

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Players shot for the top spot in the Three-point shooting contest that was part of the City of Palms Classic, Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2017. The winner was Spencer Freedman, Mater Dei, beating out Jordan McCabe, Kaukauna, Wisc. Teddy Dupay, 38, Former Mariner HS player, was also on hand to give a try at the competition and judge the Slam Dunk Contest. (Photo: Andrea Melendez/The News-Press)

While the idea of President Freedman may sound far-fetched, he carries a 4.2 grade-point average and will be attending Harvard University, which has produced seven presidents, more than any other university, ahead of Yale's five. Most of Harvard's presidents made major impacts over the course of our country's history. They are, in chronological order: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Rutherford B. Hayes, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, George W. Bush (who also has a degree from Yale) and Barack Obama.

When asked about President Donald Trump, Freedman did what skilled politicians do. He didn't answer the question. He steered the conversation in another direction.

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"I've been looking more at previous presidencies," Freedman said. "I've been looking as far back as George Washington and John Adams and working my way up. I feel like learning about the past is the best way to learn about the future."

Freedman, who has dark, curly hair and could become the first Jewish president, had multiple basketball recruiting offers. USC, Washington, Rice, UC-Santa Barbara, Princeton, Yale and other Ivy League schools recruited him. Harvard, however, ranked first for him all along both for his basketball and his presidential aspirations.

Freedman said he would run as an independent. Unlike Trump, who has 45 million Twitter followers and has sent more than 1,000 tweets since his inauguration – almost six per day – Freedman hasn't sent a tweet since October, 2015. Freedman has 1,495 followers on his active but dormant account (@Spencfree12 (<https://twitter.com/SPENFREE12>)).



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About 18 months ago, Freedman jettisoned Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to the third screen on his smartphone. He said he rarely looked at them anymore. Doing so has given him more time to devote to his studies. He spends his time away from the gym reading and listening to audiobooks. Playing video games is not part of his routine.

"I'm really ritualistic and habitual," Freedman said. "I'm repetitive. And one thing I realized, is that I'd be looking at Instagram and then 30 minutes of my day would be gone. It was addicting."

Freedman's home state of California garnered 61 percent of the vote for Democratic nominee Hilary Clinton during the 2016 general election. In Lee County, home of the City of Palms Classic, Trump captured 47 percent of the vote during the Republican primary, well ahead of Marco Rubio's 22 percent. Trump then took 58.7 percent of the vote to Clinton's 38.3 percent in the general election.

Freedman said the statistics were worth knowing.

"I like talking to people and learning their personal situations and what keeps them happy," Freedman said. "I just like meeting a lot of people."

Bryan Freedman, Spencer's father, watched the son score a game-high 29 points Friday afternoon as Mater Dei fell to Wesleyan Christian 82-73 in the fifth-place bracket.

judge the Slam Dunk Contest.
(Photo: Andrea Melendez/The News-Press)

Bryan Freedman also saw his son win the 3-point shootout Wednesday before defeating 38-year-old Teddy Dupay, the all-time leading high school basketball scorer in Florida history, in a 3-point shooting exhibition 24-19. **Buy Photo**



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"It's something that's really special," Spencer Freedman said of topping Dupay. "It's something I'll look back on for the rest of my life."

As for the rest of his life, Bryan Freedman said his son has the tenacity if not the toughness to lead the free world.

For a decade, Bryan Freedman has ranked among the top 100 entertainment lawyers in the country. He has represented actor Vin Diesel and singer Mariah Carey among many others.

"I'm more like a pit bull," Bryan Freedman said. "I'm a litigator. But Spencer does things in a different way. He has the ability to connect. He makes people feel good about themselves. It's a great skill to have."

"Whether he becomes president or not, nobody knows. But it's not in the City of Palms record book yet."

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